



JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK

MONDAY - 05/26/08

Whether at the local or national level, one of the most popular electoral and policy promises is the promise to cut the red tape.

HOW DID THE TERM “*RED TAPE*” ORIGINATE?

***American Heritage*: “The collection or sequence of forms and procedures required to gain bureaucratic approval for something, especially when oppressively complex and time-consuming.”**

***Online Etymology*: “Excessive bureaucratic rigmarole,” 1736, in allusion to the red tape formerly used in Great Britain (and the American colonies) for binding up legal and other official documents.**

- **16th century - Henry VIII besieged Pope Clement VII with eighty or so petitions for the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon; each petition was bound with the obligatory red tape.**
- **1696-1715 *Maryland Laws*: “The Map upon the Backside thereof sealed with his Excellency's Seal at Arms... with Red Tape.”**
- **Civil War - All veterans' records were bound in red tape, and the difficulty in accessing them also led to the use of the term.**

Conventional Wisdom: Red Tape = Frustrating Obligatory Bureaucracy

Moment of Zen: But, - - - -it's always been done that way!