Get Government Out of Our House

by Phyllis Schlafly August 5, 2011

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If Congress can't repeal the law that banishes the Edison light bulb and forces us to buy Chinese-made bulbs we don't like, voters will ask, what was the use in electing a Republican House? Not only are the majority of Americans in favor of abolishing that obnoxious law, but even a majority of House members voted to repeal the current law, yet that didn't eliminate the ban.

That's because Speaker John Boehner unexpectedly brought up the repeal on July 12 under a rule that required a two-thirds majority, and the vote tally of 233 for repeal to 193 against didn't meet that requirement. While the ban on Edison light bulbs was passed before Obama became President, we can blame him and his Energy Secretary Steven Chu for lobbying strongly against its repeal, and blame Nancy Pelosi for getting all but five Democrats to vote No.

Thanks to Rep. Michael Burgess (R-TX), the House subsequently passed an amendment to the 2012 Energy and Water Appropriations Act to deny funding to the Department of Energy to implement the ban. However, that's only effective for one year, so we still need to repeal the ban.

This issue not only involves Americans' freedom of choice to use the most popular and important of all American inventions, but it's also a matter of jobs. The ban gave General Electric CEO Jeffrey Immelt the excuse to close G.E.'s U.S. light-bulb manufacturing plants, lay off hundreds of well-paid U.S. employees, and open his plants in Communist China where wages are low and the new bulbs can be imported to sell in the U.S. for higher prices.

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President Obama rewarded Immelt by naming him his Jobs Czar. G.E. then announced its plan to send more American jobs to China by moving the headquarters of its 115-year-old X-ray business, responsible for magnetic resonance imaging and cardiac tomography, from Wisconsin to Beijing.

Banning the Edison light bulb doesn't even make sense in terms of environmental arguments. The new Chinese-made compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) give off less light (so we'll have to use more of them) and contain poisonous mercury so that, if we drop and break one, it will require a ten-step clean-up and be a danger to kids and pets.

Obama is moving right ahead with his effort to drive us into a nanny state. He said his energy policies will cause our electric bills to "skyrocket" (will they be controlled by the smart meters already being installed in some sections of the country?), and he warned we can no longer set our thermostats at 72 degrees.

Where are the groups that talk about the right to privacy, limited government, and keeping the government out of our bedrooms and bathrooms? It was bad enough when the progressives and busybody bureaucrats told us the "village" should raise our children, but now they want to manage our household appliances.

The busybodies have also ruled that we can't use detergents in our dishwashers that wash our dishes clean. They have restricted the water flow in our toilets, so they cannot do what toilets are supposed to do, and in our shower heads, to deny us an efficient body wash.

If the environmental purpose is to reduce our water usage, the restraints on toilets and dishwater detergents don't accomplish that goal. The low-water-flow toilets require two or three flushes to do their assigned task.

I now must use more water to pre-wash my dishes before placing them in the dishwasher. Most of these nanny-state regulations go into effect without notice to the public, so few realized the change when the boxes of Cascade changed from green to chartreuse.

San Francisco spent $100 million to deal with the awful smell emitted in sewer pipes because of backed-up sludge caused by low-flow toilets. The cost includes putting 9,000,000 pounds of bleach in the water supply to try to dispel the stench.

I'd like to know who gets the waivers that allow the public toilets in airport terminals to flush automatically and frequently with a large rush of water.

The Obama Administration just announced new CAFE (corporate average fuel economy) standards to require that fuel efficiency for cars and light trucks must go up 3.5 percent annually and reach 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025. Obama's takeover of the automobile industry means that the companies can't object.

Of course, meeting that standard means that cars and light trucks will have to be lighter weight and thus more dangerous in accidents. If our goal is energy independence, there are so many better ways to achieve that goal such as drilling for oil in places where it is now forbidden.