

Hadassah Fleisher

//

Memo to the Cambridge City Council Regarding the Smoking Ban Proposal

Today, the 15th of December is, ironically enough, *Bill of Rights Day*. With that in mind I am here to remind everyone that all people are created equal, and all, without exception, are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights; and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

So on this note I am here to issue what I hope will be a scathing critique of this proposal.

My first objection, and what I regard as an insult to me and the people of Cambridge, is the undemocratic manner this proposal has been presented—almost as a *fait accompli*; nearly, except for this pesky bit about the public hearing.

I find it disturbing that the author of this proposal has remained all but anonymous throughout this process. A government that does its business behind closed doors does not serve the people, and is not a democracy. Particularly that what is being proposed here is prohibition. No one ever makes a proposal without some vested interest. The question is whom will it serve? And always the other side of that is who will be hurt by it?

Who decided that criminalizing an activity that is in fact legal is the only way to address the problem? Do the police need one more law to enforce? Are people going to be shot in parks because law enforcement "misconstrue" someone's attitude and so feel justified in killing the perceived offender?

Again I ask *Qui bono*? And the fact that we are not at all agreed about the answer to that question obviates the need for some serious discussion.

If you are so concerned with our health, why are you not proposing a mandate to label GMO products in manufactured goods? Why are you not prohibiting the sale of GMO produce in this city? Why are you not investing in clean forms of energy? If you are so gung ho for health why are you not working to allow natural and alternative methods of healing to be integrated into the public health system?

I also suspect that you wanted to give the gentrification of this city one final push. This proposal will quietly give the affluent the authority to get all those who are poor, disenfranchised, and homeless, out of here. They are a drain on our resources, aren't they? Oh! You mean we have to talk about building affordable housing here, again? Would it not be simpler just to make it **impossible** for them to be here so they go somewhere else?

I may be completely off the wall; I am perfectly willing to grant that. Only you must show me in what way I am mistaken to quell my distrust.

H. Fleishon
100 Landsdowne St.
Cambridge, MA 02139
617.576.2381