



# Ankin Law Office LLC

Protecting the Rights of Injured Workers

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## Legal trends to watch in 2011



2010 is drawing to a close and it's been an interesting year. In a few weeks, we'll review some of the more notable highlights from 2010 in the legal world. In the meantime, here's our prediction of few [personal injury](#) trends to keep an eye on in the upcoming year.

**First**, debate will continue about banks financing personal injury lawsuits. As explained in this recent New York Times [article](#):

Large banks, hedge funds and private investors hungry for new and lucrative opportunities are bankrolling other people's lawsuits, pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into medical malpractice claims, divorce battles and class actions against corporations — all in the hope of sharing in the potential winnings.

The banks are making loans to both attorneys—to help them with costs related to litigating the claim—and to the litigants themselves.

There are rising concerns that the practice will lead to abuses, including high interest rates that ultimately reduce the final monetary judgment—in some cases resulting in much smaller recoveries for the injured plaintiff.

The banks are profiting greatly and because of the potential for abuse, many jurisdictions are enacting laws regarding this practice, such as the proposed Illinois legislation discussed in this [article](#). Although the outcome is unclear, one thing is certain—you can expect much more debate on this issue in 2011.

**Another trend** to watch for is an increasing backlash against fast food, particularly when marketing it to children.

Rising childhood obesity is a huge problem in this country and fast food has long been blamed for contributing to this epidemic. For that reason, San Francisco recently banned McDonald's Happy Meals, as explained in this Los Angeles Times [article](#):

San Francisco's board of supervisors has voted, by a veto-proof margin, to ban most of McDonald's Happy Meals as they are now served in the restaurants.

The measure will make San Francisco the first major city in the country to forbid restaurants from offering a free toy with meals that contain more than set levels of calories, sugar and fat.

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Along the same vein, Overlawyered recently [reported](#) that Flagstaff, Arizona schools will begin to weigh all students and send home warning notes to the parents of children found to be overweight.

The obesity backlash will undoubtedly continue well into 2011, as more jurisdictions address this issue by passing creative legislation intended to curb what is perceived to be a looming health care crisis.

**Finally**, another trend to watch is the continued recall of tainted food products and efforts to reduce the number of recalls.

Large scale food recalls have been increasing with greater frequency in recent years, from eggs to spinach to peanut butter. Salmonella and e. coli contamination are more common than ever, sickening more and more Americans.

However, as explained in this PBS NewsHour article, at the end of November, the United States Senate voted to approve the Food Safety Bill, an historic bill that give the FDA greater control over food production:

The bill, which passed with bipartisan support in a 73-25 vote, would give the FDA the authority to order mandatory food recalls and to conduct more frequent inspections, put new responsibilities on food producers to track their safety measures, and set new safety regulations for imported food.

So, another trend to watch for in 2011 is a decrease in food recalls and increased regulation over the industries that produce and manufacture our food supply.

Howard Ankin of Ankin Law Office LLC ([www.ankinlaw.com](http://www.ankinlaw.com)) handles [workers' compensation](#) and [personal injury cases](#). Mr. Ankin can be reached at (312) 346-8780 and [howard@ankinlaw.com](mailto:howard@ankinlaw.com).

## Related articles

[The Happy Meal Toy Ban: Like Politics, All Hamburgers Are Local](#) (blogs.forbes.com)

[Food Safety Bill: What Will it Mean for Sustainability and For Our Health?](#) (triplepundit.com)

[Should the U.S. Crack Down on Happy Meals?](#) (time.com)

[Advocates: Food safety bill doesn't have teeth](#) (cnn.com)

By [admin](#)

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