

Let (the Right Kind of) Freedom Ring

BY CLAUDE DUCLoux

As we lament the gridlock and failures of our elected state and national representatives to show cooperation and statesmanship, there appears to be an interesting political reality where the citizens and their elected representatives are cooperating more than ever. Whether it be by insistence, exigency, frustration, or distress, CITIES are becoming the chief analysts and brokers of their own solutions.

Study after study, including analysts from the World Bank, Smithsonian, and business consortia are issuing reports stating cities are now better at handling environmental issues, creating health care opportunities, and modeling transportation and other infrastructure. The message is, “Hey, big government, get out of our way. We got this.”

Well. Obviously, this must stop.

How can people possibly make correct decisions, unfettered by big-money lobbyists, unlimited corporate campaign contributions from anonymous sources, and the blessings of tax breaks? This independence stuff is clearly a “job killer” (did I say that right?) How can we move forward without the tone-deaf assistance of legislative masters, determined to “free” us with intentionally and deceptively renamed bills, to bluff the public into believing they will accomplish a different goal?

An example is the “We’re-Gonna-Fix-This-Terrible-Scourge-Called-Obamacare” bill, a departure from its original title, “The Americans for Do-it-Yourself Surgery,” which was combined with the Senate version, “The Walk-It-Off, You Weenie, Health Care Act.”

Not to be outdone, the “Lege” seemed fixated on brandishing our rights to cast off the “abuses and usurpations” of government, allowing us to smell freedom wherever we swing our gun belts. Our disdain, as Texans, for being burdened by some governmental regulations led Governor Abbott famously to proclaim, in a speech to “Freedom Works Texas” that his typical workday was to, “...go to the office, I sue the federal government, and I go home.” Yeah! Dang right! No government should be telling us Texans what to do! But wait. I feel a dissonance in “the Force.”

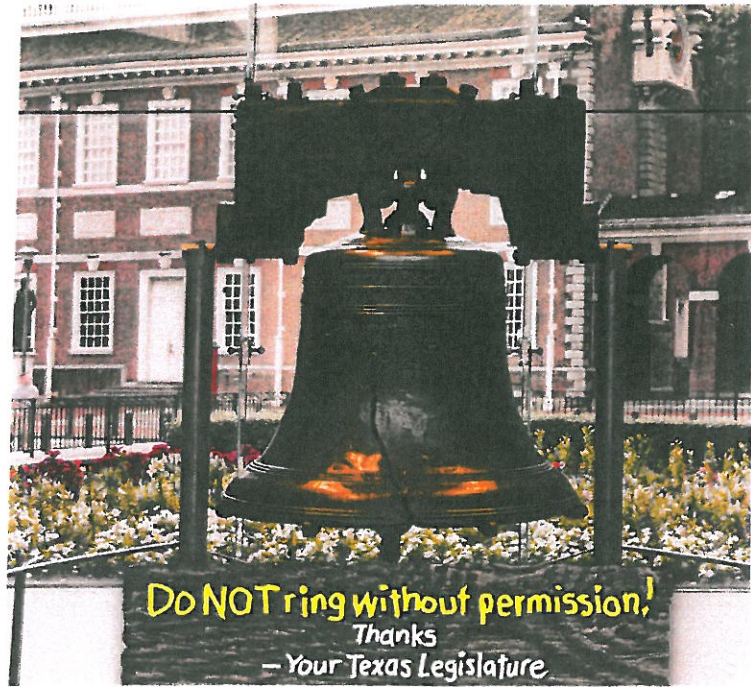
It seems these same Champions of Freedom have very different opinions when the path to self-governance chosen by some of us locals clash with their ideological vision of a free Texas. These same protectors of freedom are pretty insistent that their freedoms should supersede our freedoms.

I know that I need some expert who is able to explain this in a way even I can understand, so I turned to Hans Rechterflugel, policy director for American Liberty Tea Forum (ALTF), to assist me in unwinding the “Freedom” aspects of numerous statutes which are lined up to affect all of us. Here’s a transcript of our recent webcast interview:

CD: Welcome Mr. Rechterflugel. I’m looking forward to your assistance today on a myriad of issues.

Hans: Happy to be of service. Can’t stop the loving that freedom!

CD: Great, so let’s jump right in. I understand the goals of ALTF are “self-direction, self-governance, and personal choice.” Did I read that correctly?



Hans: Yes. This is a deeply held American principle. It’s why we sue anyone who tries to interfere with our right to local control.

CD: Okay. So starting with local control, the people of the city of Denton decided to ban fracking in the city due to the many dangers of water table pollution, and instability of the substrata. But the Legislature nullified that exercise of freedom. Why?

Hans: That was the wrong kind of freedom. That would clearly interfere with the freedom rights of oil and gas companies. Interference is not freedom.

CD: But, why can’t locals decide to implement codes and regulations which suit the needs of their own communities?

Hans: It’s just too confusing. I mean, if I use a plastic trash bag in Lufkin, do I need a permit to carry it to Austin? You can’t ban them in some cities and not others.

CD: Really? Why?

Hans: Because it’s confusing. Confusion is not freedom.

CD: But numerous studies are finding that cities around the world have become the chief problem-solvers for addressing their citizenry and environment. Aren’t those incredibly important goals?

Hans: Not if they conflict with statewide ideological objectives.

CD: Are you saying that there’s a difference between “statewide freedom” and “local freedom?”

Hans: Sure. Statewide freedom is superior. It pre-empts local wishes. It smells better, too.

CD: Well, federal law pre-empts state law, yet your group constantly sues the federal government complaining of it imposing its will on Texas, yet the state of Texas is imposing its will over locals cities, counties, and citizens on a plethora of issues.

Hans: It’s because we’re better at securing freedom, and everyone needs to do things OUR way.

CD: Wait: This legislature has

proposed or passed legislation saying cities can't try to save their trees, can't impose ecology guidelines, or other measures which are overwhelmingly approved by those cities' residents. Not only that, they overruled a crowded city's right to ban texting while driving.

Hans: Unnecessary.

CD: Even if more than 400 Texans per year are killed in texting accidents?

And, what about seeking security for rideshare passengers by suggesting better background checks? How do you square that with your passion for local control? Or criminalizing restroom use? How on earth is that an exercise of freedom?

Hans: Well, bathroom use is for safety.

CD: So is Uber security and texting while driving.

Hans: But texting while driving is personal freedom. We're all for personal freedom.

CD: Like restroom use.

Hans: No, that's safety again.

CD: Okay, you're talking in circles now. The sponsor of the bathroom bill could not relate a single incident, not one, where a transgendered individual presented a danger in a restroom.

Hans: Well, we're going to keep it that way.

CD: Can you tell me that all these new freedoms actually benefit the people of the State of Texas?

Hans: Absolutely, we have freed Texans from the burdens of Medicaid coverage, education, women's health services, and equal access to the ballot box.

CD: Who are the biggest winners?

Hans: Freedom smellers.

CD: I think I'm smelling it now.

Keep the faith. **A**

The views, opinions, and content expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Austin Bar Association.

CANLAW

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Austin attorneys, paralegals, and volunteers coming together to provide free estate planning services for the cancer community

WE PROVIDE

- Last Will and Testament
- Medical Power of Attorney
- Statutory Durable Power of Attorney
- Healthcare Directives
- HIPPA Releases

NEXT CLINIC:
SEPTEMBER 23, 2017
10AM-2PM
AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY
11000 N MOPAC EXPY, SUITE 100
AUSTIN, TX 78759

LAWYER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

LEARN MORE AT
WWW.CANCERLAWCLINIC.ORG
INFO@CANCERLAWCLINIC.ORG

Lakeside Mediation Center *Dedicated to the peaceful, constructive and efficient resolution of disputes.*



Ken Davison Greg Bourgeois Eric Galton David Moore Kim Kovach Fred Hawkins Ben Cunningham Lynn Rubinett Lucious Buntun

Book by phone
512-477-9300

or online
www.LakesideMediation.com