



Section of State and Local Government Law

ABA Government Law News

State and Local

A 60 - Second Update on What's Happening

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Despite Hopeful Economic Signs, States Still Struggle to Make Ends Meet

The AP says that [state park maintenance](#) backlogs are over \$7b and growing. Another casualty of state financial woes: [interstate rest stops](#) (with pictures).

Which Probably Explains Why Sovereign Bankruptcy Is Gaining Traction

As states continue to face [growing budget deficits](#), several policy makers are arguing that states should be allowed to engage in financial restructuring, including the ability to file for bankruptcy. Also, [listen to this podcast](#) about state/local budgets and municipal bonds, and the possibilities for defaults on public debt.

Everybody Is Not "Lovin" the Happy Meal Toy Ban

SF Weekly takes on [San Francisco's happy meal toy ban](#) (and various other bans) and concludes that "a left-leaning pack of cities is fundamentally changing the role — and pushing the limits — of local government." Whether that's a good thing or a bad thing is harder to say. In other fast food news, Los Angeles is making its ban on fast food restaurants in South L.A. permanent. Bernard Parks, the city councilman pushing the ban, sums it up this way: "There are people who are accused of being the food police, of trying to control what goes into people's mouths. But we just don't think that we need to give [fast food more rights around here](#). We don't think our community needs to have 10 or 15 or 18 ways to eat a hamburger."

Lessons About Planning and Governance from Burning Man:

Some commentators say that [Burning Man](#) is like city-making at the individual level. What started out as an annual party in the desert with non-mainstream artwork and the ritual burning of a giant wooden man has turned into an annual city-building event complete with politics and municipal services.

States May be Sued Over Ballot Initiatives Governing Union Representation

The [Nation Labor Relations Board](#) this month sent out letters threatening to sue Arizona, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Utah over recently approved ballot initiatives governing the method by which employees choose union representation, which the NLRB says violates the 1935 National Labor Relations Act.

No guns on campus

The Supreme Court of Virginia upheld restrictions on the carrying of firearms at public universities. The court held that the school was a "sensitive place" under *District of Columbia v. Heller* and pointed out the regulations were tailored, prohibiting possession only in campus buildings and at campus events (not on the open grounds). [Read the Opinion](#). [Roanoke Times article](#).

Bicycle Advocates Resist Policies that Might Deter Ridership

After receiving complaints from senior citizen pedestrians, a New Jersey lawmaker this month submitted a bill requiring [bicycles to have license plates](#). Bike advocates and [environmentalists opposed the bill](#), saying it would discourage bike riding. They must have been persuasive, because the bill was quickly withdrawn.

However, a New York City Council member liked the idea and introduced similar legislation. Bike and tranist advocates are putting up a lot of opposition, like the group [Transportation Alternatives](#), which says that the law would "criminalize bicycling, waste valuable city resources and erect yet another obstacle for those seeking to ride a bike."

Trends in new "Natural" Looking Cell Towers; Not Your Mother's Monopole

A [photography collection](#) devoted to cell tower trees.

Urban Farmers Argue that Regulations to Nourish Urban Gardening May Starve them Out Instead

A proposed [urban farming ordinance](#) in Chicago is getting a lot of support, but also generating concerns.

Make Sense of Census Data

This is the best [Census mapping website](#) we've seen yet. Map neighborhoods across the country with data on race and ethnicity, income, housing and families, and education.

Exciting State and Local Government Section Book News!

The ABA has announced the forthcoming publication of a new book by the State and Local Government Law Section: [At the Cutting Edge 2010: Land Use Law from The Urban Lawyer](#), edited by SLG Section Chair Dwight H. Merriam. The book is a compilation of the most recent Section of State and Local Government Law committee reports from The Urban Lawyer.

Section of State and Local Government Law will host a Hot Topics in Diversity Law CLE forum. The event is being held in conjunction with the ABA's Mid-Year Meeting and will take place on February 10, 2011 at Georgia State University College of Law. The Hot Topics forum will begin at 4:00 in the Urban Life Building, Room 100 at 140 Decatur Street in Atlanta. The panelists will focus on current legal issues confronting the communities, practitioners and law students regarding diversity in the legal profession. **This is a ticketed event the cost is \$10.00 per person.** [Register here for this CLE.](#) Immediately following the forum, the Section will host a networking reception from 5:30 to 7:40 p.m. **The event is free to law students!** Please RSVP to Section Administrator, Marsha Boone by February 4th, 2011 by emailing Marsha.Boone@americanbar.org.

Nominations for the 14th Annual Jefferson B. Fordham Awards will be due on or before March 4, 2011 in the categories of Lifetime Achievement, Advocacy, Up & Comers, and Law Office Accomplishments. Selections will be made by May 13; award winners will be honored at a special luncheon held during the ABA Annual Conference in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on August 5. [More information about submission criteria.](#)

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