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Regulations Affect Use of Senses

IS the time coming when we will have to check with Washington before using our natural senses? It looks that way.

Either Congress has passed laws or bureaus have issued regulations, or both, affecting our use of sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch. Some are quite comprehensive.

The United States Supreme Court, through its various and variable interpretations of the Constitution, also has made rulings affecting the use of our senses.

On the matter of sight, we are free to view obscene actions, read pornographic literature and watch explicit sex on television or movie screens, but children are prohibited from reading the biblical story of creation in public school textbooks.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has numerous regulations concerning what we may hear. Laws against public use of profanity have fallen into disuse, and whatever passes for music may be amplified to great volume.

However, if anything sounds like work, it must be muffled and kept below specified decibel volume, regardless of cost or production quotas. Keep it quiet or shut it down!

The Food and Drug Administration has banned scores, perhaps hundreds, of food additives, many of which had been used to enhance flavor and titillate our taste buds.

Social reformers have gotten to the floor of the Senate with proposals to set national diet standards, limiting our use of salt, sugar and other tasty ingredients.

Our sense of smell is now regarded as the bailiwick of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), aided and abetted by Congress. Manufacturers are required to build cars we can't smell, with widespread effects, but rules that force factories to spend millions to change their aromas or to close down have greater economic significance.

Regulators haven't been so pub-

licly identified with our sense of touch, but rules are there. Many have to do with sensual contacts, holding to be acceptable actions that are offensive to the morals of many, sometimes a majority.

A sixth sense which has been seriously impaired by laws and regulations is our sense of civic responsibility.

By making it easy for people to live without working, the government encourages nonproducers and idlers to live at the expense of working producers through tax handouts.

Regulation of our senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch is more than a comic situation or solicitude of a paternalistic bureaucracy doing these things "for our own good".

It is a reflection of the deterioration of individual self-reliance, a loss of national independence and restrictions upon personal conduct that should not exist in a free country.