

Cato Policy Report

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“To Be Governed...”

WE SHOULD JUST HAVE A FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

A new federal law requiring that sesame be listed as an allergen on food labels is having unintended consequences—increasing the number of products with the ingredient.

Food industry experts said the requirements are so stringent that many manufacturers, especially bakers, find it simpler and less expensive to add sesame to a product—and to label it—than to try to keep it away from other foods or equipment with sesame.

—*Los Angeles Times*, December 21, 2022

WAS IT GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY?

Now, as [Rep. Steny] Hoyer prepares to step down as House majority leader, his colleagues and allies at the local level say he's leaving a legacy of using that clout to bring greater resources to his district and the state—or to bring major federal buildings, as he continues to aggressively pursue bringing the FBI headquarters to Maryland. He's advocated beefing up funding for federal institutions and military installations. He's evangelized other members about the value of bringing back earmarks—community project funding as they're now known—and secured millions of dollars in projects in his district over the years.

—*Washington Post*, December 29, 2022

16 ACCIDENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHTS IN FOUR COUNTIES

As of Tuesday, 16 high schools in northern Virginia delayed notification to students of their national merit recognition. 7News reported Monday that there were 13 but the number has since jumped after Loudoun County added one additional school Tues-

day and Prince William County added two schools.

On Monday, two Prince William County high schools didn't notify students of their national merit recognition in time for important college scholarship and admissions deadlines, the school district told 7News.

The school system blames “accidental administrative oversight” for not telling students last September.

—*ABC7/WJLA*, January 16, 2023

FEEDING THE HAND THAT BITES YOU

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) one [of] the chief architects of last year's Senate push to rein in tech giants, is headed to Silicon Valley to raise money for her reelection tonight. . . .

Tickets start at \$1,000 for guests to get face time with Klobuchar, who chairs the Senate's antitrust subcommittee and has vowed to forge ahead with efforts to crack down on the dominance of tech companies like Apple, Meta, Amazon and Google.

—*Politico*, January 17, 2023

Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.) has built his national profile, and possibly a future presidential run, on challenging major companies on controversial social issues. But some of those same companies and their lobbyists bankrolled his inaugural festivities this month.

Two major fundraisers are lobbyists for Disney, the entertainment giant that DeSantis moved to punish for speaking out against his bill restricting classroom discussions of sexuality. Another inauguration co-chair lobbies for BlackRock, the investment powerhouse that DeSantis's administration divested of state funds in

retaliation for the firm's social impact standards. Additional listed sponsors included CVS Health and Walgreens, chain pharmacies that DeSantis criticized at a recent news conference on drug prices.

—*Washington Post*, January 18, 2023

NOW WE CAN SAY “THIS REGULATION IS THE WORST THING SINCE THEY BANNED SLICED BREAD”

Eighty years ago today, on January 18, 1943, the United States banned pre-sliced bread. The automatic bread slicer had been invented 15 years earlier, and pre-sliced bread was wildly popular. However, in an effort to keep the price of bread down, to use steel for the war effort instead of for slicing blades, and to use less wax paper, the Secretary of Agriculture instituted the ban. Consumers and bakers were outraged, and the ban was rescinded after 49 days, on March 8.

—*Scott Rasmussen on Ballotpedia*, January 18, 2023

BIPARTISANSHIP? HMMM

Beginning in late 2020, a bipartisan group of nine senators produced a framework for what became a \$900 billion pandemic relief package. By summer 2021, an evenly divided group of 20 senators paved the way for what turned into a more than \$1 trillion infrastructure package.

The final pieces of legislation designed to kick-start the domestic semiconductor industry came together through bipartisan talks among key rank-and-file senators. That came just after a group of two Republicans and two Democrats forged the first modest form of gun control legislation since 1994.

—*Washington Post*, January 21, 2023