

# Control increasingly large sodas

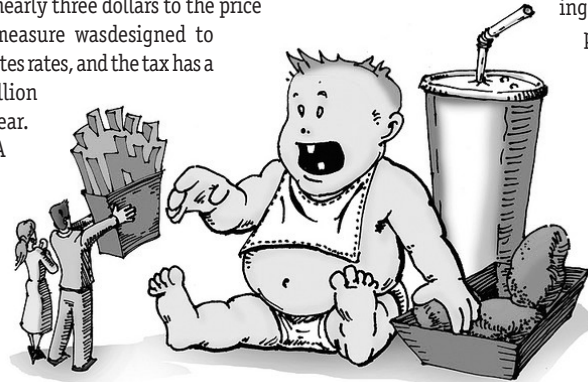
by Liat Rubin  
Editor-in-Chief



San Francisco's Proposition E, a proposed "Tax on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages," stirred divided debate on this November's ballot, before its eventual defeat on Nov. 4. Those opposed to the measure raised over 7.7 million dollars, making this one of the most heavily funded campaigns for or against a proposition. Measure E, which vaguely resembles former New York Mayor Bloomberg's failed 2012 "soda ban" would have levied a tax of two cents per ounce for most beverages sweetened with extra sugar, adding nearly three dollars to the price of a twelve-pack. The measure was designed to decrease obesity and diabetes rates, and the tax has a projected profit of 31 million to 52 million dollars a year. According to USA Today, the proceeds would have gone towards nutrition, health, disease prevention, recreation and school physical education programs. Although the measure failed to pass, I strongly agree and encourage

a tax on sugar sweetened drinks because of the increasing rate of childhood obesity with direct correlation to sugar intake and the possible monetary benefits of the measure's establishment.

America's abnormally high obesity rate of 38 percent for adults and 30 percent for children is largely due to increasing portion and drink sizes. In the last 30 years, obesity has doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents. Michelle Obama's Let's Move initiative targets childhood obesity and explains that, "in the mid-1970s, the average sugar-sweetened beverage was 13.6 ounces compared to today, when kids think nothing of drinking 20 ounces of sugar-sweetened beverages at a time." It is far more than coincidence that both obesity and soda size have simultaneously reached record highs. A recent study by the Harvard School of Public Health found that for each additional 12-ounce soda children consume per day, the odds of becoming obese increase by 60 percent



courtesy Joe13

during 1.5 years of follow-up. Because of the health consequences that are paired with increasing soda portions, I am strongly in favor of a ban on soda per ounce.

City economist Ted Egan said that city residents drink a total of 3 billion ounces of sugary drinks every year and that the tax would likely raise the price of sodas by 23 to 36 percent. The price hike would have encouraged people to buy less soda, thereby lowering the rate of obesity and chronic disease, and reducing public and private health costs in the city, he said. If measure E had passed, experts predict that consumption of soda would have been reduced by 31 percent.

Opponents of the measure might argue that by taxing soda the government is purposefully hindering the ability of consumers to purchase based on their own accord, and that this is an unnecessary intervention by government. I disagree with this opinion because I believe that if people were capable of making healthy decisions about their food and drink consumption, the obesity rate would be much lower than the current "one in three" obesity statistic. The ignorance of consumers who purchase soda packed with damaging ingredients

is not necessarily their fault. According to the Harvard study, Beverage companies in the US spent roughly 3.2 billion dollars marketing carbonated beverages in 2006, with nearly a half billion dollars of that marketing aimed directly at youth ages 2-17. Effective advertising targeting youth is serving to encourage unhealthy eating habits and lifetime soda consumers. Many children and adults have also simply never had an adequate health education to be making educated decisions regarding their choice in beverage, an issue that Measure E hoped to solve by using the measure's revenue for health education and physical fitness purposes. The soda tax would have helped lower the alarming rate of obesity and even raised money to educate Americans on making healthier choices.

Measure E, or the soda tax, was an essential proposition that could have helped lower the frightening statistics concerning obesity in children and adults, and encouraged people to make healthier eating decisions.

# Soda isn't a govt. issue

by Mhairi Finlayson  
Web Editor



San Francisco recently voted on a tax on sugary drinks. The tax that the city planned to impose was designed to reduce obesity and improve public health. However, the real, central issue is not health and the rising rate of obesity in the US, but the role of government in the lives of the people. The government should not have the right to impose a tax that is intended to prevent people from buying the drink of their choice or make it more expensive to buy one drink based on its perceived health value.

Even more asinine is the attempt made by Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York to bring back a bill that would regulate the size of large sugary drinks. This bill is an offense to the intelligence and freedom of the populace. It supposes that people are not able to, without government intervention, make their own decisions on their health and happiness. It is not the role of the government to act as the parent of an unruly child, forbidding unhealthy foods or drinks deemed too sugary. It is the role of an individual to make their own choice, and the government should not intervene regardless of the impact on that individual's health.

While the government can play an advisory role in helping people stay healthy, they should not hold a regulatory role that directly interferes with someone's capacity to make a choice on an issue that only directly affects their health and has no bearing on anyone else's health or liberty. Obesity may be a real problem in the US, but ultimately people need to make their own choices about their body, and legislation designed to influence individuals' choices either way is an overreach of governmental power.

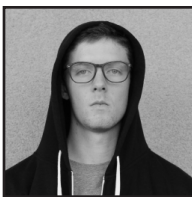
Taxing or forbidding certain soda sizes is the first step along a dangerous path. Sugar is an everyday substance that is regularly consumed, and by attempting to regulate consumption of sugar, a door is opened to regulate anything deemed unhealthy by the government. The government should only have the power to regulate substances that are hazardous to people who had no choice in the matter. For example, regulating smoking is valid because other people can be harmed by secondhand smoke. If an individual makes a well informed decision about something that only affects them, the government should have no control over it.



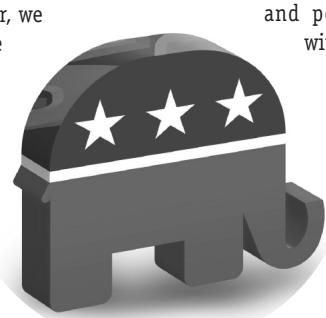
S. Sullivan

# Liberals shouldn't think they are better than conservatives

by Brian Schunk  
Sports Editor



Modern liberals like to classify themselves as intellectually superior to their conservative counterparts. From the left-leaning PEW Research Center, we find plenty of evidence to the contrary, however. Each year, PEW conducts a survey titled "What Do Americans Know." The survey uses a series of questions to test how well-informed Americans are on a series of topics. The topics this year included the federal minimum wage, the territory occupied by ISIS, the Ukraine, Common Core educational proposals, fracking, where the Ebola virus is centered, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, the U.S. poverty rate, where Shiite Muslims outnumber Sunnis, who chairs the Federal Reserve, where the federal government spends



courtesy DonkeyHotey

the most, and the U.S. unemployment rate. PEW shares its results, first sharing the differences found between people of different ages, then between people with varying levels of education. At the bottom, it admits to "modest partisan differences."

Not surprisingly, older people outperformed younger people, and people with more education outperformed those with less education. What may surprise some is that Republicans significantly outperformed both Democrats and Independents.

The Center for Individual Freedom sums up the results: "Out of 12 questions asked, Republicans outperformed both Democrats and Independents on 10. The differences were most pronounced on the questions regarding Common Core, fracking, and where Shiites outnumber Sunnis, where the percentage of Republicans answering correctly outpaced Democrats by double digits. Republicans also outperformed Democrats on questions centering on the federal minimum wage and the Fed Chairwoman. Democrats only outscored

Republicans in naming the primary Ebola outbreak location and the federal poverty rate, but only by 2 and 5 percentage points, respectively."

Despite a significant disparity in the results achieved by the parties, PEW states that Republicans only performed "somewhat better" than Democrats. To claim such a thing is ridiculous; if a baseball team won 10 out of 12 matches against another team, no one could claim that team was only somewhat better than its opponent.

The trend of Republicans being better informed than Democrats has some history. In 2012, Republicans outperformed Democrats on 11 of 12 questions asked by the PEW survey. They beat Democrats on all 19 questions in 2011. In the survey in 2010, Republicans scored better on 10 of 12 questions, and tied Democrats on one.

Liberals can attempt to qualify or excuse the results all they want; it doesn't change the fact that year after year, conservatives prove to be better informed on political issues than they are. It's time for everyone to rethink the stereotype that conservatives are idiots who are ignorant when it comes to political issues.

# American Horror Story should not be deemed offensive

by Antonia Salisbury  
Opinion Editor



Since its initial broadcast in 2011, FX's hit television series, American Horror Story (AHS), has successfully aired four seasons. Each artfully filmed season features a new and disturbing plotline and AHS has quickly become the channel's most popular show. Despite its evident popularity, many critics denounce the show's frequent "abuse" of sensitive public issues including homosexuality, racism, sexism, and genetic disability to add to the horror aspect of the series. Additionally, many people find the show's content offensive because of the generic social liberalism displayed throughout the plotline.

For example, internet magazine Salon attacked the show for its lack of Christian ideals saying that "American Horror Story's feverish, crazy, surreal aesthetic lets it get away with political positions more grounded shows can't." Salon claims that the show exemplifies "virulent anti-Catholic and anti-Christian imagery and bigotry."

This commentary was brought about by the plotline of AHS's second season, "Asylum," in which a nun struggles with sins including sexual indulgence and alcoholism and a rape victim attempts to give herself a coat hanger abortion. Though I can see

how depicting a nun as a sexualized figure may be offensive to someone of Christian faith, those offended should keep in mind that it is not being portrayed as a positive situation. As for Salon's objection to the abortion, I find their reference to AHS's lack of political correctness to be incredibly ironic as the underlying theme of the season was promoting homosexual toleration.

Additionally, homophobia is an issue that the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property (the organization upon which Salon bases all of their claims) is infamous for struggling with. In the second season of AHS both sides of the abortion debate are represented as there are respectable characters who support abortion and others who do not.

Despite having good intentions, the show has also received backlash in response to the title of the fourth season, "Freak Show." This season of the show has actually made a significant effort to promote equality between people with and without disabilities. For example, AHS has sparked a popular hashtag on Facebook: "#WeAreAll-Freaks," exemplifying their attempt to remove the offensive connotation from the term "freak." During this season one character who has Ectrodactyly, commonly known as "Lobster Claw Syndrome," states "If they

just got to know us they would see that we're just like them. No better no worse, just regular people."

On a lighter note, clown colleges across America have recently formed a coalition against the new season due to a murderous clown named "Twisty." Clowns of America International claims that the show is working against successful efforts made by the group to prevent the spread of coulrophobia, the fear of clowns, that is allegedly "crippling the nation's youth." I know that this sounds like a joke, but the CAI is making serious accusations of slander against FX. All I have to say in response to the CAI's complaints is that they should probably google "The Joker" before they take this any further.

Though the content of the television show is generally explicit, seeing as its intent is to scare viewers, I do not consider it to be offensive. Rather, I believe that AHS delivers a message of social equality to its viewers and that it warrants more respect than many other shows on television.



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