

Hangin' Out at the Park May Soon be a Crime

Have you ever noticed that it seems increasingly easy for good, upstanding citizens to be labeled as criminals?

For example, your fruitcake making grandmother is [guilty of a federal crime](#) if she sells her Christmas specialty in “a serving size other than 1 ½ oz.” Your crunchy mama friend who makes her own unpasteurized eggnog is [guilty of a federal crime](#) if she decides to make a little money off her creation. And woe to you if you’ve ever dropped a scrap of trash in a toilet at a national park. Yup, that [violates 18 USC §1865 & 36 CFR §2.14\(a\)\(3\)](#).

These ridiculous regulations are more amusing than sinister, and, let’s face it, will likely never get us into trouble. But there’s a new ordinance brewing for Los Angeles city parks that is posed to turn law-abiding adults into alleged pedophiles. The [Los Angeles Times](#) explains:

“In an attempt to make Los Angeles parks seem super safe, City Councilman Mitch O’Farrell has proposed barring adults unaccompanied by children from entering playgrounds. It’s an effort, he said, to keep city parks ‘free of creepy activity.’

Who wouldn’t want to ban creepy activity or creepy people from playgrounds? But what O’Farrell is proposing goes far beyond targeting worrisome activities that, in most cases, are already outlawed. It would bar any adult from sitting on a bench, exercising or otherwise enjoying public space near playground unless he or she brought a child along.”

The *Times* continues:

“O’Farrell argues that we can’t assume every adult who wanders into a children’s play area is benign. But why should the city assume that every adult without a child is a pedophile? That makes a childless adult a criminal just for being in a particular public space, which is an overreach that can lead to foolish enforcement – like ticketing people for sitting on a bench eating donuts.”

Is this development just another sign that American society has become overcautious and overly litigious? Is it time America was reinfused with a dose of good, ol’ common sense?

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