

# Bureaucracy Grows, Freedom Ebbs

**W**E can and should continue to use our seat belts as a means of minimizing injuries in case of automobile accident, but the law requiring a mechanical representative of the federal government to nag us into buckling down has been repealed.

This is a small recovery of individual freedom in a stampede toward Washington-made decisions by bureaucrats.

U.S. News & World Report points out that 2.9 million federal employees (bureaucrats) now are close to the total population of the colonies when they rebelled against the bureaucracy of King George 200 years ago.

"In elegant offices or dimly lit cubbyholes along miles of corridors of government buildings in Washington, D.C., or elsewhere, bureaucrats mostly unknown to the public at large make decisions—or nondecisions—reaching deeply into the lives of 212 million Americans from the cradle to the grave," the article states.

The cost of this system is phenomenal, but it is secondary to the fact that state and local governments are being displaced by "national policies" written by appointed officials, whose jobs and authority are beyond the reach of the voters.

"National policies" may be translated literally into federal bureaucratic direction, because Congress delegates the writing of rules and regulations to the bureaucrats who will be responsible for enforcing them. Many bills creating agencies to perform various functions or serv-

ices are drafted with only the purposes stated and funds authorized. Authority to write the laws is delegated.

Frequently, bureaucrats who man these agencies, enthusiastic about their assignments, go far beyond the intent of sponsors of the law.

OSHA, for example, grew out of a need to put down black lung disease that was afflicting coal miners in West Virginia, a problem which could have been taken care of by the state, instead of by an act of Congress.

The state didn't take care of it and Congress passed a law, leaving rules to be written by OSHA. Regulations written by Occupational Safety and Health bureaucrats now run into thousands of pages and agents can impose costly penalties or shut down businesses without notice.

About the same thing has happened with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which was generated by environmentalists and

staffed by ecologists, many of whom seem to have very strong opinions about protection of wildlife and natural resources but who do not display much concern for survival of people or businesses.

Convincing evidence was presented at a 12-weeks long hearing to show that smokestack gas scrubbers for controlling sulfur-dioxide emissions at electric generating plants are unreliable and unacceptable. EPA continues to insist that utilities install them, nevertheless, adding to costs with questionable benefits.

With the power that such agencies possess, another bit of information is truly frightening. There are 858 federal data banks, each containing personal information on millions of Americans.

If and when the bureaucrats get their regulations and our personal data hitched up in the same computers, we could be "processed" just for thinking contrary to "national policies."