



# Where Freedom Goes to Die: The Center for Science in the Public Interest

By Megan McArdle

I find it deeply disturbing that [such a lawsuit](#) was even contemplated in my country, even if it is likely to be thrown out on appeal:

With perfect Grinch timing, a consumer group has sued McDonald's demanding that it take the toys out of its Happy Meals.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest, an advocacy group, claims it violates California law for the hamburger chain to make its meals too appealing to kids, thus launching them on a lifelong course to overeating and other health horrors. It's representing an allegedly typical mother of two from Sacramento named Monet Parham. What's Parham's (so to speak) beef? "Because of McDonald's marketing, [her daughter] Maya has frequently pestered Parham into purchasing Happy Meals, thereby spending money on a product she would not otherwise have purchased."

You're probably wondering: How is this grounds for a lawsuit? No one forced Parham to take her daughters to McDonald's, buy them that particular menu item, and sit by as they ate every last French fry in the bag (if they did).

No, she's suing because when she said no, her kids became disagreeable and "pouted" - for which she wants class action status. If she gets it, McDonald's isn't the only company that should worry. Other kids pout because parents won't get them 800-piece Lego sets, Madame Alexander dolls and Disney World vacations. Are those companies going to be liable too?

One shudders to consider that when Patrick Henry stood up in St. John's Church and declared "Give me Liberty, or give me Death!", he was offering to exchange his life for a freedom that would then be passed down people like this . . . people who would gleefully toss that freedom away with both hands if,

by so doing, they might protect themselves from the harrowing predations of . . . a cheap plastic toy. Presumably, had he known this was coming, he would have sat his ass back down and shut up. What would these lily-livered quislings say if Henry was standing before them today, glaring reproachfully?

"While I do, of course, appreciate your courage, the constitution is not a suicide pact. It's one thing to fight for freedom when there's a price on your head and the British Army is landing in major cities along the coast. It's quite another thing to expect me to stand up to a whining four year old."

Monet Parham, by the way, seems to be an activist employed by the California government to advocate the ingestion of vegetables, though some pains seem to have been taken to obscure this connection.

Our founding fathers are no doubt spinning in their graves fast enough to provide cheap, clean, renewable power to the entire Atlantic seaboard.

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