

# Illegitimate Laws Poison Society

One way you can tell laws are not legitimate, ethically or morally, is in the way they vary from place to place.

Those of us who live near an arbitrary political line — a state line or a national border — have the opportunity to notice this more easily than others might.

Something that is legal on one side of the line becomes illegal once you cross it. Without otherwise changing your behavior in the slightest you can go from law-abiding to criminal, by law, simply by pacing back and forth across this imaginary line.

Laws against actual wrongs like murder are less variable. You can't take someone on a road trip to find a place where killing them for a reason other than self-defense is legal. These types of laws are legitimate ... and unnecessary. A law forbidding murder doesn't need to exist before you to have the natural human right to fight back and stop someone from committing murder.

A good illustration of the arbitrary nature of laws are the various laws concerning guns.

There is no such thing as an illegal gun or a legitimate anti-gun law according to the clear language of the U. S. Constitution. You'd never know this by looking at the thousands of laws that have been passed and are being enforced by the national, state, and local political class. These illegitimate gun laws create an arbitrary patchwork for travelers to navigate in a fruitless attempt to try to stay legal as they travel.

Laws concerning the substances commonly called "drugs" are the same way. Depending on which side of a line you find yourself, you might be law-abiding or you might be a criminal.

Even kids' lemonade stands are subjected to laws. They remain legal, without permits, in only 15 states. This is so ridiculous that one thoughtful lemonade mix company has set up a program to help kids pay fines and license fees.

Yet some people still seem to believe if something is illegal it's automatically wrong. This has never been true.

While most laws are illegitimate, you can't safely ignore them. Every law, no matter how seemingly trivial, is a threat to kill you if you are caught ignoring it. This threat isn't usually carried out immediately; those enforcing the law must normally escalate their enforcement attempts a few times before that happens. Yet it does happen.

Do you see the problem? Illegitimate laws poison society. They get in the way of telling right from wrong.