

July 12, 2011

Dear Interagency Working Group on Food Marketed to Children,

Thank you for offering this opportunity for public comment and I applaud this effort.

I don't see anything wrong with governmental intervention in attempting to regulate companies that traditionally have shaped public perception and cultural values around our consumer behaviors. They are guidelines and voluntary and therefore meant to be offered to companies as an opportunity to help solve a rising health epidemic facing our children in this country. These guidelines may provide greater incentive to companies to reverse their traditional advertising trend of marketing fun and relatable cartoon caricatures to children and contribute to the growing trend in producing wholesome and healthier products.

My suggestion, then, would be to integrate additional incentives for companies that actually begin changing their product ingredients to include less processed sugars and sodium and loosen regulatory guidelines in marketing for those companies to give them hegemony over how they decide to advertise their healthier products more autonomously.

Critics argue that these voluntary guidelines will lead to permanent regulations in the future and lead to an increase in more job losses.

Companies and for-profit corporations have traditionally influenced the public's consumer behavior, which in turn has been a powerful driving force in shaping what we now understand to be our American culture and lifestyle. With mounting public support for more governmental policies to help regulate that arm of our culture that seems to have driven our society into such a fast-paced and fast-food lifestyle, the Obama administration and the FTC are shedding light on the fact that these big private forces that are driving our economy also drive our culture and influence how we choose to consume in a very big way.

I applaud this effort to help bring awareness to the issue of childhood obesity and I agree with the intention to offer voluntary guidelines to companies for marketing their sugary and high sodium products to kids.

It seems the millions of dollars these companies spend on lobbying efforts every year to stop the government from imposing restrictions could be re-invested into the growing trend toward including organic and nutritious ingredients which would certainly create the kinds of green jobs we desperately need right now.

It seems clear that the Obama administration is simply attempting to bring more awareness to the issue of childhood obesity and that every one of us, including the companies that advertise and sell their products to us, have a responsibility to proactively seek solutions, whether through educational campaigns, school led efforts, grass roots organizing, or promoting policies that hold corporate companies accountable for their part in shaping the American dietary values and behaviors that have contributed to the obesity epidemic.

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