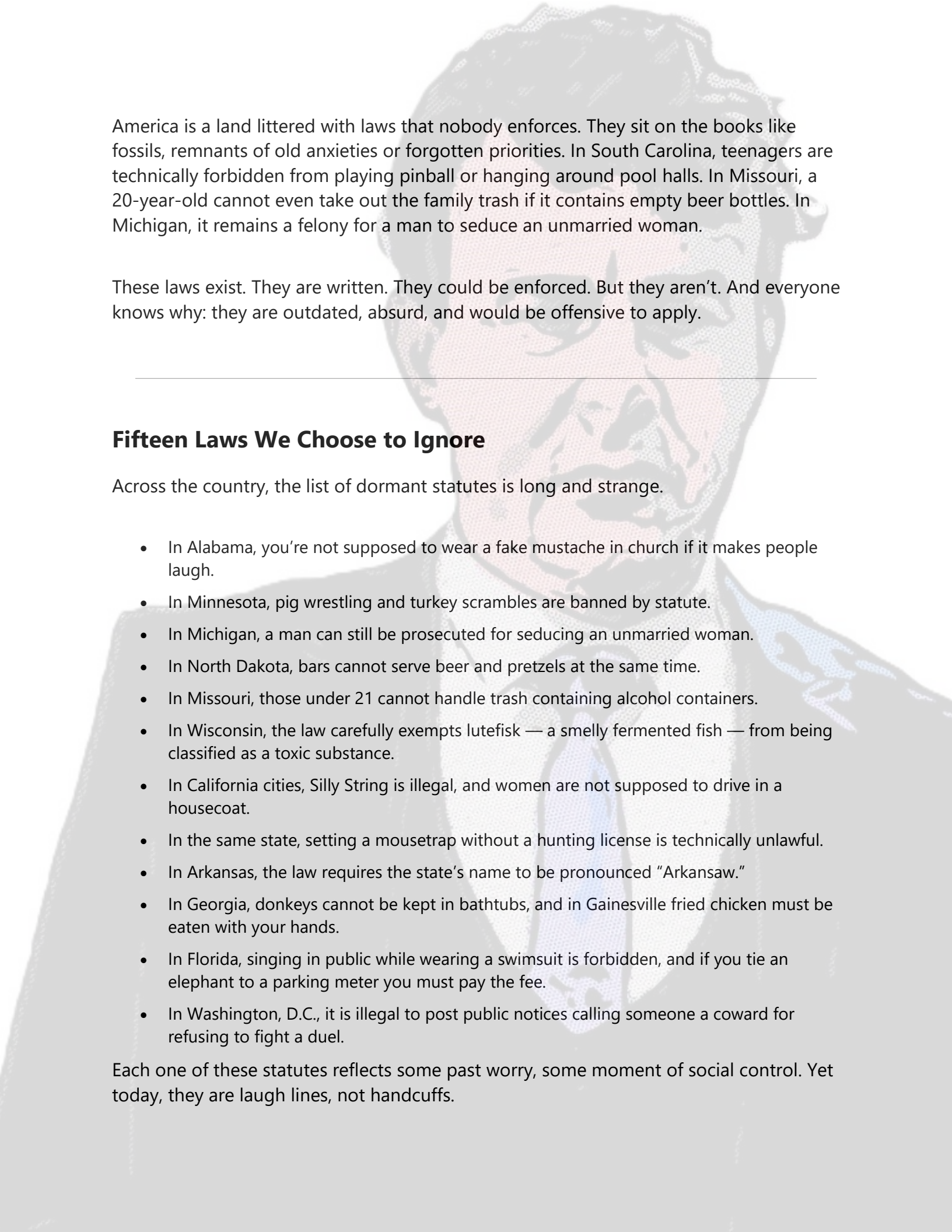


An exploration of how outdated laws go unenforced while immigration codes are applied with rigid severity — exposing the hypocrisy of selective enforcement against the vulnerable.



Laws We Ignore, Lives We Divide: The Offense of Selective Enforcement



America is a land littered with laws that nobody enforces. They sit on the books like fossils, remnants of old anxieties or forgotten priorities. In South Carolina, teenagers are technically forbidden from playing pinball or hanging around pool halls. In Missouri, a 20-year-old cannot even take out the family trash if it contains empty beer bottles. In Michigan, it remains a felony for a man to seduce an unmarried woman.

These laws exist. They are written. They could be enforced. But they aren't. And everyone knows why: they are outdated, absurd, and would be offensive to apply.

Fifteen Laws We Choose to Ignore

Across the country, the list of dormant statutes is long and strange.

- In Alabama, you're not supposed to wear a fake mustache in church if it makes people laugh.
- In Minnesota, pig wrestling and turkey scrambles are banned by statute.
- In Michigan, a man can still be prosecuted for seducing an unmarried woman.
- In North Dakota, bars cannot serve beer and pretzels at the same time.
- In Missouri, those under 21 cannot handle trash containing alcohol containers.
- In Wisconsin, the law carefully exempts lutefisk — a smelly fermented fish — from being classified as a toxic substance.
- In California cities, Silly String is illegal, and women are not supposed to drive in a housecoat.
- In the same state, setting a mousetrap without a hunting license is technically unlawful.
- In Arkansas, the law requires the state's name to be pronounced "Arkansaw."
- In Georgia, donkeys cannot be kept in bathtubs, and in Gainesville fried chicken must be eaten with your hands.
- In Florida, singing in public while wearing a swimsuit is forbidden, and if you tie an elephant to a parking meter you must pay the fee.
- In Washington, D.C., it is illegal to post public notices calling someone a coward for refusing to fight a duel.

Each one of these statutes reflects some past worry, some moment of social control. Yet today, they are laugh lines, not handcuffs.

The Hypocrisy of Selective Enforcement

Here is the offense: when it comes to laws like these, America shrugs. We don't raid restaurants for serving beer with pretzels. We don't fine women for driving in housecoats. We don't haul children out of arcades for touching pinball machines. Society recognizes the arbitrariness of these laws and quietly ignores them.

But when it comes to immigration, suddenly the state grows rigid. Officials who wink at pinball bans declare with iron faces, *"the law is the law."* Spouses are left stranded abroad. Families are split for years. Paperwork becomes a cage, and human lives are treated like contraband.

The problem is not just bureaucracy; it is hypocrisy. We excuse the trivial when it would embarrass us, but we enforce with cruelty when it hurts the vulnerable. Rule of law becomes rule of convenience.

The Promise and the Betrayal

The hypocrisy bites especially hard because America once cast itself as a refuge. At the base of the Statue of Liberty, Emma Lazarus gave voice to a covenant with the world:

"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

That inscription was not about selective enforcement. It was about welcome. It was about mercy. And yet the very nation that promised rest to the weary now hides behind statutes to delay, divide, and deny.