

Calabasas, California's new law bans all public smoking, inside and outside, including outdoor patios, sidewalks and even privately owned cars operating within the city limits. The Calabasas law represents an extension of many years of state smoking restrictions that focused on the workplace, public buildings, restaurants, airplanes and gathering places.

The Calabasas law is part of a disturbing trend to regulate personal behavior in ways ranging from banning certain foods and beverages from school cafeterias to requiring bike riders to wear helmets. The government is interjecting itself into the private lives of people who are engaged in legal activities and enacting laws to regulate these activities. The force of these laws seems to have destroyed the concept of individual responsibility and rights. Big brother has assumed parental responsibility and invaded our personal property to protect us from ourselves, even when we are not hurting anyone else.

Prior to Calabasas, no state, county, or city has gone so far as to pass a general prohibition on outdoor smoking. Anti-smoking laws are typically based on a legislative attempt to deter smoking near nonsmokers and children, to reduce the attraction of smoking to children, and to reduce pollution and litter associated with smoking. In this case Calabasas extends the protected areas to sidewalks and even privately owned cars that operate within the city. If a nonsmoker is bothered by a smoker on a city sidewalk, this law backs the nonsmoker and authorizes him to ask the offending smoker to stop. Violators of the law are subject to criminal charges and civil actions can also be filed against them. Why? What have they done to me or you or anyone else?

In Calabasas a person cannot smoke while he or she is walking to their car or waiting at a stop sign. It is hard to see how that affects anyone other than the person who is smoking. If you are worried about someone standing on the corner or walking by, then why aren't you concerned about those same people inhaling exhaust fumes from all the automobiles driving by?

Doing something that is legal and only affects the individual doing it, should not be prohibited. If I am a non-smoker and do not want to inhale other people's smoke then I should not have to, but if you want to smoke in your car, why would I care? It is a personal choice if a person wants to smoke or not. If a person wants to fill their lungs up with smoke and pay the ridiculous prices and taxes to do so, that's not my problem. Let them fill their lungs and their car with smoke and let them walk the sidewalks smoking to their heart's content.

Whether you are a smoker or non-smoker, you should be opposed to the Calabasas anti-smoking laws. This is just another example of the government and the extremist activist organizations involved with the government telling you what you can and cannot do. It is called taking away your rights! There is no rational basis for laws like this and they must be overturned before the government goes too far. Today it is smoking on the sidewalk; tomorrow it will be eating a hamburger or wearing a mink coat. Maybe there should be a law against being too fat or too dirty or ugly? This may sound ridiculous now, but laws like this are moving us in that direction and they have to be stopped, before it is too late.