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Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
By Jim Brown

### THE LEGISLATURE AND CAESAR SALAD

Had your fill of mud slinging over the airwaves leading up to last Saturday's election? Well don't expect any changes in the near future. There are two major statewide elections on the horizon and both to take place in the next 60 days. And before you know it, the Louisiana Legislature will be back on session. We all yearn for the riveting coverage of meaningful issues touching the quality of life in the Bayou State. No, not solving the crises the state faces in healthcare, education and affordable insurance. I mean the real media issues where the debate goes on for days. Whether to continue the legalization cockfighting? How about taking one more shot at a new State poem?

But if you think Louisiana has an oddball legislature that leans toward quirky solutions to non-existent problems, check out California that has moved a notch ahead of us here in the Deep South.

/There is great news to report. California has decriminalized the sale of Caesar salad. That's right! It's no longer a crime to put together a Caesar salad in California. What an important gastronomic epitome of a truly civilized state.

To assist in this whole "war on crime," the California State Legislature last year, in its collective wisdom, created a new law that banned the sale of any food product using raw eggs as an ingredient. And what do you find in the smooth, creamy taste with a bit of a bite in the dressing that goes on the Caesar salad? Well of course, uncooked eggs. But using uncooked eggs for a Caesar became a crime in California. That's right! Criminal penalties attached to this new important protection of the public health. Well you can imagine the public response. The rallying cry became, "When you outlaw Caesar salad, only outlaws will eat Caesar salad." And dire predictions were rampant. Would there be a flourishing black market in contraband romaine lettuce, raw eggs, and Parmesan cheese?

But California is similar to Louisiana in one respect. Things don't often change very rapidly, and naysayers thought it may take some time to bring legislators back to reality. We've had plenty of firsthand experience with the same foot dragging here in Louisiana. So ignoring the roadblocks, a cadre of Caesar supporters took a more gradual approach, and offered several possible solutions:

- ❖ Begin a slow return by implementing a five-day waiting period for Caesar salad, so the government could do a medical background check for raw-egg allergies.
- ❖ Legalize only “medical Caesar salad” whereby people with a vitamin deficiency could get a doctor’s permission to buy a small amount of Caesar salad for their own personal use.
- ❖ Launch an anti-Caesar salad TV advertising blitz, perhaps with a commercial showing a frying pan, and then showing the pan with a raw egg in it. The voice-over could be: “This is your brain. This is your brain on Caesar salad.”

Allowing only adults, 21 and over the right to buy Caesar salad, on the grounds that it may be an adolescent’s gateway-salad to stronger stuff, like macaroni salad or three-bean salad.

But actually, it was the Libertarian Party who lead the fight in strongly opposing the “just say no to Caesar salad” law. And you know, Libertarian candidates are springing up all over Louisiana. Rumor has it that Senator Walter Boasso, in a possible run for governor next year, may qualify as a Libertarian. I can just hear his platform now that could include a plank that says, “I support the Constitutional right of every Louisianan to keep and bear Caesar salad ... or rather to eat and buy a Caesar salad. I’m not going to stand by in my race for governor and allow these political eggheads to flourish and think they have the right to micromanage every aspect of our lives.”

Hey, this may be a pretty good approach. It can’t be any worse than some of the platforms we’ve seen candidates for governor have used in recent years. The good news is that the California Legislature did come to its senses, and you’ll be happy to know that Caesar salad is now legal in California. Let’s hope the previous trend doesn’t find its way to Louisiana.

If it does, you will find me in the forefront of leading the fight against the injustices of banning the salad that I eat five or six times a week. And what will my slogan be? Simple. “Back off Legislature. Just lettuce alone.”

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*“We’re in the hands of the state legislature and God, but at the moment, the state legislature has more to say than God.”*

**- Edward Irving Koch, Former Mayor of NYC**

Peace and justice.

Jim Brown

You can listen to Jim Brown all this week as host on 1380 AM in Baton Rouge and on the web at [www.AM1380.com](http://www.AM1380.com) from 9:00 am until 11:00 am each weekday.

Jim Brown's weekly column appears each Thursday here at Politicsla.com, and in a number of newspapers throughout the State of Louisiana. You can read Jim's Blog, and take his weekly poll, plus read his columns going back to the fall of 2002 by going to his own website at <http://www.jimbrownla.com>.