



# A Year Of Freedom Lost?

BY BILL O'REILLY  
Creators Syndicate

If you see Kris Kristofferson around, please tell him thanks for writing the line “freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose” in his song “Me and Bobby McGee.” That thought is sage and very appropriate for America in the year 2013.

In California, Gov. Jerry Brown has signed into law an astounding 876 new mandates. They all took effect last week. Now, in the Golden State, you cannot do the following:

- Hunt a bear using trained dogs. Un-trained canines are OK, I guess. And how would the authorities be able to tell? Would the dog have to take a test in the forest?
- Sit in an off-road vehicle without being in a seat. You can’t sit on the floor or on the roof. Do off-road vehicles even have roofs? I don’t know.
- Use a boat in a “freshwater body” without paying a separate fee. The purpose of the fee is to raise money to control the influx of “invasive mussels.” I thought that was a 1950s monster movie.
- Drive a party bus without a special license. Can’t wait to see that test. “Do you know the words to ‘Celebration’ by Kool and the Gang?”

The list of new laws is almost endless, and it is clear that Brown and the California legislature have been very busy thinking up ways to control every aspect of people’s lives. And that is what’s basically happening throughout this country. Politicians, some of them well-meaning, are trying to legislate everything.

New York’s Mayor Michael Bloomberg doesn’t



Bill O'REILLY

want us to be chubby, so he’s trying to ban soft drinks in large cups. If a child rides his bike, he often looks like a Roman gladiator with all the protective gear. Drive through a yellow light, and you may be ticketed thanks to a camera tied to a pole. Everybody’s watching everything – and then sending it out to the world via technology.

The more laws that governments pass the less individual freedom there is. Any student of history will tell you that. Totalitarian countries ban pretty much everything. The Taliban whipped people in public for dancing. Mao would execute you for saying a prayer. Hitler would send you to a concentrate camp if he thought you were gay.

We Americans need to stop this nanny state stuff. Reasonable protections are fine. It should be a crime to text while driving. But in California it is now against the law to park at a broken meter for more time than you could if said meter were working. I can just see the cops standing there with a stop-

watch.

I consider myself a law-abiding person. But I’m exhausted. I don’t know where to put the bottles, newspapers, cans and other stuff for garbage pickup outside my house. The rules are so thick you need someone from MIT to explain them.

So here’s my pitch to Brown and other elected officials: Relax. The bears will be fine. The mussels will invade no matter what you do. The parking meter deal isn’t important.

OK?

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show “The O'Reilly Factor” and author of the book “Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama.”

## Pierre Report

# A Refreshing Start To The Session

BY STATE REP. BERNIE HUNHOFF  
District 18 (Yankton)

South Dakota’s 88th legislative session kicked off Tuesday, and Pierre watchers all agree that there’s an unusually positive attitude. Since politicians are naturally suspicious, we’re curious why that is so.

Is it because we don’t have many money troubles? That could be part of it. Revenues are expected to grow by 6 to 7 percent in the year ahead, providing it rains and our counterparts in Washington don’t wreck the economy for everybody.

Is it because of all the new faces? That never hurts. We have more than a 30 percent turnover. But the newcomers hardly know where to find the bathrooms yet, so we probably can’t give them too much credit for changing the culture of Pierre.

Maybe it’s because voters settled some of the most controversial issues of last session — corporate incentives and the governor’s education initiatives— in the November election. Voters also said “absolutely no” to raising the sales tax, giving some finality to that notion.



B. Hunhoff

And maybe it’s because we’ve all watched, painfully, as Washington’s politicians have bungled their responsibilities, bickering and badgering and getting nothing done.

That’s never been the way in Pierre. I’ve probably been as critical as anyone about some of the outcomes of recent years. But our legislature still works. We like each other. Trust each other. Respect each other.

In the next seven weeks, we’ll debate and vote up or down on about 500 bills. We’ll develop a \$4 billion budget, and we’ll pass it even though we may not know what to expect from Washington in the year ahead.

That’s my prediction for the 88th legislative session. I hope the positive attitude is still in the air, but for better or worse we’ll do our job and shake hands and go home.

## YOUR LETTERS

### Strange Medicine

Ruth Ann Dickman, Utica

I totally agree with Rex Alberts’s article “Deadly Profits” (*Press & Dakotan*, Dec. 10). I agree that a lot of prescription drugs should not be given!

My last doctor, who did my hip surgery, was great! Another doctor who did a surgery on me, was very good, too. I went to one doctor who kept giving me more and more pills. Every time I went back to him and told him how the pills made me feel so strange, he’d give me another kind, which made me feel worse. I kept feeling just terrible, but I kept taking the pills. My son even had to take me to the emergency room once. I felt so bad! The only thing they found was a little congestion, they told me they gave me the pills, but to take the pill that they gave me in ER. I was to the point that I couldn’t hardly walk, see or think!

I went to bed that night. The next day, I felt great!

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THE DAKOTAS’ OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861  
Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

## OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# Strategy To Reduce Crime Encouraging

**ARGUS LEADER of Sioux Falls (Jan. 8):** With a promise to save money and make South Dakota safer, Gov. Dennis Daugaard indicated in his State of the State speech recently that criminal justice reform is a priority in this legislative session.

Safely reducing the prison population and reducing repeat offender rates, as proposed by his administration, sound like two good initial steps to preventing our state from needing to build more prison space. His concern is warranted with our state’s growth in inmate numbers surpassing other states and an estimated cost of \$200 million to build and operate additional prison space.

To his credit and after months of hard work listening to judges and others involved in how we handle those who violate state law, Daugaard had supporters on board even before the plan was released publicly. Some details include adding two more drug courts and piloting a new HOPE program for drug offenders similar to the 24/7 program for those monitored for alcohol offenses. Daugaard has looked at what has worked in other states and says South Dakota — where 80 percent of new prisoners are nonviolent offenders — won’t be soft on crime but will be smart about it.

Without all of the details, it is difficult to say if everything Daugaard proposes for criminal justice reform eventually will make it through the House and Senate. Maybe there are suggestions that lawmakers and others will think of to make his ideas even better.

But what is encouraging is that Daugaard has worked upfront on the issue and included experts and those who work in criminal justice before proposing changes. That could be in part sensitivity to last session when educators complained that they were not included in the process until after plans were announced.

In South Dakota, all services such as education and prisons compete for money in a limited, balanced-budget approach. The criminal justice reform ideas brought forward, which include sentencing instead of just addressing what to do with someone once they are incarcerated, are a good start.

In his speech, Daugaard focused on crime without tackling education and other initiatives. We’re sure that is intentional, and yet those topics will get discussed during the time lawmakers are working in Pierre. It’s all part of a long-standing budgeting process.

We’re interested in hearing more.

## Real Change: A Small Window

**MCCOOK (Neb.) DAILY GAZETTE (Jan. 4):** With Vice President Joe Biden administering the oath of office, Deb Fischer was officially sworn in Thursday for her six-year term as U.S. Senator, with Sen. Mike Johanns and former Sen. David Karnes at her side.

Sen. Fischer pledged to work with Republicans and Democrats to “restore America’s fidelity to her constitutional principles” by limiting the size of government, revitalizing the economy and respecting “the liberties and hard-earned money of American taxpayers.”

“The road ahead requires tough choices, and I will cast my votes solely on the merits of policies and their impact on Nebraskans and the nation.”

Those “tough choices” won’t be long in coming, and her decisions will show how far she is willing to go to help the federal government to get its fiscal house in order.

While members of the House of Representatives are on a timetable of fundraising and running for re-election that makes it extremely difficult to take the long view, senators at least have a six-year term to use to accomplish a worthwhile goal.

As a member of the Armed Services committee, Sen. Fischer will have an important role in national defense, but will she be willing to endorse cuts that would reduce the number of jobs in Omaha, home of the U.S. Strategic Command headquarters?

Will she make the “tough choice” to cut farm subsidies to Nebraska, which ranks fifth of the 50 states, receiving more than \$13 billion in commodity, crop insurance, conservation and disaster subsidies?

Will she become part of a bipartisan coalition that can make the organic change necessary for the long-term fiscal health of the American system?

Or will she become just another member of the “business-as-usual” crowd in Washington, keeping the federal funding coming until the fiscal house of cards comes crashing down?

For Sen. Fischer and other newly elected members of Congress, the next few months will tell.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

### By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Jan. 14, the 14th day of 2013. There are 351 days left in the year.

**Today’s Highlight in History:** On Jan. 14, 1963, George C. Wallace was sworn in as governor of Alabama; his inaugural address included the ringing declaration, “Segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!” — a view Wallace came to repudiate in later years.

**On this date:** In 1784, the United States ratified a peace treaty with England, ending the Revolutionary War.

In 1858, Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, and his wife, Empress Eugenie, escaped an assassination attempt led by Italian revolutionary Felice Orsini, who was later captured and executed.

In 1900, Puccini’s opera “Tosca” had its world premiere in Rome.

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and French General Charles de Gaulle opened a wartime conference in Casablanca.

In 1952, NBC’s “Today” show premiered, with Dave Garroway as the host, or “communicator.”

In 1953, Josip Broz Tito was elected president of Yugoslavia by the country’s Parliament.

In 1963, Sylvia Plath’s semi-autobiographical novel “The Bell Jar” was published in London under the pen name “Victoria Lucas,” less than a month before Plath committed suicide.

In 1968, the Green Bay Packers of the NFL defeated the AFL’s Oakland Raiders, 33-14, in Super Bowl II.

In 1969, 27 people aboard the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, off Hawaii, were killed when a rocket warhead exploded, setting off a fire and additional explosions.

In 1973, the Miami Dolphins of the AFC defeated the Washington Redskins of the NFC 14-7 to win Super Bowl VII. (This game featured the notorious “Garb Gaffe” by Dolphins kicker Garo Yepremian that resulted in a Redskins touchdown.)

In 1989, President Ronald Reagan delivered his 331st and final weekly White House radio address, telling listeners, “Believe me, Saturdays will never seem the same. I’ll miss you.”

In 1993, TV talk show host David Letterman announced he was moving from NBC to CBS.

**Ten years ago:** Kmart Corp. an-

nounced its biggest round of cutbacks yet, saying it would close 326 more stores and eliminate 37,000 more jobs in hopes of getting out of bankruptcy by the end of April 2003. (Kmart emerged from Chapter 11 protection in May 2003.) Thousands of General Electric Co. employees across the country began a two-day strike to protest higher health insurance costs.

**Five years ago:** Republican Bobby Jindal, the first elected Indian-American governor in the United States, took office in Louisiana. Alvaro Colom was sworn in as Guatemala’s first leftist president in more than 50 years.

**One year ago:** Rescue workers scrambled aboard the stricken Costa Concordia cruise liner, seeking to help some 4,200 passengers the day after the ship ran aground and tipped over off Italy’s Tuscan coast; the death toll from the tragedy eventually reached 25 with seven missing and presumed dead. Miss Wisconsin Laura Kaeppler won the Miss America pageant in Las Vegas.

**Today’s Birthdays:** Blues singer Clarence Carter is 77. Singer Jack Jones is 75. Singer-songwriter Allen Toussaint is 75. Former NAACP Chairman Julian Bond is 73. Actress Faye Dunaway is 72. Actress Holland Taylor is 70. Actor Carl Weathers is 65. Singer-producer T-Bone Burnett is 65. Movie writer-director Lawrence Kasdan is 64. Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Maureen Dowd is 61. Rock singer Geoff Tate (Queensryche) is 54. Movie writer-director Steven Soderbergh is 50. Actor Mark Addy is 49. Fox News Channel anchorman Shepard Smith is 49. Rapper Slick Rick is 48. Actor Dan Schneider is 47. Actress Emily Watson is 46. Actor-comedian Tom Rhodes is 46. Rock musician Zakk Wylde (Ozzy Osbourne Band) is 46. Rapper-actor LL Cool J is 45. Actor Jason Bateman is 44. Rock singer-musician Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters) is 44. Actress Jordan Ladd is 38. Retro-soul singer-songwriter Marc Broussard is 31. Rock singer-musician Caleb Followill (Kings of Leon) is 31. Actor Zach Gilford is 31. Rock musician Joe Guese (The Click Five) is 30. Actor Jonathan Osser is 24.

**Thought for Today:** “Love is the condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own.” — Robert A. Heinlein, American science-fiction author (1907-1988).

## FROM THE BIBLE

For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them. *Matthew 18:20.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

### CONTACT US

PHONE:  
(605) 665-7811  
(800) 743-2968  
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**Published Daily  
Monday-Saturday**

Periodicals postage paid at Yankton, South Dakota, under the act of March 3, 1979.

Weekly Dakotian established June 6, 1861. Yankton Daily Press and Dakotian established April 26, 1875.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078.

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