



There Ought Not Be a Law

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Not everything that we dislike should be illegal. Not everything that we like or want should be made mandatory.

To most of us, this is common sense.

We lack the totalitarian impulse.

But every day, otherwise-inclined people, including lawmakers, notice another aspect of our lives that they decide must no longer be free. If they can't fix our bad thinking — by sending us to reeducation camps for summary brainwashing — they can at least regiment our conduct.

The latest victims of this totalitarian impulse are [owners of big stores](https://thisiscommonsense.org) that sell toys. Often, toys for boys are in one

section, toys for girls in another. Barbie dolls are not on the same shelf as firetrucks and water pistols.

It's a great hardship — supposedly — for a little girl who likes fire trucks or a little boy who likes Barbie dolls to cross the aisle to the opposite-gender toy section.

Enacted in 2021 and taking effect in 2024, California's new law says that “keeping similar items that are traditionally marketed either for girls or for boys separated makes it more difficult for the consumer to compare the product and incorrectly implies that their use by one gender is inappropriate.”

So the new law compels stores with at least 500 employees to “maintain a gender-neutral section” that is so labeled. First violation, \$250 fine. Further violations, up to \$500.

There ought to be a law making such laws illegal.

A constitution, maybe?

Meantime, the affected stores should sue.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.