



Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on March 15, 2013

The Future of Bloomberg's America

Fortunately, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg suffered an embarrassing defeat this week when a judge ruled that his now infamous “soda ban” failed to pass legal muster.

Yet the mayor, far from being disheartened, dug his feet in further and promised to appeal the court's decision. He also once more defended his decision for wanting to prevent the city's eating establishments from selling more than 16-ounce servings of non-diet soda and other sugary drinks at a time.

Bloomberg made it clear that his position on soft drinks is motivated by his desire, not to be a bully, as many of his critics allege, but to protect us from an “epidemic” that is consuming the nation: obesity. Moreover, he is especially concerned with protecting “the poor,” who are more vulnerable to obesity than anyone else. Bloomberg explains that the poor “don't have the ability to take care of themselves” as well as those with more resources.



Setting aside the only thing that really matters — the fact that bans of the sort the Bloomborgs of the country advocate are a blatant affront to liberty — it requires just a little bit of thought to see that the mayor's reasoning turns against itself.

First of all, if it is *obesity*, not *starvation*, from which America's poor are suffering, then it would seem that the “War on Poverty” that was launched nearly a half-of-a-century ago has indeed been won. The legions of activists who have been tirelessly telling us for years about “the millions” of American children who go to bed hungry each and every night can finally rest easy. State, local, and federal governments can at last dismantle the staggering complex of anti-poverty programs that have been in place for decades. We can now celebrate that the trillions of dollars that we've spent since the War on Poverty began have not been spent in vain!

Of course, none of this is going to happen, but the point is that it should happen if the poor are afflicted by obesity.

Second, if good health is our objective, then the government shouldn't be halfhearted in pursuing it. It should order all restaurant owners and grocers to either sell the foods that the government demands or else go out of business. And because those greedy titans of the food industry who Bloomberg decries can't be trusted to observe its dictates of their own volition, the government must destroy all competition in the realms of producing and selling food.



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Yet this isn't all.

The government should take over all health and fitness clubs while making it illegal for citizens not to exercise at least, say, three times a week. Government-issued gym membership cards can be distributed to the citizenry. When Americans attend a gym, their membership cards will be swiped and then registered in a government computer base. After a time — so many months, say, or maybe a year — if it is shown that they didn't make their government-allotted quota of gym visits, stiff penalties will be attached.

Candy stores, taverns, liquor stores, and bakeries should all be closed for good.

Another point to which Bloomberg's reasoning leads concerns non-physical aspects of human health and well-being. If it is permissible for the government to "control" what we eat and drink for the sake of making our lives better, why shouldn't it be OK for it to at least try to control what we *think* and *believe* for the same purpose?

The government can start requiring every literate American to read so many books within specified timeframes. It can issue library memberships. As there are now tax forms that American workers must fill out so that the government can take stock of every cent they earn, so too will the government now be able to monitor Americans' reading — reading that it *assigns*.

Government can as well impose a "high culture" quota under which Americans are forced to attend so many museums and theatres per year.

Finally, since study after study has shown that religious people tend to feel more fulfilled than their secular counterparts, government should compel all Americans to attend religious services regularly. Perhaps the Bible should be on the government's required reading list.

We needn't continue. By now it should be clear that the logic of Bloomberg's vision leads to an America in which few of us would want to live.



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