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Nanny-Statist CSPI Sues to Ban Happy Meals at McDonald's

Posted By [Hans Bader](#) On December 17, 2010 @ 8:25 am In [Health and Illness](#), [Legal](#), [Nanny State](#), [Personal Liberty](#), [Regulation](#), [Sanctimony](#) | [4 Comments](#)

An [ill-informed](#)^[1] left-wing group, the [Center for Science in the Public Interest](#)^[2], is [suing](#)^[3] McDonald's in California to ban toys from Happy Meals. It is bringing a class-action lawsuit on behalf of "[an activist](#)^[4] employed by the California government to advocate the ingestion of vegetables, though some pains seem to have been taken to obscure this connection," abetted by the gullible liberal media, which continue to depict her as just a "[random](#)^[3]" California mom.

San Francisco earlier [banned Happy Meals](#)^[5], even though the meals in San Francisco's own public schools are [less healthy](#)^[2] than at McDonald's.

Why is the plaintiff in the suit against McDonald's suing? She [claims](#)^[3] that "[b]ecause of McDonald's marketing, her daughter has frequently pestered her into purchasing Happy Meals, thereby spending money on a product she would not otherwise have purchased," and that "when she said no, her kids became disagreeable" and "pouted." If that's a basis for suing, then, as Walter Olson [notes](#)^[3], "McDonald's isn't the only company that should worry. Other kids pout because parents won't get them 800-piece [Lego](#)^[6] sets, [Madame Alexander](#)^[7] dolls and [Disney World](#)^[8] vacations. Are those companies going to be liable too?"

The Center for Science in the Public Interest is the left-wing group that has [ignorantly disparaged](#)^[1] "normal food items such as baked potatoes, hamburgers, pizza, pork chops, and bacon as unhealthy. Never mind that a baked potato has only 100 calories, gives you 30 percent of your day's supply of vitamin C (more than a banana), some protein, and many important minerals."

People claim that McDonald's makes poor people fat by selling them cheap greasy food, but its customers aren't that poor (even so-called "poor" people in America have [significant disposable income](#),^[9] which is why they often pay \$3.69 for a Big Mac, when they could easily buy a McDonald's double-cheeseburger that's almost as big and has as much meat for a mere \$1.19, even in "poor" places like the inner city). And its food isn't particularly fatty: a Big Mac or a Quarter Pounder is a lot [leaner and healthier](#)^[10] than many dishes people cook at home [like Quiche Lorraine](#)^[11]. I am not poor, and I periodically feed my 3-year old daughter cheeseburgers or double-cheeseburgers without being nagged to do so (although she certainly enjoys them).

New fast food restaurants were recently [banned in South Los Angeles](#)^[12], based on a kooky "food apartheid" claim by the Los Angeles City Council. Never mind that baked goods are a bigger source of calories for kids than fast-food items like pizza, and that some people lose weight eating at McDonald's, like [me, Soso Whaley, and a Richmond man](#)^[13] who lost 86 pounds. A court recently [blocked a class-action lawsuit](#)^[14] against McDonald's over [obesity](#)^[15].

While liberal busybodies are suing McDonald's, they are using federal funds to [subsidize the opening](#)^[16] of an International House of Pancakes in Washington, D.C., and the development of [high-calorie foods](#)^[17] to benefit agribusinesses.

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URLs in this post:

[1] ill-informed: <http://www.openmarket.org/2009/08/04/frivolous-lawsuit-against-dennys-over-salty-food/>

[2] Center for Science in the Public Interest: <http://overlawyered.com/2010/12/mcdonalds-sued-over-happy-meals/>

[3] suing: http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2010/12/15/2010-12-15_mcdonalds_suit_over_happy_meal_toys_by_california_mom_monet_parham_new_low_in_re.html

[4] an activist: <http://pajamasmedia.com/instapundit/111538/>

[5] banned Happy Meals: <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-happy-meals-20101103,0,5438230.story>

[6] Lego: <http://www.nydailynews.com/topics/LEGO+Group>

[7] Madame Alexander: <http://www.nydailynews.com/topics/Madame+Alexander>

[8] Disney World: <http://www.nydailynews.com/topics/Walt+Disney+World+Resort>

[9] significant disposable income,: <http://www.openmarket.org/2010/12/12/more-disincentives-to-work-thanks-to-the-federal-government-and-the-stimulus-package/>

[10] leaner and healthier: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/le-big-mac-is-healthier-than-quiche-lorraine-571913.html>

[11] like Quiche Lorraine: <http://www.openmarket.org/2010/10/01/obamacare-may-force-mcdonalds-to-drop-health-coverage-for-employees/>