

FSA ELA Argumentative Writing Example

A government has a duty to ensure that each and every one of their citizens is healthy, whether it is by simply promoting public health or taking action to ensure the public's health. In the United States a debate has been ongoing on the government's ability to regulate the food we eat. Over the past years, the New York City Board of Health has been placing such regulations on the city's restaurants, some of the rules include the banning of trans fats and placing a limit on the size of sugary drinks to 16 ounces. These regulations have been shown to reduce the health problems associated with them, such as heart problems, in cities where foods are regulated. The government placing rules on what we eat and drink and how those foods and beverages are prepared is ultimately better for society as a whole.

Certain ways that food is prepared are often the primary cause for their unhealthiness, and would put the public at a greater risk of things like heart disease. One of the first things to be banned were trans fats, used in the making of many foods found fast food restaurants. In the article, *Should the Government Regulate What We Eat(?)*, Bert Glass explains more about why companies use these harmful fats in their foods. By using these fats, restaurants can make their product easier to ship, as they are in a solid form and have a longer shelf life than non-trans fat foods. While this is good for the company, when people continue to eat these foods, their health can go downhill. Glass goes on to say, "For example, trans fats can raise our level of 'bad' cholesterol while also lowering our 'good' cholesterol, both of which can contribute to heart disease." A city where the majority of people have heart issues, would not be able to even function properly, the majority of the city's spending would have to be devoted to healthcare, something many big cities could not afford to do. The risk of certain ingredients is simply too high for the governing body of an area not to step in.

Another reason the government should be allowed to regulate foods and beverages is because, currently, America is one of the most obese nations in the world. One of the top causes of this is that a significant portion of Americans do not watch what they eat, and often overeat, exceeding the amount of calories that they need. Since obesity is such a problem in some cities, they have begun to implement limits on the size of sugary drinks. New York, for example placed the limit to 16 ounces, a move praised by health advocates like Marion Nestle. She explained in a column from the San Francisco Chronicle, *Soda-Size Cap Is a Public Health Issue*, why the 16 ounce limit was a good thing for the city. Nestle stated, "Sixteen ounces provides two full servings, about 50 grams of sugars, and 200 calories-10 percent of daily calories for someone who consumes 2,000 calories a day." A portion of the obesity problem in the United States could be erased by limiting soda sizes across the country. A smaller obesity rate means a healthier nation, and one of the government's prime duties, is to ensure a healthy public.

Critics of these government regulations say that they are a severe intrusion into the free will that the people have. In their eyes, the government has no place telling people and businesses what to cook with or drink they argue that if a restaurant wants to, they should be able to use unhealthy ingredients like trans fats, if a person wants to, they should be able to get a soda larger than 16 ounces. They argue that none of them will be followed by restaurants in areas with such rules. The government is not overstepping their boundaries, though. One of the most important jobs of a government, is protecting the welfare of its citizens and they have numerous other public health and safety laws, as relaxed as the food and drink laws, which are not seen as government intrusions by a majority of people. Health advocate Marion Nestle explained to the San Francisco Chronicle that the rules regarding food ingredients and soda size are like the many other laws for public health and safety. She observes, "You have to wear seatbelts in a car and a helmet on a motorcycle. You can't drive much over the speed limit or under the influence."

A government's duty to its citizens is to ensure that the public is healthy and well. By legislators creating regulations on what restaurants can and cannot use in their cooking, and by limiting the sizes of sugary drinks, the government is combatting an unhealthy, and overweight society, ultimately leading to the betterment of public health in cities spanning the United States.