

oral quarrel

This week's Oral Quarrel question asked readers whether a law requiring persons to wear seatbelts would save lives and whether government should pass laws to protect people who don't want to be protected. Following are the responses.

- I've been a Republican for 60 years in Clarencville, Farmington and Farmington Hills, and I don't want Ruth or anyone else to tell me to wear seat belts. Tell Ruth to find something more important to do, and that goes for 60 senior citizens I have talked to.
- Tell Ruth to mind her own business and stay in Birmingham. If she wants to wear seat belts, let her wear them.
- I am tired of having our elected officials telling us what we have to do. If they want to do it, let them do it and let us alone.
- Yes, the government should protect people who don't want to wear seat belts because I know people who were burned to death that had seat belts on — people couldn't free them in the fire. They should be free to wear them or not wear them. I know of another person that was hurt because of a seat belt.
- I don't think we should have to wear seat belts. I think it should be our own decision. The government is stepping on our toes too much already telling us what to do. Next thing they will want us to do is wear fire-retardant suits while we are in the car. The whole thing stinks.
- The answer is no, and you can tell Ruth to stick her seat belt in her car.
- The government should pass rules to protect lives because they are at ready for businesses. Businesses are required to have laws for seat belts and they are trying to pass air bags. Mandatory seat belts would not hurt a thing.
- Yes, definitely. If we enact laws to save lives, the relatives of suicides cannot collect on lawsuits.
- Well, I don't like the government making that decision for me, and I think it should be left up to the individual and, furthermore, I am a seat belt wearer but I don't want the government to tell me when and how to do it.
- I am definitely opposed to the government telling me I have to wear a seat belt although I usually wear one.
- We have too much government now.
- I think there are too many laws that are presently on the books that create problems for honest everyday citizens. I don't think that we need another law to make criminals out of innocent people. This is exactly what happens when you get a ticket, you become a criminal and this is taking away my right to decide what I want to do with my life.

I FEEL THAT safety belts are a minor inconvenience, and everybody should get used to wearing them and it would save a lot of lives and a lot of insurance money for everybody (meaning insurance premiums).

• I want to know who says that if you put on a safety belt that everything is all safety. You can get locked in the car. If you can't reach the release button on the seat belt and maybe no one is around if you run off the road and hit a tree, maybe you're locked in your car. Who says everything has to be pro-safety in these days? I think it is infringing on my personal rights.

• The \$10 civil fine for violators for not wearing a seat belt is a tax designed for the police department to pick up money. Those fellows should be in the alley earning their money so that our homes aren't ripped off, not sitting in the driveway looking for guys not wearing a seat belt.

• I don't think they should be mandatory especially for people who have a phobia of being hemmed in.

• I think the gall of Ruth McNamee, our rep in office, is just going too far. My constitutional rights are being violated daily. How about passing capital punishment for murder? Receiving a capital punishment makes me, a taxed and law-abiding citizen, a criminal. How about a part-time legislature — maybe there won't be enough time to make new laws.

• I don't think it should be mandatory to wear seat belts. I think the representatives should be busy themselves with more important things rather than seat belts.

• I don't think there should be a law protecting people that don't want to be protected because if you made that kind of a law, then there wouldn't be a law. You would be contradicting yourself by saying yes you have to wear them but you don't have to wear them.

• No, I don't think there is ample proof that you save lives by buckling up because, primarily, most of the head-on collisions are so minimal in comparison to sideswiping, broadside and also rear-end collisions that I feel it's the right of the individual if he wants to use the belt, fine, and if he doesn't, fine also. It should be mandatory.

ABSOLUTELY NO law to wear seat belts. It's up to the individual, and I

don't think the government has any right to get involved.

• Yes, definitely. There are adults that have to be treated like children and told what to do to save their own lives.

• Yes, definitely, the seat belt law should be passed. It certainly will save lives. It's been looked into many times, and it takes place in Ontario and it's working well there so it definitely should be put into law here.

• I don't think people should be required to wear seat belts because in some instances it has been shown that they were killed because they had seat belts on. Who is to say how the accident is going to happen? It is also an infringement on people's civil liberties, and the next thing you know, if they get away with this, they will be telling you when to inhale and exhale.

• I am 100 percent against having a law making people wear seat belts. It is just one more freedom of mine that would be taken away. If they are going to concern themselves with making

driving in Michigan safer, the first thing they should do is rescind the law that allows people to turn on the red light. It has caused more trouble than anything else going.

• I don't think the government should interfere. I believe there should be seat belts in the car, but I think it should be up to the individual person as to whether they want to wear it or not. I don't think the government should make any law requiring it.

• Yes, definitely.

• Absolutely not. The time has come when we must stop mandating people's lives into a regulatory existence or very soon big brother will have us all in his clutches.

• Absolutely, it should be installed. It's not so much saving lives as the immense cost to all of us. Direct medical expenses for people who are injured and have to have medical care, and if they had seat belts they probably wouldn't have this injury and these costs are passed on to you.

• No, the government is into too



much stuff now that they know nothing about. If Congress is going to design our automobiles, no wonder nobody will buy them.

• I think front seat belts should be mandatory. Not using a seat belt infringes on my rights because I must

share the cost of their hospitalization after an injury that could have been prevented.

• I don't know if seat belts save lives or not, but I don't want the government to interfere in my life any more than it's interfering now.

Lobbyist rules state's 3rd branch

DURING A RECENT disagreement between Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara and state Rep. Jack Kirksey over who should have been doing what to save the city of Livonia's share of race track revenue, McNamara complained that neither Kirksey nor state Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Northville, had informed him Gov. William Milliken had vetoed a race track appropriations bill.

The mayor had to find out, he said, from lobbyist Jim Karoub, whose firm is retained by Livonia to represent its interests in Lansing.

The fact is, nobody in state government or local government should be surprised that Karoub is the firstest

KAROUB, 53, is a former Highland Park politician and Jaycee young man of the year (1964) who served two terms in the state Legislature (1962-63, 1967-68) before being knocked out in a 1968 Democratic primary, which pitted him against six poles.

Most defeated politicians pack up their troubles and go back home, but Karoub was never known for giving up easily.

Of the myriad of lobbyists who have tried to influence state legislators, including a few dozen former legislators, Karoub stands head and shoulders above the rest. This is true even though Karoub makes Jim Blanchard look tall.

However short and slight he is, Karoub is always intense. He is even fierce and intimidating when he wants to be, which is most of the time, particularly when he has his mind set on securing passage of certain legislation or blocking passage of other legislation.

Karoub's lobbying firm has the biggest stable of clients in Lansing includ-

ing Blue Cross and several associations related to racing. Most recently he was given credit for engineering the reelection of Sen. William D. Faust, D-Westland, as Senate majority leader over the UAW's darling, Gary Corbin, D-Clio.

Sen. Basil Brown, D-Highland Park, gave this reason for voting for Corbin and against Faust: "If it's true, and I think it is, that one of 'em's the UAW's stooge and the other one is Jimmy Karoub's stooge, then it's a matter of whose stooge you prefer. I prefer the UAW's stooge."

FOR MANY YEARS, Karoub's most important ally in the Legislature was Sen. Bill Huffman, D-Madison Heights, who was long-time vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and, for a number of reasons, almost ran the committee.

Huffman (who retired this year to become a lobbyist with none other than James Karoub) could get just about anything he wanted out of other legisla-

tors because of the committee control over appropriations. As he used to say, "Sooner or later, they all come to me."

If all this gives you an indication that there is something wrong with state Legislature, so be it.

Actually there are at present three branches of government involved in lawmaking: 1) the executive, 2) the Legislature and 3) the lobbyists and pressure groups — with Karoub at the apex.

The hidden branch of government is able to exert political influence far beyond what is reasonable simply because it makes the bulk of political contributions to legislative election campaigns.

One thing the Michigan Legislature could do with its time during the next legislative year is to determine a better method of financing election campaigns — the possibility of public financing should be considered.



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