



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 15, 2017

Will Trump Throw Out Michelle Obama's Lunch?

The School Nutrition Association, composed of 54,000 school cafeteria workers are hoping that the Trump administration will scrap the school lunch rules imposed by the Obama administration at the urging of former First Lady Michelle Obama.

The former first lady took the lead during her husband's presidency in demanding that the nation's public schools serve what she considered healthier lunches in the cafeteria. Specifically, Michelle Obama wanted the lunches to be low in salt and sugar, with more grains, often bland-tasting. What has happened is that the kids aren't eating these tasteless lunches made according to her "recipes," causing school cafeterias to lose money.



Obviously, determining what is served in every public school cafeteria across America is not found within the enumerated powers delegated to Congress in the Constitution. So why don't the schools just refuse to follow the dictates of the federal government, promulgated at the insistence of Michelle Obama?

As is the case so many times, schools can refuse the "nutrition" requirements coming out of the federal bureaucracy, but if they do, they can lose subsidies they presently receive from the U.S. government. The pattern is familiar: Get a state or local government, or in this case a local school district, dependent upon federal "grants," and the receiving entity becomes very compliant of federal dictates. In the '70s, it was a national speed limit of 55 m.p.h., adopted by all states to keep from losing "federal" highway funds. More recently, the Obama administration ordered schools to let "transgender" boys use girls' showers, or face the loss of federal money.

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) published a paper recently, expressing its displeasure at the Obama policy. "Overly prescriptive regulations have resulted in unintended consequences, including reduced student lunch participation, higher costs and food waste."

Salt is an example of something that the feds want to see reduced in the foods served in the nation's school lunch rooms. The Obama Department of Agriculture demanded ever lower amounts of salt, causing the SNA to warn "naturally occurring sodium present in meat, milk and other low-fat dairy foods will force schools to take nutritious choices off the menu, including many soups, entree salads and low-fat deli sandwiches."

Instead, the Obama administration demanded the schools use more costly all-grain foods. "Students are eating more whole grain breads and rolls," the SNA paper explained, "but schools are struggling with a limited availability of specialty whole grain items and meeting students' regional and cultural preferences for certain refined grains, such as white rice, pasta, grits, bagels or tortillas."



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So what does the SNA want? “Federal nutrition standards should be modified to help school menu planners manage these challenges and prepare nutritious meals that appeal to diverse student tastes.”

The SNA has some allies in Congress. Representative Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) is leading the effort to get rid of the Michelle Obama-inspired “Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.” Meadows is the leader of the House Freedom Caucus, and he rightly sees this as a freedom issue, as well as an issue of practical importance to local school districts. “The federal government involving itself in what is served in school lunches is the epitome of government overreach. Districts that have chosen to opt out have been able to provide more options to students and better-quality services.”

Meadows explained how the Trump administration can give the schools some relief. “At the beginning of the year, I released a report of more than 300 regulations the Trump Administration can undo, which included overly burdensome federal lunch program standards. It’s the perfect example of how government interference generally makes a small problem far worse.”

Meadows is no doubt correct in that assertion. Governments have long felt the need to meddle in the private lives of their citizens and subjects — the U.S. government is not the first. When King James the First of Great Britain observed the growing popularity of tobacco, he was incensed. He issued a “Counter Blast to Tobacco” shortly after he ascended the throne in 1603.

“Have you not reason then to be ashamed, and to forbear this filthy novelty, so basely grounded, so foolishly received and so grossly mistaken in the right use thereof?” James wrote of tobacco. “In your abuse thereof sinning against God, harming yourselves both in persons and goods,” he told his subjects some of the problems he saw with tobacco. He called it “a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and the black stinking fume thereof, nearest resembling the horrible Stigian smoke of the pit that is bottomless.”

At first, James was inclined to simply ban it, but he was persuaded instead to tax it, a practice imitated by many governments since. He authorized the levying of an excise tax and a tariff on its importation.

The intrusion of the federal government into what children eat in the cafeterias of the public schools in America raises many other issues that should concern Americans who believe in limited government, individual liberty, respect for the Constitution, and federalism.

In this instance, why should the first lady wield so much power? She has not been elected to anything; she is not subject to oversight by any congressional committees; and she cannot be impeached. Just because she happens to be married to the president of the United States, why should she exercise so much power and enjoy so much attention from the nation’s press? After all, the spouses of medical doctors are not expected to assist their surgeon spouse in a surgery. Neither are the spouses of a football coach expected to draw up plays for a coaching spouse to run during a football game.

When Margaret Thatcher was prime minister, her husband was not expected to be openly involved in the making of public policy. Just because his wife was the chief executive of the British government did not give him any more official power than any other person in the land.

Of course, this entry into policy matters is not unique with Michelle Obama. Rosalynn Carter sat in on Cabinet meetings, and Hillary Clinton was even cast as almost a “co-president” for her husband. Even Nancy Reagan’s “Just Say No” to drugs effort, while commendable in some ways, has certainly contributed to more federal involvement in what should be local law-enforcement matters.

Furthermore, this view that it is the role of the government — especially at the federal level — to make



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decisions on what individual citizens eat and drink, is a dangerous idea. Making it the role of government to determine what little children eat takes such decisions away from local school districts and also from their parents. And it establishes the precedent that if government should be determining what children eat and drink, supposedly for health reasons, it is only logical that government should tell adults what to consume, for the same reason.

While cigarette smoking is loathsome for many today (I do not care for it myself) just as it was for James I, the modern assault on tobacco established a *modus operandi* for nanny-staters. In this progressive model, government controls are seen as a positive, and private enterprise is cast as the villain — with such pejorative terms as Big Tobacco, Big Oil, Big Pharma, and perhaps, most absurdly, Big Soda.

This issue, as it is with most others, has a globalist component. While voters in three cities in California have recently enacted measures to increase taxes on sodas and other sugar-sweetened beverages, along with other American cities, Harold Goldstein, the executive director of Public Health Advocates, sees the taxing of sodas as a “worldwide movement” that “can no longer be stopped.” In support of his claim, Goldstein cited a recent report by the World Health Organization (an agency of the United Nations) that called upon all nations of the world to tax sugary drinks.

No one argues against the proposition that an individual should consume soda pop in moderation, or that it would be better if school children ate food with less salt and sugar. Smoking a pack of cigarettes per day is not the best way to extend one’s years on Earth. But as President Warren Harding said during the 1920 presidential campaign when he rejected the Nanny-Stater progressives’ political philosophy, “All human ills are not curable by legislation.”

What can be done to stop this drift toward increased government control over our personal lives? We must be prepared to defend others who practice habits of which we might not approve — whether that be cigarette smoking, alcohol drinking, soda drinking, or what have you. Just because we personally do not like something, we should not just wait until they get around to dictating our personal choices before we take a stand for liberty.

As Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller said, in explaining why he waited so long to oppose the National Socialist regime of Adolf Hitler, “First the Nazis went after the Jews, but I was not a Jew, so I did not object. Then they went after the Catholics, but I was not a Catholic, so I did not object. Then they went after the trade-unionists, but I was not a trade-unionist, so I did not object. Then they came after me, and there was no one else left to object.”



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