

ANSWERS TO COMMON SODA INDUSTRY ARGUMENTS

The soda industry is fighting to keep its products in schools. During your campaign you will most likely hear some or all of the claims listed below from soda industry spokespersons or opponents of a soda ban.

Industry Claim:

Schools will lose revenue if sodas and other sweetened drinks are removed.

Counter:

Schools across the nation have proof that revenues do not decline for schools. Because soda is cheaper to produce than fruit juice or even spring water, the soda industry has a higher profit margin with these beverages. But for schools, beverage sales often go up when a healthy beverage policy is implemented. (For examples check the Center for Science in the Public Interest www.cspinet.org/schoolfood)

In addition, students should not be forced to subsidize their own education with revenue from unhealthy beverages. While it is shameful that most of our public schools are under-funded, soda sales are not an appropriate revenue source.

Industry Claim:

Students should have "freedom of choice." Schools should provide healthy options, but students should not have their choices limited.

Counter:

Baloney! Parents have the right to limit what beverages their children are drinking. Schools are in business to educate our children in a safe and healthy environment. The idea that students need access to soda while in school is nonsense.

Industry Claim:

Soda is a scapegoat. In order to fight childhood obesity we need to focus on eating healthy and getting more exercise. It is unfair to single-out one product. Soda can be part of a healthy diet.

Counter:

Consumption of soft drinks by children has risen dramatically over the last 30 years. While many strategies to increase exercise and improve student's diets must be considered, eliminating soda from schools is seen by medical experts as one of the most promising interventions in fighting the epidemic of childhood obesity.

Industry Claim:

Fruit juice has the same amount of sugar as soda, so why limit one and not the other?

Counter:

The goal of a healthy beverage policy is to replace non-nutritional beverages like soda with healthy ones. Nearly 75% of American children are not receiving the USDA recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. A student who is drinking fruit juice is getting needed nutrients.

Industry Claim:

Soda should only be banned in elementary schools.

Counter:

The rate of childhood obesity is rising faster among adolescents. Consumption of soda and junk food by high school age students must be addressed to prevent obesity.