

If I Could Make A Law

by Anne Sloan

A law is a system of rules and guidelines. Laws shape politics, economics and society. There are many kinds of laws such as contract, property, trust, administrative, constitutional, international and so forth.

The category my law falls under would be constitutional. This constitutional law concerns human rights and the civil liberties of individuals. If I could make a law, every civil rights agency in the United States would be after my head, providing I was still around and remembered what I set out to reform. Making and enforcing laws seems to take an eternity.

Let me begin with a history of the product I would like to make contraband. Chewing gum is a type of "confection" traditionally made of chicle, a natural latex product or synthetic rubber. The ancient Greeks chewed mastiche, Mayans chewed chicle, North American Indians chewed sap from spruce trees and most unfortunately, passed it on to early settlers who took it from there. In 1848 John Curtis made the first commercial gum.

In 1850 a paraffin flavored gum appeared. By 1881 Adams made a gum called TuttiFrutti and sold it from vending machines in a New York subway. In 1928, an employee of the Fleer Company invented the successful pink Double Bubble Gum. And so began the bane of my existence.

If you have ever been assisted by a clerk, or a teller or any person who interacts with the public, who is chewing gum the whole time, seemingly unaware, resembling a cow chewing its cud, you'll understand my desire to make this law. While sitting in a movie theater or on a bus and listening to someone cracking gum at the decibel of a firecracker, you will possibly empathize. What of the person mindlessly blowing bubbles which pop and often stick to one's face? Or how about that time you stepped on some person's discarded wad of gum? Trying to get rid of it resembles one doing the Charleston.

I could go on and on about the horrors of chewing gum, but everyone doesn't feel so strongly about this so-called "confection." As long as you understand now, where I'm coming from, here is a draft of my proposed law:

Any person caught chewing any kind of gum outside the confines of his or her private home will be liable to a fine or a jail sentence or both. There will be varying degrees of offenses. Any person who works with the public in any form who does not comply will be put on unpaid leave for a given amount of time. A second offense will be unpaid leave and a fine set by a court of law. A third offense would result in dismissal and jail time. Any person caught cracking gum will be fined and any person who discards gum indiscriminately will be given a jail term. (They do it in Singapore, why not here?) If the law would allow, gum would be banned permanently from the entire United States and its territories.