



Traffic Calming: A Nightmare for Americans

Traffic calming is not just physically hazardous. It harms our way of life as well.

([PRWEB](#)) October 14, 2004 -- Most people have experienced nightmares at some point in their lives. One that's quite common is to dream you are trying to get somewhere, but can't.

One version of the nightmare goes like this:

You are driving home from a very long day at work. The freeway is normally congested at this hour because few improvements have been made to increase traffic flow in decades even though the population of your town has grown significantly. Unfortunately for you today, the traffic is virtually gridlocked because there has been an accident and the clogged system cannot cope with the additional burden of a closed lane and police activity.

Never mind. In your dream, you decide to try another route. It's a little out of your way, but it heads in the general direction of home, so you feel it's worth a try.

However, this too is a mistake. As soon as you exit to the surface street you begin to encounter unfamiliar markings on the roadbed, such as a super-wide bicycle lane or left-turn lanes that are wider than the regular lane. It feels like you are being squeezed into a narrower and narrower space as you drive along, because extra wide medians with curbs now replace the double yellow lines.

When you get to one intersection, you notice that the sidewalk at the corner bumps out into the driving lane of the road, making a right hand turn difficult. Farther down the road, a circular planter fills the center of a four-way intersection. Again you must slow down almost to a stop in order to navigate around the hazard and then continue on.

Speed bump hazards are placed indiscriminately in the roadbed. These bumps are so high your speed must be reduced to a level drastically below the speed limit so that the car can pass over it without damage or without harming your passengers.

The way home has become shockingly stressful. You decide to stop at a deli for food, since you're now delayed past your normal dinnertime. When you get there, something looks odd. You used to be able to park parallel to the curb, but now there seem to be some planters with high cement curbs in the place where your parking spot used to be. They sure look nice with flowering trees and some low growing greenery, and they appear to be spaced just far enough apart for a car to fit between them. But you soon learn there isn't quite enough space to park your modestly-sized car.

Powerless to achieve your goal, you give up on the deli. The goal is now to navigate through the one-way and dead-end streets, and you fear you will never get home. This "nightmare" is reality for people all over America.

What you discovered in your attempt to return home were roadbed hazards, euphemistically called "traffic calming devices" by government roadwork agencies. The devices, the lane reductions, the planted medians, the corner bump-outs, the cement roundabouts, speed bumps and the chicanes occupying former parking spaces are all different types of hazardous obstacles -- whose sole purpose is to delay you or discourage you from using your automobile. They are designed to severely restrict traffic flow and add considerable delay to travel



times.

These hazards are finding their way onto the streets of our towns and cities with the blessing of most of our elected officials.

What motivates our local representatives to deliberately install permanent roadway hazards in public roads? What authority do our representatives have that grants them the power to make our roads dangerous to cars traveling at the legally posted speed limit?

The purpose of our Constitution is to guarantee the right of the citizen to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If the duty of our elected politicians is to defend our Constitution and our rights, then they must also defend our right to travel in pursuit of legitimate business or pleasure. When officials from our cities and towns employ roadbed hazards to make legitimate travel a time-consuming and perilous endeavor, they are -- in essence -- responsible for the corruption of our American system of government.

By constructing hazards that restrict speeds to below the posted speed limits local politicians have stepped over the line. They have ceased to defend the fundamental right of citizens to travel freely around this nation and, instead, are intentionally imposing oppressive control on our freedom of mobility. But by what authority?

If politicians determine that roadbed hazards should be constructed to slow the speed of drivers below the posted speed limit, aren't they implying by their actions that all drivers are speeders, since all drivers will be slowed by these hazards? If our elected politicians think that all drivers break the law, and that all drivers must be punished, then it follows that they do not support the Natural Law perspective on which our system of government is based -- namely, that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

To support the idea that all drivers must be restricted because all drivers are speeders, our politicians must rely on a different legal perspective -- one that does not spring from our unalienable rights. This perspective implies that all rights spring from the government, and that the government can restrict our freedom of mobility, in order to prevent any lawbreaking that might occur.

The origins of this perspective, sometimes called the Precautionary Principle, can be found in the democratic socialist system that prevailed in Germany in the 1930s. In this case, the government is taking an interventionist measure to justify its perception that drivers must be slowed and discouraged from using public roads. They are attempting to prevent the potential risk that a driver might drive too fast, or that too many drivers might drive down a particular street.

The idea that local governing officials presume they must act to prevent the potential risk that you will violate the law, rather than allowing you to be responsible for driving safely and allowing you unrestricted passage over public roadways, is wholly contrary to our Constitution and the American system. More troubling still is the fact that these officials would identify with a perspective founded in the tenets of German Socialism in the mid-Twentieth century.

Alarmingly, more and more council members and supervisors adopt traffic calming and other freedom limiting measures in the name of the Precautionary Principle.

In light of this, responsible citizens are forced to ask the following question: If a politician does not support the most basic tenet of American government (namely, Natural Law), but instead chooses to impose restrictions on



our freedom based on purely socialist doctrines, should that person be allowed to hold office and exercise authority in the American political system?

The nightmare we cannot awake from is not merely the construction of roadbed hazards that block the way to our homes and businesses. The nightmare we are experiencing is the corruption of the American system of government. The socialist doctrines that are the basis for implementing traffic calming and other transportation ordinances simply have no place in a free society.

That this situation can even occur is also part of the nightmare. Free citizens, knowingly or not, are electing officials who should be aware of their duty to protect individual rights, but who, for whatever purpose, abuse their power as elected officials by violating the right of citizens to pass freely through our towns and cities.

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