

The country may be flirting with deadbeat status and risking another financial meltdown, but some people keep their eyes on the prize — they know what's *really* important. The House of Representatives yesterday voted on the BULB Act, repealing the federal mandate to increase the energy efficiency of light bulbs. (The bill was considered so urgent that it was brought to the floor under a special suspension of the rules; fortunately, this procedural move backfired when BULB received a majority vote but not the super-majority required under the special procedure.) Good thing that's the biggest problem facing the country in these days. Honestly, sometimes you wonder whether there are any grown-ups left in this country!

As if that's not enough, state legislators are trying to get into the act. [This](#) just in from Texas:

Texas hopes to get around the law with a measure recently signed by Republican Gov. Rick Perry declaring that incandescent bulbs — if made and sold only in Texas — do not involve interstate commerce and therefore are not subject to federal regulation.

What's wrong with this law? Well — putting aside that it would cost Texas consumers tons of money in higher electricity bills, result in more pollution in Texas, and burden the planet with more carbon — there's the fact that it's a legal nullity. It's got exactly the same legal standing as a declaration by me that my salary isn't really income and can't be taxed by the federal government.

It's not up to Texas to decide what is or is not interstate commerce. That's a question of federal law, to be decided by the federal courts. And it's been plain for a century, since the [Shreveport Rate Cases](#), that Congress can regulate purely intrastate transactions as an adjunct to regulation of interstate transactions. The Supreme Court recently reaffirmed that principle, even when the local transactions are non-commercial, in a [California case](#) involving medical marijuana.

Texas has some excellent law schools, but apparently everyone in the Texas legislature slept through Con. Law class.