

EVERY MINORITY'S RIGHTS require advocacy so as not to be swallowed up by the tyranny of the majority; therefore, let it be known it is now my time, my moment of protest, for I have discovered I am a member of a new and oft-maligned minority group, Slim People. There was a time, not so long ago, when overweight folks were the minority. Fat advocacy groups fought the good fight for everything from wider airline seating to undoing weight limitations for government jobs, but now, with over two-thirds of Americans being categorized as either overweight or obese, the minority shoe is on the other foot, and it's a slenderer one.

With a BMI of 21.5, I am the ideal spokesperson for the cause, right in the dead center of what current medicine considers normal weight for my height. Yet, I have been labeled everything from "skinny" to "gaunt," and even "anorexic" by a corpulent stranger wearing a dimpled look of concern, who announced his prognosis to a room full of people. The heavy-set shake their heads when I forgo thirds, pass up dessert, or skip the yellow butter-flavored trans-fat on my theater popcorn. They share their worry that I may be over-exercising or that I may have something medically wrong with my glands.

The truth is, I *don't* look like most people anymore. Once I did, back when I was a 20-something and fresh out of college, but as the years and pounds accrued on three-quarters of others around me, I followed what medical science has recommended to us all: I monitored my diet and exercised regularly. As a result I still weigh now what I weighed then. But, am I lauded for this? Hardly. The usual response to my successful self-maintenance has ranged from pity to scorn, and I've had enough.

It's time to fight back, to stand up for my rights and the rights of slim people everywhere, so here are a few of my initial demands:

1) **Airlines:** Require reserved and designated airline slim-seating sections. No more sitting next to someone who is spilling over the armrest. All passengers with a BMI over 25 will be excluded from sitting next to a slim person. Passengers will also be weighed *with* their baggage to determine an overall total weight restriction—we slender folks have been subsidizing the heavier majority, and as they've grown larger our bags have had to shrink to accommodate them—no more! By weighing passengers with their bags, travel will once again be made equitable.

2) **Retail:** All clothing manufacturers and vendors must be required to continue making and stocking clothing for slim shoppers. Have you tried to find trousers in any of the major department stores with a waist size less than 34" lately? Good luck. One store clerk sent me to the Boys Department, where the waist sizes were right, so long as I didn't mind dressing like a member of a boy-band. If a store doesn't stock clothes that fit, they should be required to cover the cost of re-tailoring as punishment for non-compliance to my new Waistline-Fairness Law.

3) **Restaurants:** Install uneaten food rebate scales. Restaurants should have to weigh whatever remains on a customer's plate and

refund their patrons accordingly. This will incentivize offering normal portions for meals to begin with and also prevent us slimmer folks from subsidizing the majority's gluttony. *Cheesecake Factory*, consider yourselves warned.

4) **Education:** Provide thinness-esteem classes for the young and svelte. Slim school children need self-esteem counseling, and playground name calling, such as "twiggy," "boney-boy," "Skeleton," and "string bean," should be treated and punished as hate crimes.

5) **Economics:** Allow Cap & Trade for BMI. Everyone knows the more weight a person carries the more fuel it takes to transport them, to clothe them, and to feed them. The heavier the person, the more stress on the environment and the more greenhouse gasses produced. Slim people should be allowed to sell BMI-offsets to heavier people for cash.

This is only a start. There is much more work to be done in order to assure fair treatment for our new Slim Minority. If we set to work now protecting the rights and practices of the slim, who knows, we may even regain our majority status someday.



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