

“Don’t Tread on Me” / There ought to be a law (or not)

“Don’t Tread on Me” is one of our Editorial Board’s favorite mottos. Its origin goes back to colonial times. In December 1775, Benjamin Franklin published an essay in the Pennsylvania Journal, in which he suggested that the rattlesnake was a good symbol for the American spirit. To paraphrase.... *The rattlesnake is an emblem of vigilance – it never begins an attack, but once engaged, it does not surrender. The rattlesnake never wounds, until it has given appropriate notice to a potential enemy.*

We feel that this sentiment continues to be very pertinent today in regards to a number of current issues facing the country - - the US government’s encroachment on personal liberties, the over-reach of the National Security Agency, and other examples where the executive or legislative branch have breached their constitutional limits.

Our Editorial Board’s fundamental belief is that “less is more”. We feel that many of the major political issues facing the country are caused by a bloated bureaucracy, and “entrenched” legislators who begin to feel that they need to propose additional laws to “solve a problem”. This, in turn, contributes towards the ever expanding reach of the US government into people’s daily lives. It also contributes to the phenomenon whereby the US government, as a percent of GDP, has grown from 2.4% in 1887, to 7.9% in 1938, and to 25.2% in 2012. The final conundrum is that our elected officials do not seem to have the courage to ask the current generation of citizens to fund the programs that they have proposed and voted on to establish (setting aside the question as to whether the program was actually needed or not in the first place) because it is easier to push those obligations on to future generations.

So, the first question is.... Do we need the law / government program, or not. Our Editorial Board’s default position is NOT.