

First Lady Proposes Ban on Junk Food Marketing in Schools

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY MAGGIE FOX, NBC NEWS (6.2)

RETRIEVED 6-10-14 FROM [HTTP://WWW.NBCNEWS.COM/HEALTH/KIDS-HEALTH/FIRST-LADY-PROPOSES-BAN-JUNK-FOOD-MARKETING-SCHOOLS-N38201](http://www.nbcnews.com/health/kids-health/first-lady-proposes-ban-junk-food-marketing-schools-n38201)

First lady Michelle Obama wants to stop companies that sell junk food to students. She announced a new plan to ban ads for sodas and unhealthy snacks in public schools. The plan is called **Smart Snacks in School**.

The new rules are from the USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture]. If a snack can't be sold to during school hours, then it can't be advertised either. That includes junk foods. "Junk food" means candy, snacks, sugary drinks, and fast food.

Now, some school posters and scoreboards have ads on them. Companies spend \$149 million a year marketing [trying to sell] junk food in schools. The new rules would stop that.

Healthy eating is one of Mrs. Obama's goals as First Lady. The new rules are part of her **Let's Move** program. She is fighting childhood obesity. [Obesity means being overweight.]

She hopes healthy choices will become a habit. She wants kids to eat fruits and vegetables, not chips and candy.

Former president Bill Clinton worked with companies in 2006. He got them to limit drink sales in elementary schools to

- water,
- juice with no added sugar,
- low-fat and nonfat milk.

Why make these changes? Many groups say too many kids are overweight. Too many kids have unhealthy diets. "[Why] market unhealthy food to children at all, much less in schools," says Margo Wootan. She is a director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI).

CSPI says that in 2012, most schools allowed food ads. This was true for 70 percent of elementary schools.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) says junk-food companies donate posters and scoreboards to schools. They also give students coupons. They might give food prizes for reading books. They place ads in school TV programs and other educational materials.

California banned sodas and junk food from public schools in 2005. Connecticut banned it in 2006. But most states don't have these rules.



Ads for foods that don't meet **Smart Snacks in School** guidelines would be banned. The guidelines limit calories, sugar, and fat in food sold to students.

Companies still could market bottled water. Ads for food sold at after-school events would not be banned.

American Beverage Association President Susan Neely agreed with the plan. She likes Mrs. Obama's efforts to improve students' health.

The plan would also extend lunch and breakfast programs. Schools with large free lunch or breakfast programs will be asked to expand it to all students.

"Millions of children showing up to school hungry every day," Mrs. Obama said. The new rules would let all kids get the meals without parents having to sign them up.

Studies show children get better grades if they aren't hungry during the day. They also have fewer behavior problems.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

First published February 25th 2014, 11:46 am

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