

Parking Tickets and the “Consent of the Governed”

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There’s been a theory floating around America for the past couple hundred years suggesting that government people gain their power and legitimacy via the “consent of the governed”. As I understand it, in the world of [Legal Land](#), it is commonly held that silence is tantamount to consent. In that, if the government people demand something of you and you either comply or say nothing that you are consenting to their rule over you.



Some of us liberty activists say that that is absurd. We say that the reason people comply is not because they consent but because they are frightened of violent government people hurting them, their family, or taking away their property.

Perhaps it’s not an either-or situation. While it is true that most people comply with government people’s demands due to fear of violence, it is also true that if enough people withdrew their consent and therefore their compliance, government people would no longer have their precious legitimacy.

The question becomes, how will the government people respond when people start withdrawing their consent? Will they behave as the theory suggests and respect each sovereign individual’s choice to live their life how he wants? (As long as he is not harming others, of course.) Or, will they reveal themselves as violent, antisocial thugs?

With that in mind, I have decided to test the consent theory. I will start simple, with the issue of parking tickets but eventually would like to move on to other, more pressing issues such as gambling and drug prohibition and even property taxes. I doubt I will be very effective alone, so I invite you to join the fun. Perhaps we can get our freedom back!

Earlier this week I received a \$5 parking ticket for not feeding the meter as I went to check my mailbox in downtown Keene, NH. Thanks to the help of Rich Angell at [Sovereign Solutions](#), I crafted a letter to the Keene Police Department Parking Bureau:

NOTICE OF DISCUSSION

February 28, 2008

*KEENE POLICE DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF PARKING
400 Marlboro Street
Keene, NH 03431-4336*

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in acknowledgement of the receipt of a “CITY OF KEENE PARKING TICKET” # 60220797, regarding a Subaru, Florida Tag XXXXXX, issued on the 26th of February 2008 at 11:37, demanding the amount of \$5.

It is not my intention now, nor has it ever been my intention to defraud anyone. If in fact, I owe such an amount to your agency, I will pay it.

To prove that I am, in fact, bound to such an obligation, please provide the following:

- *Evidence of the valid, original contract with my signature binding me to said obligation.*

Unless I receive evidence as noted above within ten business days of the receipt of this response (03/13/08), I shall assume that there is no contractual authority for your agency to demand such a "fine" and that I am not obligated to pay any "fine", with no legal repercussions for any perceived "failure" to do so.

For your convenience and as a show of good faith I am including a prepaid return envelope so as to make your response as simple as possible.

Please note that any correspondence is subject to being posted on the blog at FreeKeene.com

*Sincerely,
Ian Bernard
(my address)*

So, if I have actually consented, then they certainly will have no trouble finding evidence of that. Of course, I have not consented. In fact, at the time I registered to vote here in New Hampshire, there was a paragraph that said:

In declaring New Hampshire as my domicile, I am subject to the laws of the State of New Hampshire which apply to all residents, including laws requiring me to register my motor vehicles and apply for a New Hampshire's driver's license within 60 days of becoming a resident.

Prior to signing my voter's registration I made certain to cross this paragraph out and initial it. How could I possibly agree to it? I don't know what all of the laws are in New Hampshire, nor do I care or have enough time to bother reading them. The Attorney General's office even sent someone to investigate me for crossing it out. I told him the same thing. I am not dangerous and will not do harm to others, but I do not consent to be governed by anyone but myself.

How will the parking bureaucrats respond to my letter? Only time will tell. Stay tuned to FreeKeene.com for the latest!