



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 7, 2013

NYC Initiative Targets Earbud Headphones and Hearing Loss

There apparently is no limit to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Nanny State. In his latest public health initiative, Bloomberg is [targeting](#) earbud headphones. Bloomberg and NYC public health officials are planning a social media campaign to warn young people of the risks of losing their hearing from listening to music on their headphones at a high volume.



"With public and private support, a public-education campaign is being developed to raise awareness about safe use of personal music players ... and risks of loud and long listening," said Nancy Clark, the city Health Department's assistant commissioner of environmental-disease prevention.

The initiative is expected to cost \$250,000 and is being financed by a grant from the Fund for Public Health, the fundraising arm of the Health Department.

The *New York Post* [writes](#), "The Hearing Loss Prevention Media Campaign will target teens and young adults, conducting focus-group interviews and using social media sites like Facebook and Twitter."

Noise reduction has been a target of Bloomberg since taking office. In 2005, he signed "Operation Silent Night" which changed the noise code by cracking down on jackhammer sounds at construction sites and on music in clubs in order to "make New York quieter and more livable."

The *New York Post* notes that hearing loss has become a growing epidemic among young people, increasing 30 percent between 1988 and 2006.

Bloomberg is not proposing laws to limit or eliminate the use of earbuds — yet. But some pundits believe that the social media initiative is just the beginning.

Conservative pundit Glenn Beck [opined](#) on his radio program, "He's going to try first to educate. But if that doesn't work.... He's going to have to be regulating the ear buds — what can be sold, and what should be worn, and how loud things can get."

Beck concluded sardonically, "If you're against that, it's most likely just because you're an extremist because [Bloomberg] knows better."

Many New Yorkers aren't responding positively to the campaign. Subscribers to *New York Magazine* had [this](#) to say in response to Bloomberg's latest initiative:

Popham: Mr. Bloomberg certainly is relentless in his depriving New Yorkers of their freedoms and liberties.

MC5: How about cracking down on the cholos hanging out on my corner under my bedroom



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window all night?

THENext_Mrsbass: I need to turn up the volume in my earbuds to drown out the sound of subway preachers and panhandlers. Why don't you do something about that, Bloomie?

Margaret Hartmann of *New York Magazine* writes, "We're refusing to comply until he issues a ban on loud music or personally yanks the wires out of our ears."

The hearing initiative is just one example of Bloomberg's significant intrusion into [New Yorkers' private lives](#).

Mayor Bloomberg has banned the sale of all drinks over 16 ounces at venues across the city of New York, including movie theaters and street carts. Establishments that do not comply with the ban, which goes into effect on March 12, could face fines of \$200.

Guides about the new rules are being handed out at local establishments in New York City.

Naturally, the touted benefits behind the ban is to minimize the consumption of sugary drinks and improve the health of New York residents, but constitutionalists say the solution is not to dictate human behavior, a notion that should never be permitted in a free society.

In 2008, for example, New York issued a rule requiring restaurants to include calorie counts on their menus.

New York City issued a rule in 2006 that forced restaurants to cut the use of trans fats in prepared food.

In 2011, the city banned smoking in most public areas, including beaches and parks.

Mayor Bloomberg has acquired something of a reputation for his focus on obesity and the health habits of New York residents. He has attempted to replace high traffic areas such as Times Square with pedestrian plazas, and has replaced a number of parking spots with bicycle lanes.

And New York City has recently begun a program to round up the city's mentally ill and ensure they are taking their court-ordered medications. The *New York Post* reported that police will be armed with a list of the most-wanted mentally ill and a tracking system, and will force those deemed ill to go to a hospital.

According to Judge Andrew Napolitano, the policy is "clearly unconstitutional because the Constitution says the only way you can arrest someone is if you see them committing a crime or a probable cause to believe they have committed, not are going to commit, but have committed a crime."

Meanwhile, some New York residents believe that the mayor's attention should be elsewhere, particularly since major crimes were [up](#) 4.2 percent in 2012.

According to the *New York Post*, this is the first time in 18 years that all eight NYPD "patrol boroughs" have seen an increase. Those crimes include grand larceny, sex crimes, and shootings, all of which have dramatically increased since 2011.



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