

-
- [home](#)
 - [photos](#)
 - [Podcasts](#)
 - [About](#)
 - [FAQ](#)
 - [Other Writings](#)
 - [PDA](#)
 - [Terms of Use](#)
 - [Backup](#)
 - [RSS](#)
 - [Advertise](#)

December 15, 2009

GENE HEALY: Making Criminals Out Of All Americans. "The Founders viewed the criminal sanction as a last resort, reserved for serious offenses, clearly defined, so ordinary citizens would know whether they were violating the law. Yet over the last 40 years, an unholy alliance of big-business-hating liberals and tough-on-crime conservatives has made criminalization the first line of attack — a way to demonstrate seriousness about the social problem of the month, whether it's corporate scandals or e-mail spam. . . . There are now more than 4,000 federal crimes, spread out through some 27,000 pages of the U.S. Code. Some years ago, analysts at the Congressional Research Service tried to count the number of separate offenses on the books, and gave up, lacking the resources to get the job done. If teams of legal researchers can't make sense of the federal criminal code, obviously, ordinary citizens don't stand a chance."

Posted at by Glenn Reynolds at 2:53 pm