

Opinion: What about all the junk food bought with food stamps?

By Lincoln Brown

A study from the University of Tennessee which was cited in Reuters indicates that despite what New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg may think, limiting people's options on food, even junk food, does not help them to lose weight.

So if the Great Twinkie Prohibition of 2012 is not going to be successful at controlling the national waistline, what will it control? My guess is free agency and the free market. After all, if our dear leaders are so intent on managing our sugar and carbs, a la Mayor Bloomberg., shouldn't they be concerned with the dietary choices of those people on assistance programs? How long will it be until someone decides that those the same stringent regulations that are being applied to those in the free market can be applied to those on SNAP?



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And you on the Left, don't tell me that people buying junk food on SNAP cards doesn't happen. Once on a Sunday evening I had to run up to the radio station to handle a technical issue. It being summer, ice cream seemed seasonally apropos. So on the way back I stopped at a convenience store for a gallon of Rocky Road. The woman in line ahead of me had a

stack of frozen pizzas and a six pack of Pepsi. She paid for it with food stamps. I thought to myself that what those items were probably not what the food stamp folks had in mind when they devised the program. But it was after all, food. (The woman also pulled a roll of twenty dollar bills out of her pocket and bought several cartons of cigarettes. But that is another story for another time.)

Will the time come when one cannot purchase “all that and a bag of chips” with a SNAP card?

Probably not. Feast your eyes, if not your stomach on this from the SNAP to Health website:

“For several years now, cities and states across the country have expressed interest in limiting the purchase of certain foods and beverages with SNAP benefits. However, because the criteria for SNAP purchases are federally-regulated policies, any states that wish to place their own restrictions must apply to the USDA for a waiver. To date, the USDA has rejected all applications for waivers. In 2010, the debate over restrictions of SNAP purchases was revived when New York City applied for a waiver to permit restrictions of sodas with SNAP benefits. The waiver was also rejected, but it raises the question of how to weigh the issue of the regulation of SNAP purchases and the rights of SNAP clients against the emerging obesity epidemic in the United States.”

Funny how when it comes to the government freebies, the government has to “weigh the issue” of the junk food versus and the obesity epidemic over which we should all be panicking. However, when it comes to cash on the barrelhead, or on the soda cup, Democrats are more than willing to clamp down on the exchange of goods and services. I guess it just doesn't pay to take a Slim Jim out of the same hands you hope will pull the metaphorical lever for you in November.

In the end it boils down to the same old issue that has driven

the left for years-government control versus personal responsibility. Congressman Rob Bishop once commented that conservatism is about allowing people to make choice for themselves but it is also about those same people taking responsibility for their choices- be it homeownership, personal spending, healthcare insurance or even what they choose to toss down their throats. It's their decision, but it is also that person's responsibility to manage and pay for the outcome.

If someone wants a Big Gulp, or a Super Big Gulp, or for that matter wants to drag a 55 gallon drum into the store, or even intubate themselves with a tube running from the fountain and into their gullet that is fine with me as long as their drink and subsequent heart bypass are on their nickel and not mine. But that would mean less government regulations and lower taxes, something that is heresy among Democrats.

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