

SB 2 Banning the Use of SNAP Benefits for Junk Food Background and Arguments for Support/Opposition

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, provides monthly funds to help low-income individuals and families buy food. SNAP already excludes non-nutritive items such as alcohol, tobacco, hot prepared foods, and non-food items. SNAP benefits are delivered via an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which works like a debit card at retailers.

Supportive Arguments

- Nationwide, nearly 10% of SNAP benefits are spent on sugary drinks each year, with another \$600 million spent on candy and prepared desserts
- Research has shown that high sugar and ultra processed diets contribute to obesity, heart disease, inflammation, and other chronic, preventable conditions. In children, these products are linked to developmental problems, attention deficits, and poor academic and behavioral performance
- These harms impose growing costs on the Commonwealth in the rising burden of taxpayer-funded healthcare programs

Opposition Arguments

- Individuals will still eat unhealthy foods, even if SNAP benefits do not cover the purchase. In turn, this will not actually reduce the costs of taxpayer-funded healthcare programs
- Healthier food is more expensive, therefore families utilizing SNAP benefits may have to buy less, not adequately feeding their families
- Could hurt local businesses (ex: grocery stores) and large industries based out of Pennsylvania (ex: Hershey Foods)