

### Small Crafts vs. Big Government

*For Discussion*

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1. Define: artisanal, organic, small-scale economy, creative class, big-box, third-party, entrepreneur, mainstream, politicized
2. Why did the author think this story is important? What does she think about the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act?
3. What is cynicism? How does the author think that the story relates to political cynicism? Is she right?
4. How did the CPSIA affect artisanal producers? How can larger companies often counter effects like these?
5. If the artisanal industry itself did not take these effects into consideration, is it likely that Congress did? What prevents Congress from anticipating all the consequences of its legislation? When is it worthwhile for Congress to pass laws anyway?
6. How could we estimate the benefits of this regulation? How would we evaluate whether these benefits are more important than the costs inflicted on the artisanal toy producers?
7. If you were a large company like Mattel, would you have acted to try to counter the CPSIA?
8. Why does the regulation cost more per toy for a smaller company than a bigger company?
9. Why does the author call eating farmer's market produce "a quasi-religious ritual of group identity"? Is she right?
10. Do you know people who enjoy shopping at farmer's markets? How would they respond to legislation that threatened such markets? Are people more passionate about the sources of food than of toys?
11. "When Ron Paul's the only guy who votes against something it's really hard to go back and fix it." Who is Ron Paul? Why would he be the only person or one of the few people to vote against something? Do you think it would be more difficult to influence a law while it's being passed than to go back and change it?