

Sagging Rules

**By Reg P. Wydeven
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When I was in grade school, if we ever had a particularly rough game of touch football at recess, it wasn't unusual for my Izod shirt to come untucked from my Levis. Unfortunately, it also wasn't unusual for the waistband of my Fruit-of-the-Looms to poke out of my jeans either. The girls in my class would instantly begin to chant in unison, "I see London, I see France, I see Reg's underpants."

Giving your classmates a glimpse of your tighty-whiteys was a source of embarrassment and ridicule. Oh how times have changed.

During a trip to the mall recently, I deduced the U.S. has put an embargo on belts. I saw a high school couple strolling hand in hand. The waistline of the boyfriend's jeans was dangling about four inches below the waistband of his boxer shorts. His jeans were riding so low, I had to assume that the only way they were staying up was because they were stapled to his boxers.

His girlfriend's jeans were just as far south of the border. It was abundantly clear she was wearing a thong, and just as clear that her high school guidance counselor never told her to 'just say no' to crack.

While I instinctively wanted to start the "I see London" chant, several parishes in Louisiana have had a much different response to these low riders.

Lafourche Parish recently passed an ordinance making it illegal for anyone to reveal underwear or to dress in a way that is "not becoming to his or her sex." Deemed a danger to the community, violators of the indecent exposure ordinance could be fined \$50 to \$100 for the first two offenses, and \$100 plus 16 hours of community service after revealing buttocks, underwear or even bra straps a third time.

Pointe Coupee Parish also voted on a dress code ordinance of its own recently, proposing \$500 fines and even jail time for violators. The Mayor of Decalmbres also enacted a similar ordinance, penalizing violators with up to six months in jail and a \$500 fine.

Government officials claim that saggy pants aren't just a moral, but a public safety one as well. Two near-injuries have occurred in Louisiana due to baggy britches. One involved loose pants getting caught in the spokes of a cyclist's bike, while the other happened after a pedestrian had to stop in the middle of the street to pull up his pants that had fallen down.

While these laws are designed to hold up pants, they may not hold up in court. Many legal experts believe these dress code ordinances are unconstitutional because they violate people's rights to self-expression and because enforcement is very subjective.

Meanwhile, California introduced a dress code of its own. Last week, the state's Supreme Court barred athletic shoe maker Adidas from selling shoes made from kangaroo leather. The suit was originally filed in 2003 by Viva! USA, an animal rights group, with the support of the Humane Society of the United States.

Adidas claimed California's law prohibiting products made from kangaroos to be sold or imported into the state conflicts with the U.S. Endangered Species Act, which supports Australia's efforts to control its booming kangaroo population.

Back in grade school, we used to wear KangaRoos shoes. I assumed they were called 'Roos because they had pouches on them, but now I'm not so sure.

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