



Philadelphians
for a **FAIR FUTURE**

ICYMI:

PFF PARTNERS RESPOND TO PROPOSED CONTAINER TAX

Advocates urge Council to support soda tax as best way to fund pre-K expansion

Philadelphia, May 23, 2016 – Philadelphians for a Fair Future and its member organizations have issued the following statements in opposition to the proposed container tax as an inadequate funding alternative to the proposed Sugary Drinks Tax that would pay for pre-K expansion and other critically important anti-poverty programs.

Here is a sampling of their statements in response to the proposed container tax:

SEIU 32BJ – Gabe Morgan

“The proposed container tax fails the fairness test on several levels. The container tax would fail to produce the revenue needed to fund pre-k, community schools and rec centers, once again, leaving Philly kids underfunded. Unlike the soda tax, the container tax is more likely to be passed onto consumers because it could be collected at the point of sale and is on all beverages.

Additionally, the cost of implementing the tax is unknown and has been burdensome in cities like Baltimore where a similar tax was implemented. Instead of helping Philadelphia schools, the container tax could actually hurt them by taxing beverages which the District serves in large volumes to schoolchildren.”

American Heart Association

“The American Heart Association stands strongly behind Mayor Kenney’s proposed 3-cent per ounce sugary drink tax that would fund pre-K, improvements in parks and recreation centers, and community schools—initiatives that would benefit the health and economic health of Philadelphia’s children and the city as a whole. We urge city council to reject the new proposal to tax containers.

- The sugary drink tax will raise sufficient revenue to fund pre-K, parks and rec centers, and community schools, while also reducing consumption of sugary drinks which will also improve health.

- Many drinks—including unsweetened teas, 100% fruit juices, water, diet drinks and more—will NOT be taxed. As a result, no one will HAVE to pay the sugary drink tax.
- Conversely, the container tax will include nearly every beverage: water, and 100% juices, effectively imposing the tax on all who purchase beverages and placing a significant burden on those least able to afford it.

Don't be misled by propositions that seek to detract from the Mayor's sound proposal. That's our three cents."

Minister Rodney Muhammad

"Let's stop trying to find ways to make it easy to let the big soda companies off the hook when it comes to paying for expanded pre-K for our children. We have a chance to enact programs that will give our children a chance at a quality education, and this proposed container tax doesn't come close to being a real alternative to the Sugary Drinks Tax. It would generate \$30 million less than the soda tax, and that means our children would have to settle for less once again.

The container tax forces poor people to pay because it taxes all containers. That is truly a regressive tax that unfairly impacts poor people even when they make a choice to drink healthy beverages.

We have a chance to force the soda companies, who have been making billions of dollars in profits from poor people for decades, to pay for programs that at long last will fight the devastating effects of poverty in our community.

So I say to all members of City Council: Don't let the big soda companies off the hook. Stop worrying about their concerns, and focus instead on the people in the communities we all serve."

PASNAP

"The proposed container tax would have regressive health and economic effects on our members and the patients we serve," said Patricia Eakin, RN, PASNAP President. "The proposed legislation would exempt bottles of alcohol but would provide no exclusion for bottled water or health supplements. And, even if those exemptions were made, the tax will likely still encourage increased consumption of sugary drinks as people will try to minimize the impact of the tax by buying larger containers."

"Additionally, unlike the sugary drink tax, the container tax is unavoidable because it includes so many types of food items. It's truly the grocery tax.

"The container tax is a distraction and we strongly oppose it. The sugary drinks tax raises a larger and more reliable income stream and is cheaper to collect. It has the added benefit of helping reduce conditions like obesity and diabetes, thus improving the quality of life of Philadelphians and driving down health costs.

"It is time for Council to do the right thing for their constituents and vote yes for the sugary drinks tax. Our children can't wait any longer for a chance at a good education."

PFF

“The proposed container tax completely fails the test of fairness because it forces all consumers, especially poor people, to pay the tax on almost every beverage imaginable – water, milk, 100% fruit juices, and other essentials. By contrast, the Sugary Drinks Tax is a tax that no consumer is forced to pay.

“In addition to being fundamentally unfair to consumers, a container tax will not generate anywhere near the revenue needed to fund the critically important anti-poverty programs proposed in the FY2017 budget. As a city, these programs – particularly expanded pre-K, community schools, and revitalization of neighborhood parks, rec centers and libraries – are essential to the future of our children and our city. The Sugary Drinks Tax will provide the funds to pay for them. We should not support alternatives that force our fellow citizens to settle for anything less.”

About PFF

Philadelphians for a Fair Future represents a growing coalition of 81 organizations from all walks of life in Philadelphia, including: Public Citizens for Children and Youth; the Philadelphia Parks Alliance; the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers; Education Voters of Pennsylvania; the Service Employees International Union; Center for Popular Democracy; the Alliance of Community Service Providers; the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children; Men United for a Better Philadelphia; Ceiba; Action United; Aspira; the Center for Science in the Public Interest; Lodge 5 of the FOP; Local 22, IAFF; District Councils 33 and 47, AFSCME; Youth United for Change; and multiple community development corporations and small business owners from throughout the city.

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