August 28, 2013

Mark Steyn, referring to the healthcare act, says it is a "very strange law whose only defining characteristic is that no one who favors it wants to be bound by it."

On his radio show the other day, Hugh Hewitt caught me by surprise and asked me about running for the U.S. Senate from New Hampshire. My various consultants, pollsters, PACs and exploratory committees haven't fine tuned every detail of my platform just yet, but I can say this without a doubt:

I will not vote for any "comprehensive" bill, whether on immigration, health care or anything else.

"Comprehensive" today is a euphemism for interminably long, poorly drafted, and entirely unread — not just by the peoples' representatives but by our robed rulers, too (how many of those Supreme Court justices actually plowed through every page of ObamaCare when its "constitutionality" came before them?).

The 1862 Homestead Act, which is genuinely comprehensive, is two handwritten pages in clear English. "The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" is 500 times as long, is not about patients or care, and neither protects the former nor makes the latter affordable.

So what is it about? On Wednesday, the Nevada AFL-CIO passed a resolution declaring that "the unintended consequences of the ACA will lead to the destruction of the 40-hour work week." That's quite an accomplishment for a "health" "care" "reform" law. But the poor old union heavies who so supported ObamaCare are now reduced to bleating that they should be entitled to the same opt-outs secured by big business and congressional staffers. It's a very strange law whose only defining characteristic is that no one who favors it wants to be bound by it. ...

With the example of government types exempting themselves from their healthcare legislation, this USA TODAY column by **Glenn Reynolds** calling for a halt to special privileges, is timely.

All over America, government officials enjoy privileges that ordinary citizens don't. Sometimes it involves bearing arms, with special rules favoring police, politicians and even retired government employees. Sometimes it involves freedom from traffic and parking tickets, like the special non-traceable license plates enjoyed by tens of thousands of California state employees or similar immunities for Colorado legislators. Often it involves immunity from legal challenges, like the "qualified" immunity to lawsuits enjoyed by most government officials, or the even-better "absolute immunity" enjoyed by judges and prosecutors. (Both immunities -- including, suspiciously, the one for judges -- are creations of judicial action, not legislation).

Lately it seems as if these kinds of special privileges are proliferating. And it also seems to me that special privileges for "public servants" that have the effect of making them look more like, well, "public masters," are kind of un-American. Even more, I'm beginning to wonder if they might actually be unconstitutional. Surely the creation of two classes of citizens, one more equal than the others, isn't the sort of thing the Framers intended. Why didn't they put something in the Constitution to prevent it?

Well, actually, they did. ...

Jillian Melchior of National Review tells us how she got all her obamaphones.
Confession: You're paying my phone bill.

In the past month, I have received three shiny new cell phones, courtesy of American taxpayers, that should never have fallen into my hands.

The Federal Communications Commission oversees the so-called Lifeline program, created in 1984 to make sure impoverished Americans had telephone service available to call their moms, bosses, and 911. In 2008, the FCC expanded the program to offer subsidized cell-phone service, and since then, the expenses of running the program have soared. In 2012, the program's costs had risen to $2.189 billion, up from $822 million before wireless carriers were included. As of June, there were 13.8 million active Lifeline subscriptions.

To be eligible for Lifeline, the applicant is supposed to be receiving some significant government benefit — food stamps, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, public housing assistance, etc. But because welfare eligibility has expanded under the Obama administration, more people than ever before are qualified to receive "free" cell-phone service — part of the reason why Lifeline mobiles have become commonly known as Obamaphones. Alternatively, applicants can qualify if their household income is less than 136 percent of the federal poverty line.

But as with any federal program with too much funding, too little oversight, and perverse financial incentives, Lifeline has become infamous for rampant fraud and abuse. ...

Slumber Wise Blog tells us people use to have two sleeping periods each night.
... The existence of our sleeping twice per night was first uncovered by Roger Ekirch, professor of History at Virginia Tech.

His research found that we didn't always sleep in one eight hour chunk. We used to sleep in two shorter periods, over a longer range of night. This range was about 12 hours long, and began with a sleep of three to four hours, wakefulness of two to three hours, then sleep again until morning.

References are scattered throughout literature, court documents, personal papers, and the ephemera of the past. What is surprising is not that people slept in two sessions, but that the concept was so incredibly common. Two-piece sleeping was the standard, accepted way to sleep.

"It's not just the number of references – it is the way they refer to it, as if it was common knowledge," Ekirch says.

An English doctor wrote, for example, that the ideal time for study and contemplation was between "first sleep" and "second sleep." Chaucer tells of a character in the Canterbury Tales that goes to bed following her "firste sleep." And, explaining the reason why working class conceived more children, a doctor from the 1500s reported that they typically had sex after their first sleep.

Ekirch's book At Day's Close: Night in Times Past is replete with such examples. ...

Weekly Standard informs us of a new hot dog brand in FL. Would you believe Carlos Danger Brand Weiners?

"Anthony Weiner may be lagging in the race for New York City mayor, but he is winning in another area—hot dog marketing. The delicious combination of Anthony Weiner's name and his sexually suggestive Twitter antics were apparently too good to pass up for one Florida marketing man, who has joined forces with an Illinois hot dog company to create a hot dog brand called . . . " (" 'Carlos Danger' Brand of Weiners Enters the Food Market," ABC News, August 16).

IBD

ObamaCare Means Whatever Obama Wants It To Mean

by Mark Steyn

On his radio show the other day, Hugh Hewitt caught me by surprise and asked me about running for the U.S. Senate from New Hampshire. My various consultants, pollsters, PACs and exploratory committees haven't fine tuned every detail of my platform just yet, but I can say this without a doubt:

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So what is it about? On Wednesday, the Nevada AFL-CIO passed a resolution declaring that "the unintended consequences of the ACA will lead to the destruction of the 40-hour work week." That's quite an accomplishment for a "health" "care" "reform" law. But the poor old union heavies who so supported ObamaCare are now reduced to bleating that they should be entitled to the same opt-outs secured by big business and congressional staffers. It's a very strange law whose only defining characteristic is that no one who favors it wants to be bound by it.

Meanwhile, on the very same day as the AFL-CIO was predicting the death of the 40-hour week, the University of Virginia announced plans to boot working spouses off its health plan beginning Jan. 1 because the Affordable Care Act has made it unaffordable: It's projected to add $7.3 million dollars to the university's bill in 2014 alone.

As Nancy Pelosi famously said, "We have to pass the bill so that you can find out what's in it." But the problem with "comprehensive" legislation is that, when everything's in it, nothing's in it. The Affordable Care Act means whatever President Obama says it means on any particular day of the week. Whether it applies to you this year, next year, or not at all depends on the whim of the sovereign, and whether your CEO golfs with him on Martha's Vineyard.

A few weeks back, the president unilaterally suspended the law's employer mandate. Under the Constitution, he doesn't have the power to do this, but judging from the American people's massive shrug of indifference he might as well unilaterally suspend the Constitution, too. ObamaCare is not a law, in the sense that all persons are equal before it, but a hierarchy of privilege; for example, senators value their emir-sized entourages and don't want them to quit, so it is necessary to provide the flunkies who negotiated and drafted the Affordable Care Act an exemption from the legislation they imposed on the citizenry.

Once again, the opt-out is not legal. As The Wall Street Journal trenchantly observed, "OPM has no authority to pay for insurance plans that lack FEHBP contracts, nor does the Affordable Care Act permit either exchange contributions or a unilateral bump in Congressional pay in return for less overall compensation."

OPM has no authority to pay for plans that lack FEHBP? Who knew?

Despite being the presumptive next senator from New Hampshire, I am in fact an immigrant, and, although I do my best to assimilate, I never feel more foreign than when discussing "health" "care" "reform." Across the planet, my readers from Tajikistan to Tuvalu are wondering: Is an OPM a new kind of procedure? Is it the latest high-tech stent or prosthetic?

But, no. Nothing in the health care debate is anything to do with medicine or surgery, only with OPMs and FEHBP and the death of full-time employment.

What does your employer or (for the discarded husbands of the University of Virginia's Women's Studies Department) your spouse's employer, have to do with health care? For most of modern history, your health care was a matter between you and your doctor. Since World War II, in much of the developed world, it's been between, you, your doctor, and your government. In America, it's now between you, your doctor, your government, your insurer, your employer, your insurer's outsourced health care administration services company . ... Anybody else? Oh, let's not forget Lois Lerner's IRS, which, in the biggest expansion of the agency in the post-war era, has hired 16,500 new agents to determine whether your hernia merits an audit.

All third-party systems are crappy and inefficient. But socialized health care has at least the great clarifying simplicity of equality of crappiness: liberté, égalité, merde. It requires a perverse genius to construct a "health" "care" "reform" that destroys everything from religious liberty to full-time employment, while requiring multitudes of new tax collectors and other bureaucrats and ever fewer doctors and nurses.

The parallel public/private systems of continental Europe cost about 10% of GDP. The ObamaCare monstrosity blends all the worst aspects of a private system (bureaucracy, restricted access, co-pays) with all the worst aspects of a government system (bureaucracy, restricted access, IRS agents) and sucks up twice as much GDP, ever less of which is spent on "health care" and ever more on the intervening layers of third, fourth, fifth and sixth parties.

But, as the AFL-CIO's resolution emphasizes, that hardly begins to state the distorting effects of ObamaCare. In my part of the world, a common employment profile is for the husband to have his own one-man business, doing construction all summer and snowplowing all winter, while the missus does an administrative job with the school district or some other government or quasi-government racket in order to get health coverage. In my experience, most of the people who do the latter don't terribly enjoy it: they take the job mostly for the health care. So it's un-American, in the sense that it requires them to sacrifice the pursuit of happiness for the certainty of low-deductible plans.

But it also has a broader destabilizing effect:

As I noted a couple of weeks ago, at the low end, about 40% of Americans now do minimal-skilled service jobs — the ones that, in the wake of ObamaCare, are becoming neither full-time nor part-time but kinda-sorta two-thirds-time in order not to impose health-insurance obligations on the employer.

In the middle, a similar number of Americans are diverted into those paper-shuffling jobs that do provide health benefits — say, in the "human resources" department of the bureaucracy, the kind of job in which you pass the time calling someone in Idaho to say you need them to fill in a W-9 before you can send them a 1099, or vice-versa.

And, at the top end, privileged Americans spend six-figure sums acquiring college degrees that admit them to a homogenized elite that tells itself ObamaCare makes perfect sense for everyone except them. The U.S. economy can never recover until more of its real "human resources" are engaged in genuine wealth creation. Yet ObamaCare instead incentivizes the diversion of more and more manpower into the Republic of Paperwork.

The cynical among us have always assumed ObamaCare was set up to be so unworkable a grateful populace would embrace any 2016 Democrat promising single-payer health care. The way things are going the entire system may collapse first. If any Republicans are trying to devise a health system that doesn't involve employers, the IRS and paperwork without end, they're keeping awfully quiet about it.

USA Today

Stop privileges for government officials

Politicians and police don't deserve special treatment.

Glenn Harlan Reynolds

All over America, government officials enjoy privileges that ordinary citizens don't. Sometimes it involves bearing arms, with special rules favoring police, politicians and even retired government employees. Sometimes it involves freedom from traffic and parking tickets, like the special non-traceable license plates enjoyed by tens of thousands of California state employees or similar immunities for Colorado legislators. Often it involves immunity from legal challenges, like the "qualified" immunity to lawsuits enjoyed by most government officials, or the even-better "absolute immunity" enjoyed by judges and prosecutors. (Both immunities -- including, suspiciously, the one for judges -- are creations of judicial action, not legislation).

Lately it seems as if these kinds of special privileges are proliferating. And it also seems to me that special privileges for "public servants" that have the effect of making them look more like, well, "public masters," are kind of un-American. Even more, I'm beginning to wonder if they might actually be unconstitutional. Surely the creation of two classes of citizens, one more equal than the others, isn't the sort of thing the Framers intended. Why didn't they put something in the Constitution to prevent it?

Well, actually, they did. Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution prohibits the federal government from granting "titles of nobility," and Article I, Section 10 extends this prohibition to the states -- one of the few provisions in the original Constitution to impose limits directly on states. Surely the Framers must have considered this prohibition pretty important.

Well, yes. But since then we've read it rather narrowly: Basically, so long as people aren't granted titles like Baron, Duke, or Sir, nobody even considers the question of titles of nobility. And, of course, the kinds of privileges I describe aren't hereditary (and though the growth of political dynasties like the Bushes and the Clintons should give people pause, it doesn't rise to the level of titles of nobility -- does it?). But in England they have Life Peerages as Barons that aren't hereditary, and the titles of nobility clause also forbids American officials from accepting knighthoods, which aren't hereditary, from foreign nations without consent of Congress. So the ban on titles of nobility can't just be a matter of word-games, or descent.

There hasn't been much judicial action on the titles of nobility clause -- they are, as described in Prof. Jay Wexler's book of the same name, among the Constitution's "odd clauses." But since we always hear that the Constitution is a "living, breathing document" that must change to adapt to the times, perhaps in this era of big government and accumulating special privileges it is time to give the ban on titles of nobility a second look.

How would I do it? I'd provide that any rule giving government officials -- whether elected, appointed, or members of the civil service -- preferential treatment compared to ordinary citizens would have to withstand "strict scrutiny." That is, I'd treat discrimination based on government employment status the same way we currently treat racial discrimination. To withstand strict scrutiny, a government action must serve a "compelling government interest," and must be narrowly tailored to serve that interest. And there must be no less restrictive means of achieving the same goal. That would be especially true where the distinctions -- special privileges relating to legal process, or the right to bear arms, for example -- parallel those enjoyed by the nobility in the Framing era.

Applying this to distinctions between government employees and citizens would undoubtedly knock down a lot of those distinctions. But, in my opinion, that wouldn't be so bad. Frankly, our political class seems to have gotten a little full of itself.

Is this too much "living, breathing" Constitution for you? Well, okay, but it's less of a stretch than we've seen in other areas of constitutional interpretation, such as the Commerce Clause. And it addresses a real problem: The growth not only of government, but of a governing class that believes, in a very real way, that it is fundamentally above the law.

Address this my way, or some other way. But one way or another, it's likely to be addressed. At least my way doesn't involve pitchforks.

Glenn Harlan Reynolds is professor of law at the University of Tennessee and the author of The New School: How the Information Age Will Save American Education from Itself. *He blogs at* InstaPundit.com.

National Review

Me and My Obamaphones

Not on welfare or below the poverty line? Never mind — here's your free phone.

By Jillian Kay Melchior

Confession: You're paying my phone bill.

In the past month, I have received three shiny new cell phones, courtesy of American taxpayers, that should never have fallen into my hands.

The Federal Communications Commission oversees the so-called Lifeline program, created in 1984 to make sure impoverished Americans had telephone service available to call their moms, bosses, and 911. In 2008, the FCC expanded the program to offer subsidized cell-phone service, and since then, the expenses of running the program have soared. In 2012, the program's costs had risen to $2.189 billion, up from $822 million before wireless carriers were included. As of June, there were 13.8 million active Lifeline subscriptions.

To be eligible for Lifeline, the applicant is supposed to be receiving some significant government benefit — food stamps, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, public housing assistance, etc. But because welfare eligibility has expanded under the Obama administration, more people than ever before are qualified to receive "free" cell-phone service — part of the reason why

Lifeline mobiles have become commonly known as Obamaphones. Alternatively, applicants can qualify if their household income is less than 136 percent of the federal poverty line.

But as with any federal program with too much funding, too little oversight, and perverse financial incentives, Lifeline has become infamous for rampant fraud and abuse. There have been news reports about recipients flaunting dozens of subsidized phones. And in February, the Wall Street Journal reported on an FCC audit of the top five Lifeline providers, which found that "41% of their more than six million subscribers either couldn't demonstrate their eligibility or didn't respond to requests for certification."

The FCC supposedly buckled down on eligibility standards last year and established other safeguards aimed at reducing fraud. I was curious about how tough it was to get one of these phones, so last month, I hit the streets of New York. And out of respect for the law and my journalistic integrity, I did not lie to obtain a phone.

Now is the point, I suppose, where I should explain that I really, really shouldn't have received a single phone. Despite what you hear, not all 20-something writers in the Big City are starving. Given my earnings, even if I were supporting a family of eight, my income would still rule me out. Nor do I receive any type of government benefit. By the Lifeline program's standards, I am unambiguously ineligible.

My first task was figuring out where to register. The rule of thumb is that wherever you can sign up for food stamps, you can apply for an Obamaphone.

Representatives from SafeLink and Assurance, two of the leading New York Lifeline vendors, stand outside the food-stamp offices, paired like Mormon missionaries, young and polite and earnest. They carry electronic tablets and ask all passersby whether they've received their free phone "yet" — as if it were an inevitability.

They approached me for the first time outside the food-stamp office at Tenth Avenue and 216th Street, on the northern tip of Manhattan. The SafeLink vendor, a man probably in his mid 20s, asked me whether I was enrolled in any benefit programs.

"No," I said, "but I'd certainly like to be. I'm hoping to be." And indeed, while doing research for another story, I had gone through the motions of applying for New York City welfare, which I also don't qualify for. I showed him my Human Resources Administration paperwork packet and the case number assigned to me. I reiterated that though I had once applied, I had never been approved for any sort of benefit.

He brought out his electronic tablet immediately to sign me up for phone service. He asked if I had an insurance card, so I pulled out my trusty Blue Cross Blue Shield. He looked at it for a second, puzzled, then asked if I had Medicaid. No, I told him, just private insurance through my work plan.

"Private insurance? What's that?" he asked, maybe not facetiously. My BCBS card was nevertheless photographed, as well as the first page of my Human Resources Administration paperwork. He asked for my name and my home address, and that was about it. The whole process took less than five minutes, and I had to provide no documentation verifying my income level or (nonexistent) welfare status.

The SafeLink vendor then referred me to his opposite number, a rep from Assurance. She too took down my information, registering me for another Obamaphone.

Traveling to several of the welfare offices in the city, I learned this was common practice. Obamaphone reps come in twos, and both will sign you up if they can.

That's a very questionable practice, given the Lifeline program's rules: Each eligible household may receive only one Lifeline subsidy, and obtaining multiple subsidized phones from multiple Lifeline carriers is "a flat-out violation of our rules," says Michelle Schaefer, an attorney-adviser from the FCC's Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau.

Schaefer also tells me that "consumers are, on their applications, required to certify under penalty of perjury that they will only be receiving one Lifeline discount."

But when I went around New York signing up for multiple phones, I never even saw the applications; SafeLink and Assurance vendors filled out the necessary forms on their tablets on my behalf, clicking through so quickly that it must have been nearly muscle memory. And nobody mentioned perjury.

Granted, the first question the wireless reps asked was usually whether I was already enrolled in the Lifeline program. I told the truth: I had signed up recently, but the phone hadn't arrived in the mail yet. Almost always, that got me re-entered into the system without hesitation
.
When I did receive my SafeLink phone a few days later, I started informing vendors that I did have one Lifeline phone. They assured me that the Lifeline program permitted me to have one phone from each participating wireless provider — which simply isn't true.

Maybe there's a disconnect between the corporate offices of wireless providers and their men on the street; a letter I later received from Assurance mentioned that "a household is not permitted to receive Lifeline benefits from multiple providers. Violation of the one-per-household rule constitutes a violation of federal rules and will result in de-enrollment from the Lifeline program and potentially prosecution by the United States government."

But the wireless providers aren't doing much due diligence, if my experience is indicative.

At the Union Square location, a SafeLink rep noted that I was already approved for a phone and declined to re-enter my information — but the rep from Assurance, standing only a few feet away, readily signed me up.

At the welfare office on Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn, a vendor hesitated when I told her that I'd already applied but the phone had not yet been delivered. "Surely your system will catch if I'm actually enrolled," I told her. She shrugged and signed me up once more.

At the DeKalb Avenue office in Brooklyn, when I told the rep I wasn't receiving welfare, I was signed up for a phone but cautioned that I might well be denied upon secondary review.

And at one Lifeline location in East Harlem, I walked up to the wireless representative talking very loudly on my own smartphone. I hung up only to answer her questions. Now, keep in mind that the program is supposed to provide cell-phone service to people too poor to afford any

phone whatsoever — but my application for a subsidized mobile was happily submitted, even as I dinked around very obviously on my existing smartphone.

So here's the final count: I was able to apply on the street for one SafeLink phone and seven Assurance phones. I received one SafeLink phone and two Assurance phones, no questions asked. For several other applications, Assurance sent me requests for more financial information.

Finally, I received one other letter, full of grammatical errors, informing me that "there is already an Assurance Wireless account established at this address" and requesting further information about my application. I find it curious that Assurance caught a duplicate only once, considering that I've got seven entries in their system, and that they have on file my name, address, HRA case number, and, in some instances, photos of my insurance card and driver's license. SafeLink was slightly better about catching duplications on the street, but it still gave me a phone when it shouldn't have.

Since receiving my undeserved phones, I've repeatedly tried to reach both SafeLink and Assurance press reps for comment, all to no avail. Their corporate offices have sent me the numbers of their customer-service centers, which are easily accessible and happy to offer plan upgrades to Lifeline clients.

Representative Tim Griffin (R., Ark.) has long opposed the Lifeline wireless subsidies, making it a pet cause. He reiterated the basic point I had learned from this experience: The problems began when the federal government got in the business of providing free cell phones, and the FCC's recent reforms aren't sufficient.

"I saw all the horror stories of people getting 10, 20, 30, 40 phones," Griffin says, "the [wireless] companies not paying a lot of attention and in some cases no attention to who was getting them and whether they were getting duplicates."
And if you've been wondering why the companies are so eager to hand out free phones, the incentive is built into the program. As Griffin explains, "Of course, the way the program was set up, [wireless companies] were getting money for every one they could give out, so they gave out as many as they could."

And still do.

Jillian Kay Melchior is a Thomas L. Rhodes Fellow for the Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity.

Slumber Wise

Your Ancestors Didn't Sleep Like You

Ok, maybe your grandparents probably slept like you. And your great, great-grandparents. But once you go back before the 1800s, sleep starts to look a lot different. Your ancestors slept in a way that modern sleepers would find bizarre – they slept twice. And so can you.

The History

The existence of our sleeping twice per night was first uncovered by Roger Ekirch, professor of History at Virginia Tech.

His research found that we didn't always sleep in one eight hour chunk. We used to sleep in two shorter periods, over a longer range of night. This range was about 12 hours long, and began with a sleep of three to four hours, wakefulness of two to three hours, then sleep again until morning.

References are scattered throughout literature, court documents, personal papers, and the ephemera of the past. What is surprising is not that people slept in two sessions, but that the concept was so incredibly common. Two-piece sleeping was the standard, accepted way to sleep.

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that goes to bed following her “firste sleep.” And, explaining the reason why working class conceived more children, a doctor from the 1500s reported that they typically had sex after their first sleep.

Ekirch’s book At *Day’s Close: Night in Times Past* is replete with such examples.

But just what did people do with these extra twilight hours? Pretty much what you might expect.

Most stayed in their beds and bedrooms, sometimes reading, and often they would use the time to pray. Religious manuals included special prayers to be said in the mid-sleep hours.

Others might smoke, talk with co-sleepers, or have sex. Some were more active and would leave to visit with neighbours.

As we know, this practice eventually died out. Ekirch attributes the change to the advent of street lighting and eventually electric indoor light, as well as the popularity of coffee houses. Author Craig Koslofsky offers a further theory in his book *Evening’s Empire*. With the rise of more street lighting, night stopped being the domain of criminals and sub-classes and became a time for work or socializing. Two sleeps were eventually considered a wasteful way to spend these hours.

No matter why the change happened, shortly after the turn of the 20th century the concept of two sleeps had vanished from common knowledge.

Until about 1990.

The Science

Two sleeps per night may have been the method of antiquity, but tendencies towards it still linger in modern man. There could be an innate biological preference for two sleeps, given the right circumstances.

In the early ‘90s, psychiatrist Thomas Wehr of National Institutes of Mental Health conducted a study on photoperiodicity (exposure to light), and its effect on sleep patterns.

In his study, fifteen men spent four weeks with their daylight artificially restricted. Rather than staying up and active the usual sixteen hours per day, they would stay up only ten. The other fourteen hours they would be in a closed, dark room, where they would rest or sleep as much as possible. This mimics the days in mid-winter, with short daylight and long nights.

At first, the participants would sleep huge stretches of time, likely making up for sleep debt that’s common among modern people. Once they had caught up on their sleep though, a strange thing started to happen.

They began to have two sleeps.

Over a twelve hour period, the participants would typically sleep for about four or five hours initially, then wake for several hours, then sleep again until morning. They slept not more than eight hours total.

The middle hours of the night, between two sleeps, was characterized by unusual calmness, likened to meditation. This was not the middle-of-the-night toss-and-turn that many of us experienced. The individuals did not stress about falling back asleep, but used the time to relax.

Russell Foster, professor of circadian neuroscience at Oxford, points out that even with standard sleep patterns, this night waking isn't always cause for concern. "Many people wake up at night and panic," he says. "I tell them that what they are experiencing is a throwback to the bi-modal sleep pattern."

Outside of a scientific setting, this kind of sleep pattern is still attainable, but it does require changing our modern, electric lifestyle. Very cool person J. D. Moyer did just that. He and his family intentionally went an entire month with no electric light.

In the winter months, this meant a lot of darkness and a lot of sleep. Moyer writes "…I would go to bed really early, like 8:30, and then get up around 2:30am. This was alarming at first, but then I remembered that this sleep pattern was quite common in pre-electric light days. When this happened I would end up reading or writing by candlelight for an hour or two, then going back to bed."

Moyer didn't set out to reproduce our ancestors sleep pattern, it just happened as a byproduct of a lot of dark hours.

Should We Revive Two Sleeps?

Although history shows that two sleeping was common, and science indicates that it is (in some conditions) natural, there is no indication that it is *better*. Two sleeps may leave you feeling more rested, but this could simply be because you are intentionally giving yourself more time to rest, relax, and sleep. Giving the same respect to the single, eight-hour sleep should be just as effective.

Note too that two sleeping needs a lot of darkness – darkness that is only possible naturally during the winter months. The greater levels of daylight during summer and other seasons would make two sleeping difficult, or even impossible.

Perhaps two sleeping is merely a coping mechanism to get through the long, cold, boring nights of the winter. Today, we don't need to cope. So long as we give our sleep the time and respect it needs, getting the "standard" eight hours of sleep should be fine.

But next time you wake up at 2 AM and can't sleep, just remember your great, great, great, great, great grandfather. He did the same thing every night.

Update

Well this article proved exceedingly popular! Thank you to everyone who visited, or took the time to leave a comment. I would encourage new visitors to have a read through the comments below for some interesting ideas and perspectives. I learned two things in particular:

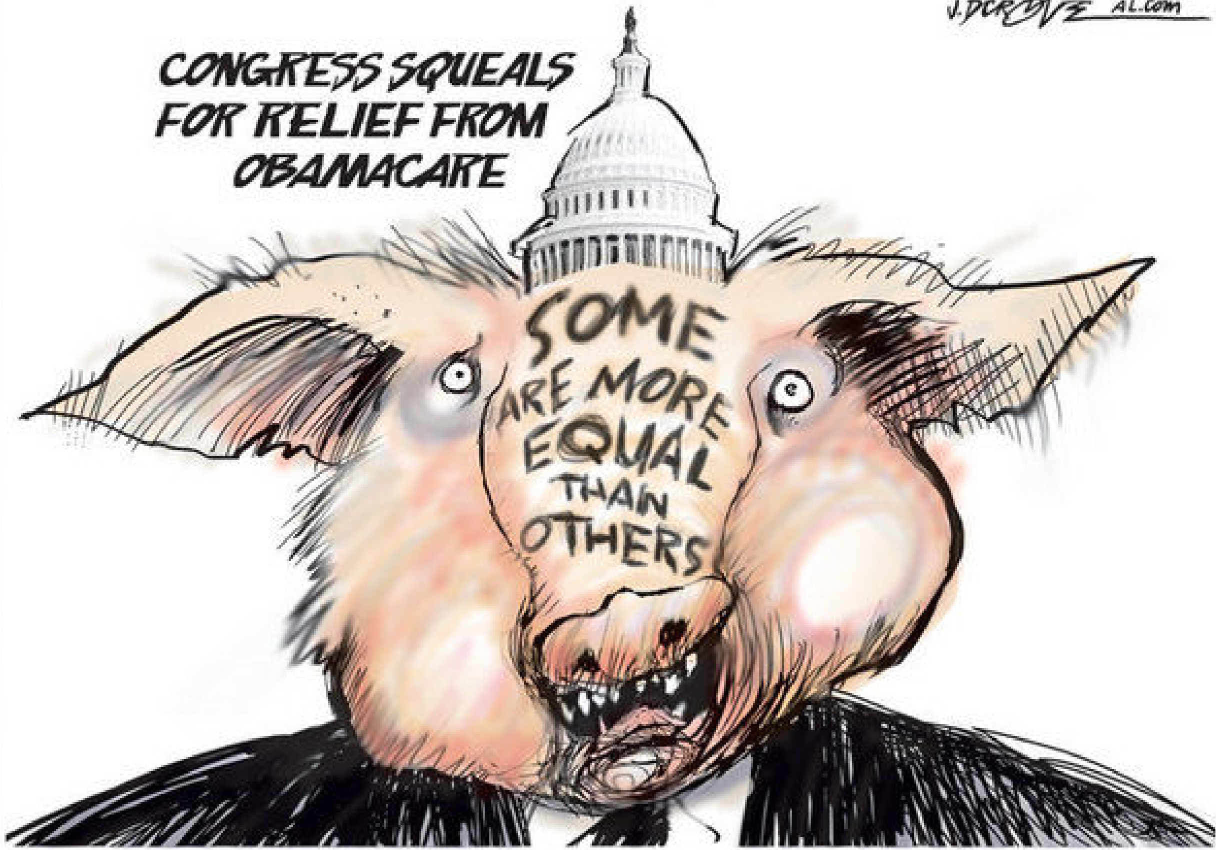
1. This is far more common that I thought. A lot of commenters either practice, or used to practice this kind of sleep.

2. Another possible reason for two sleeps is tending the fire during the night. Several clever readers noted that in order to keep a fire running through the night, we would need to get up and tend it.

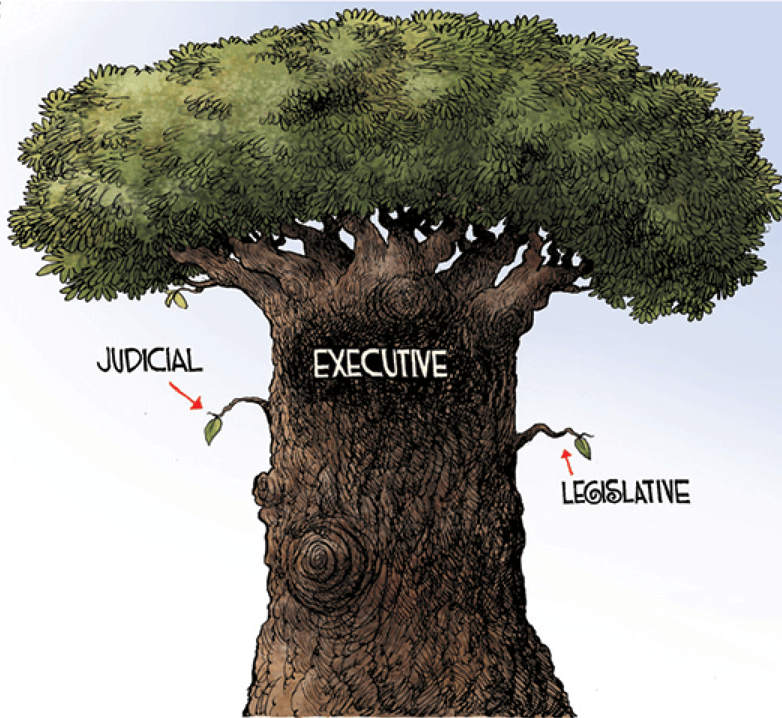
Commenters also raised questions regarding non-European and non-Western cultures, which we'll be digging into in future articles. For anyone who wants to learn more about this kind of sleep, I've linked below to two books referenced in the writing of this article, available on Amazon.

Weekly Standard

"Anthony Weiner may be lagging in the race for New York City mayor, but he is winning in another area—hot dog marketing. The delicious combination of Anthony Weiner's name and his sexually suggestive Twitter antics were apparently too good to pass up for one Florida marketing man, who has joined forces with an Illinois hot dog company to create a hot dog brand called . . . " (" 'Carlos Danger' Brand of Weiners Enters the Food Market," ABC News, August 16).



THE DAY FREE STUFF BACKFIRED



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