

NEWS



Libertarian Party

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Proposed 'fat tax' on soda is start of a nationwide 'War on Fat' by politicians

California bill would impose a 'fat tax' on soda. Is your state next?

WASHINGTON, DC — Legislation that would impose a "fat tax" on soda in California and study new taxes on junk food is the first wave of a new "War on Fat" by politicians — and should be vigorously fought by every American, says the Libertarian Party.

"This is the next great battle of American politics: Keeping politicians out of our refrigerators," said George Getz, the Libertarian Party's press secretary. "If we don't stop them now, they'll slap new taxes on soda, hamburgers, and ice cream — while subsidizing tofu, broccoli, and bean sprouts.

"But to the fat-cat politicians in California or elsewhere who want to impose new food taxes, we say: Fat chance. If Americans wanted the government to tell us what to eat, we would have elected Jenny Craig president."

In California, State Senator Deborah Ortiz has filed S.B. 1520, which would impose a new tax on distributors of soda and other sweetened drinks. The bill would add about 2 cents to the cost of a typical 12-oz soda, and the money — as much as \$300 million a year — would be used to fund childhood obesity prevention programs.

The bill is an unabashed effort to decrease soft-drink consumption among children, acknowledged Ortiz.

"I don't think there's any one staple of a child or teenager's diet that is so utterly devoid of any nutritional value as soda," she said.

Meanwhile, State Assemblywoman Wilma Chan filed a bill that would require the state to study the feasibility of taxing junk food to fund health and dental services for children.

Fat-tax proponents point to new studies that say Americans are getting heavier, with 55% qualifying as overweight, and about 18% as obese. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) has claimed there is an "epidemic" of obesity in America that is responsible for 300,000 deaths annually.

But Libertarians say the real problem is an epidemic of politicians who want to fatten the coffers of government, while getting new power to micromanage what Americans eat.

"Our eating habits shouldn't be the government's business — and bureaucrats shouldn't be allowed to micromanage our menus or tax our twinkies in the name of so-called public health," said Getz.

"What you eat, and how much you eat, are matters of personal preference and personal responsibility. If revenue-hungry politicians in California want to put something on a starvation diet, they can start with their state's bloated budget."

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