Are Too Many Lawyers Destroying America?

The Lawyer's Office by Marinus van Reymerswaele, 1526

by Roger L. Simon

According to the World Population Review, the United States leads the world in the number of lawyers, with 1.26 million. Other studies put the number at more than 1.35 million.

The USA certainly doesn't lead the world in population, coming in a distant third to India and China, both of which are close to 1.5 billion persons. We are at a relatively paltry 333

million, slightly ahead of Indonesia and Pakistan.

But lawyers, we've got! (For ironic comparison, almost three times the number of [plumbers](#).)

Is this a good or a bad thing?

You would think for a country that trumpets, even defines itself by, the "rule of law," it would be a good thing.

Not so fast.

Lately, considering what we have seen from the government and its nonstop political weaponization of what we once thought of as the law, it's clear we now have too much of a formerly good thing: lawyers.

It's like a beehive that's reached critical mass, becoming so over-extended that the confused bees are stinging everything in sight.

They all have to have something to do, don't they? Unfortunately, as we are now seeing, much of it is malign.

We all have a right to be disturbed by what's become of the legal profession, as we were reminded by the statements from a congressman emerging from Devon Archer's congressional testimony on July 31.

We were told with a straight face that Mr. Archer's testimony that then-Vice President Joe Biden was on 20+ phone calls with his son Hunter and foreign businessmen "for the brand" was actually because Joe is a "family guy" who just had to talk to his boy as much as possible.

And then we have Donald Trump's Aug. 1 indictment from the special counsel that reads like a brief advocating for an end to the freedom of speech.

When did this all start?

How did this happen?

How did it come to pass that our legal profession became so populous, too much of it on the seamy side, to that extent that "First kill the lawyers," became one of Shakespeare's most quoted phrases, even though it was a line from a character and in no way meant to express the Bard's views?

Concurrently, why have we become a society dominated by what's called "lawfare?" It's non-stop.

(Apologies here to the fine lawyers I have known and worked with. They obviously exist.)

Although it began ages ago, I suspect much of the current surge was initiated when I attended college. That was the Vietnam War era and not many of us, protestors or not, wanted to serve. (I include myself in that regrettable decision.) Graduate school, because it provided a military exemption, became more popular than ever.

For those who had a passion—medicine, academic scholarship, scientific research, the arts, whatever—this made for a relatively simple choice.

The law, it was my observation, often became the default position for those that didn't. Of course, a significant number had a passion for law and government as well, but others, many actually, went into it because it "kept their options open." They could go into business, practice law, or even do something entirely different.

It was a form of "kicking the can down the road" with, importantly, the potential for serious financial remuneration at the end of it.

Now, we are overstuffed with lawyers with that lawfare everywhere, disrupting our republic, not to mention, although less apocalyptic, endless television advertising from law

firms encouraging us to sue somebody, justifiably or not, in an amazingly litigious society.

I don't find it surprising that a significant part of the voting public now seems to be steering away from leadership by lawyers.

On the Republican side, we obviously have the presidency of businessman Donald J. Trump and now the rapid rise of entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy.

In the Senate, no one has distinguished himself more during the so-called pandemic than Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), a medical doctor, in his many confrontations with Dr. Anthony Fauci.

This isn't a new story. Some of our greatest presidents, from George Washington to Harry Truman, weren't lawyers.

In fact, unlike medicine, the law isn't that difficult for the intelligent layman to understand. You don't have to have taken organic chemistry. It's not surprising that only four states (California, Virginia, Vermont, and Washington) allow you to take the bar exam without having attended law school. For the others, it's basically a closed shop.

Can you imagine how many lawyers there would be if anyone could take a four-week bar review course and become an attorney?

Some have made the choice not to do it.

[Wikipedia](#) has this to say about the man who is generally acknowledged as the mind behind our constitutional republic.:

"[James] Madison saw himself as a law student but not a lawyer; he did not apprentice himself to a lawyer and never joined the bar. Following the Revolutionary War, Madison spent time in Montpelier in Virginia studying ancient democracies of the world in preparation for the Constitutional Convention."

Time well spent, I'd say.

But none of my argument that we are infested with lawyers to our detriment is to say that if I were in trouble—if the FBI were at my door, for example—I wouldn't be "lawyered up" in an instant.

The old saw still very much applies: "A man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client." Especially now.

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