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## Making Life Safer by Passing Laws

**E**VERY TIME a new law is enacted to make life safer it seems to make it cost more, restrict activities, reduce fun, or all of these things.

A recent ruling of the Supreme Court is expected to add from \$185 to \$300 to the price of each new car to pay for air bags intended to soften effects of crashes. Laws requiring seat belts are estimated to have cost motorists \$14 billion so far.

Most states have passed "lemon laws" to protect buyers from hidden faults in new or used cars and insurance laws to protect crash victims from financial losses. But drunken drivers still run loose.

Folks who gas their own cars soon will find notices posted at many gasoline stations warning them to keep their faces away from hazardous fumes arising from hose nozzles or gas tanks.

If these warnings have no more effect than those required on cigarette packages people who don't know better may keep on sticking their noses in gas tanks. Efforts to

require similar warnings on alcoholic beverages have failed, although evidence shows their usage may lead to alcoholism, loss of jobs and unhappy homes.

So-called consumer organizations have been waging war to get more laws and more bureaus to protect the public from everything from whirling lawnmower blades and steep stepladders to baby walkers that might topple.

The aim may be to require manufacturers to design products that are "people proof."

Congress has responded by creating a number of agencies to make life safer by administering a set of laws, writing additional regulations and adding thousands to government payrolls.

Laws place heavy responsibility for safe use of products, foods, drugs and vehicles upon manufacturers long after commodities have passed beyond their control. This has led to numerous lawsuits and some fabulous judgments, costs of which other consumers will pay.

Mysteries related to causes of cancer led to enactment of the famous "Delaney zero tolerance" amendment that allows bureaus to ban use of materials even suspected of being a cause. Cancer is a terrible ailment but impractical regulations aren't likely to cure it.

Farming has long been regarded as an idyllic way of life. Thousands of city workers have moved into rural areas to enjoy it, possibly unaware that it is one of the more hazardous occupations.

City folks face risks, too, some of which might not be fully "protected" by laws up to now. It may be dangerous to get up in the morning. You might slip and fall in the bathtub or encounter one of a thousand other perils that might be neither foreseen nor preventable.

The government is vigorously trying to protect us against our own negligence or carelessness. Perhaps most people would be happy if it would just keep the robbers, rapists and other violent criminals behind bars to make our streets and homes safer.