



Trick or Tax

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Nothing sets the scene for me in October quite like Halloween. I love nothing more than dressing up, throwing a few decorations around, and getting spooky.

Which is why I was so happy to see the local government of Chesapeake, Virginia, get into the spirit by showing kids the spookiest monster of all: government red tape.

The government there decided anyone over the age of 12 caught trick-or-treating this year would face a \$25 fine or up to six months in jail.

Let's leave aside the obvious question of how good conditions in Chesapeake jails are for a six-month stint to be equal in their eyes to a \$25 fine. There is a larger point to be made here.

Trick-or-treating is the act of strangers showing up at someone's house demanding a tithe or there will be punishment. The tithe goes towards nothing the person actually wants, but they have to give it up anyway as that is tradition. So I ask: why does the Chesapeake government want to



stop young kids experiencing all the wonders that can happen for you if you work for the state?

The next generation of bureaucrats spent Halloween going house-to-house, ransacking property of hard-working people. They learned about the progressive tax system as their eyes turned to dollar symbols when they went to the nice house on the street.

They even learned about tax avoidance when houses rumoured to have Starbursts only ended up offering them one—just one—out of an assorted party mix.

Any government taking itself seriously would not just encourage trick-or-treating, but declare Halloween a public holiday so more kids can take time to learn about civic duty.

So why ban it? My only guess is that Chesapeake realises something: a public that can stand up to trick-or-treaters can stand up to anyone. If people learn to stare down trick-or-treaters themselves and keep their hard-earned lollies, then soon they will break off the shackles of government and use their full earnings to pursue the greatest dream of all: even more Starbursts.

Well played, Chesapeake. Well played.