

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment.

Several months ago I did a comment on the ridiculous amount of jaywalking I see on Broadway and how dangerous it is. Since then there have been FIVE pedestrian fatalities. This is becoming an epidemic and needs to be addressed by our elected officials. Not all of these tragic accidents were on Broadway or caused by jaywalkers, but I believe the jaywalking problem is a great place to start making changes. This is a petty crime that our law enforcement ignores. I understand there are very serious criminal situations that the police need to focus on, but the hard, cold facts are that people are being hit, and sometimes killed, far too often while jaywalking. It is apparent that much of the law-breaking activities our police focus on are revenue-generating. The seat belt law is a primary example. If parents don't buckle up their children, that is a safety issue that we should all be concerned with, but why should the government tell me that I have to wear a seat belt? Instead of the government dictating to me that I have to wear my seat belt, the insurance company should be involved. If I'm in an accident without wearing my seat belt, they could implement an additional \$5,000 deductible before coverage starts, or if I am wearing it, the deductible is waived. In the name of safety, our government is handing out very expensive fines for seat belt violations. Clearly, this is a revenue-generating activity. What is more likely to create an injury-causing accident: a jaywalker or a person not wearing their seat belt? What is more likely to cause a devastating, life-altering situation for both driver and pedestrian? I cannot imagine the trauma for a driver after hitting a pedestrian. If you look at the response by our law enforcement at these two situations, the police believe seat belt violations are more critical to prevent than jaywalking. I personally believe it has to do

with the revenue that is generated by the seat belt violation fines. The government isn't really concerned with our safety, otherwise, jaywalking would be addressed. Obviously, it's much easier to see a jaywalker than it is to spot a seat belt violator. Have you ever tried to find someone not wearing a seatbelt? It is really difficult. My wife was given a citation for not wearing her seatbelt a few years ago. She was actually in the process of putting it on, when the police officer saw her. She was very upset at the ticket, because she is very diligent about wearing her seatbelt. She just happened to be in my old pickup, and, for some reason, forgot. It happens. If he was so concerned with safety, why write up a ticket as someone is correcting the situation? The fine at that time was \$160. \$160! Are jaywalker's ignored, just because many are street people, who likely have no funds to pay a fine? Since when is this a reason to ignore a lawbreaker? If revenue is the driving force prioritizing a police officer's time in the field, then make jaywalking an expensive citation. This will benefit the police departments financially and make our streets safer for everyone. Jaywalkers that can't afford to pay the fine can be treated the same as with any fine imposed for breaking the law; either work it off with community service or go to jail. The one flaw in this approach is how do we deal with the mentally deranged?. We have done a very poor job collectively dealing with this segment of our population. I'm usually opposed to government spending, but I would back better funding for the departments who deal with the mentally challenged. Regardless, we need to stop turning a blind eye to this situation, because it is getting out of control. Sometimes while driving on Broadway, I feel like I'm playing, "Dodge the pedestrian," and believe me, it's not a game I like to play.

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