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## DID YOU KNOW?!

Each month, we will be bringing you some of the most outlandish laws in our country!



### Law Summary: In Mississippi

**A man may not seduce a woman by lying, and claiming he will marry her**

[Read Full Text!](#)

Dear Len

As we say goodbye to 2009 and look ahead to 2010, we hope to see a better economic future. However, according to the Wall Street Journal, that may not be the case. Many people including your employees are still coming across hard times and personal bankruptcy continues to rise. Countrywide Pre-Paid Legal Services can assist your employees in these challenging economic times. We offer attorneys that handle bankruptcy, foreclosure and debtor/creditor issues, along with a list of other legal matters that your employees may be dealing with.



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## Personal bankruptcy filings rise fast!!!

By Wall Street Journal

The number of Americans filing for personal bankruptcy rose by nearly a third in 2009, a surge driven largely by foreclosures and job losses. And more people are filing for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, which liquidates assets to pay off some debts and absolves the filers of others. That is significant

because a 2005 overhaul of federal bankruptcy laws aimed to encourage Chapter 13 filings, which force consumers to sign onto debt-repayment plans in exchange for keeping certain assets.

The changes were designed to make it more difficult for people to shed their debt, particularly in a Chapter 7 filing. A "means" test, for example, was introduced to separate those who could afford to repay their debt from those who couldn't.

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A Chapter 7 filing is off the table if the means test determines a person is able to pay back at least a portion of the debt after it is restructured.

## Foreclosure nearby? It's your problem

Think the foreclosure crisis isn't your worry? Think again. If your neighbors lose their houses, you can expect more broken windows, drugs and crime.

by Liz Pulliam Weston

If you're not struggling to pay a mortgage, you may think the foreclosure crisis has nothing to do with you.

You're probably wrong.

As millions of Americans lose their homes, many of our neighborhoods will change, and not for the better. Areas where the foreclosure tsunami has already come ashore show us what's in store:

- Vagrants, drug dealers and prostitutes have taken over abandoned houses in a middle-class Atlanta neighborhood.

- In Cleveland, among other hard-hit cities, vandals are stripping copper wiring, copper plumbing and even aluminum siding from abandoned homes, leaving uninhabitable eyesores behind.

- In suburban Elk Grove, Calif., broken windows and weedy lawns are just the start of the problem. Inner-city plagues including gangs, drugs and graffiti have invaded newly built developments as landlords accept any renters they can get.

"Landlords are taking Section 8 people, people on government assistance, and moving them into 4,000-square-foot houses with five bedrooms and three bathrooms," said Steve Steele, the pastor of Oak Tree Community Church in Elk Grove. In many cases, Steele said, neither the landlords nor the new tenants have maintained the properties, which once sold for \$500,000 or more.

Gang activity and crime have spiked, residents say, as foreclosures have increased in the community.

## There goes the neighborhood

Increased crime and foreclosures appear to go hand in hand. Each 1% increase in foreclosures, according to Dan Immergluck of Georgia Tech and Geoff Smith of the Woodstock

Institute, is associated with a 2.23% rise in violent crime.

Cleveland's Slavic Village experienced such a transformation a decade ago, when a spate of foreclosures from high-cost loans turned the once-tidy, middle-class neighborhood into streets of eyesores.



## Why Offer Countrywide Pre-Paid Legal Services???

[Countrywide Pre-Paid Legal Services](#) Inc. is a group legal services company providing a low cost employee benefit designed to make legal services available and affordable to employees when the need arises. The Personal Legal Protector Plan offers a wide range of benefits, which cover everyday situations where legal advice is important but often overlooked.

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