

Prof forces students to lobby government to ban soda

By: Robby Soave – March 8, 2013

If students want to pass John Banzhaf's law class, they'll have to fight for increased government regulation in the food and beverages industry.

Banzhaf, a law professor at George Washington University, will require his students to lobby state and local governments to ban sugary beverages, according to a press release. The release was put out by Banzhaf himself, who summarized the objective as "Undergrads Required to Lobby for Obama Policy."

"Some 200 undergrads will be asked to contact legislators in their home cities, counties, or states asking them to adopt legislation similar to that already adopted in New York City ... banning restaurants, delis, movie theaters and many other businesses from selling high-sugar drinks in cups or containers larger than 16 ounces," said the press release.

To appease students who may not wish to advocate the specific policy in place in New York City, Banzhaf supplied a list of substitute activities, which include:

- Ban the sale of sugary soft drinks entirely
- Ban the sale of sugary soft drinks to children
- Put a special tax on sugary soft drinks; e.g., to reduce consumption and/or to fund counterads
- Don't exempt sugary soft drinks from the ordinary sales tax
- Prohibit the sale of sugary soft drinks in vending machines
- Mandate per-oz. pricing of sugary soft drinks in venues like fast food restaurants and movie theaters (i.e., a 32 oz. serving must cost at least twice as much as a 16 oz. serving)
- Limit the maximum size for sugary soft drinks in venues like fast food restaurants and movie theaters (e.g., a single serving can be no more than 16 oz.).

Walter Olson, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, pointed out that the list fails to accommodate students who may disagree with Banzhaf's agenda.

"All the other examples given, however, involve alternative ways of extending regulation and taxation in the food and beverage realm," he wrote. "Presumably any student that believes that the government should stay out of this area has had the foresight to drop the course."

Banzhaf is a publicity hound known for repeatedly suing fast food companies for making people fat. He also achieved notoriety for suing the Catholic University of America over the university's decision to implement single-sex dormitories.

Banzhaf did not respond to requests for comment from The Daily Caller News Foundation.