Who's Your Nanny?

Big food companies attack public health advocates, calling them “food nannies.” But who’s the real nanny? Groups that want to make healthy choices easier? Or the food industry – spending billions of dollars telling you what to eat and drink?

The food industry opposes healthy food policies, because it wants to keep its job as the nation’s food nanny.

Anti-rat-hair Regulations

“Copper sulphate, boric acid, formaldehyde, coal tar, saltpeter... sound appetizing? You might have ingested these substances if you had purchased food in America a century ago. And, unless you were a chemist, you might not have known it. Not only were these additives commonly used to preserve foods or disguise foods already spoiled, but food labels rarely reported more than the name and manufacturer of the product... Buying food for the family was a dangerous and sometimes even deadly enterprise.”

The food industry fought regulations to take shards of glass and rat hairs out of food back at the turn of the 20th century. Today, they still fight sensible food policies that would keep our kids safe and healthy. We’ve made progress on safe and healthy food policies, but the Big Food Nanny continues to fight sensible policies and exert tremendous influence over how we feed our kids and what kids consider to be food.


Do you want this guy as your kids' nanny?

The Nanny Encourages You to Spend More Money and Make Less Healthful Choices

Coca-Cola’s “Cap The Tap” program trains restaurant servers to sell Coke beverages and offer bottled water when a customer asks for tap. “Every time your business fills a cup or glass with tap water, it pours potential profits down the drain.” – Coca-Cola

http://civileats.com/2013/11/13/coca-colas-assault-on-tap-water/

Aggressive selling techniques actively discourage customers from ordering what they really wanted and choosing the beverage that is healthiest for our bodies and our wallets: tap water. Soda companies say they are offering “choices” but the reality is that they spend millions of dollars to encourage people to spend more on their unhealthy product over free, healthy water.

The Nanny Formulates Food to be Irresistible

Food companies engineer products like Doritos and Coca-Cola to induce maximum cravings through a ratio of ingredients to achieve a “bliss point.” This combination of salt, sugar, and fat achieves the highest level of palatability without creating a flavor so distinct that the brain registers satiety and tells you to stop eating. Author Michael Moss revealed this industry insider concept to the public in his book “Salt Sugar Fat,” but the concept has been employed by food manufacturers for decades.

Image: Grant Cornett for The New York Times

The Nanny Decides that You Need More Calories

Restaurants now serve soda portions 6 times larger than in the 1950s. Americans rarely have the freedom to order what used to be a small soda. Food portions also have grown, and studies show people eat more calories when served larger portion sizes.

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Adapted from original source.

THE GUP SCALE

Portion Distortion

What comes in a portion?

32 oz

300 calories

44 oz

415 calories

64 oz

600 calories

52 oz

485 calories

Adapted from original source.

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport put ads for alcohol and other unhealthy drinks around water fountains.