

## Interest Group Activity: The Cola Controversy

### Sip on This!

Thirsty and want to buy a soda in between class periods? Looking for a beverage to purchase before staying after school for practice? Up until now, students at Florida Middle School have been able to do just that. However, a recent debate has begun over whether to allow vending machines on middle school campuses. Florida lawmakers are considering a bill that would remove all soda vending machines and stop the sales of soda to students. This proposed legislation impacts many groups: soda manufacturers, school administrators, pediatricians, and the students buying sodas. Each group has a strong opinion regarding this bill.



### Water! Water! Water!

Supporters of removing vending machines and stopping soda sales argue that soda is a drink high in sugar and, therefore, not beneficial to the health of young students. There is also a concern with the amount of caffeine in some of the sodas and the potential side effects of consumption, such as headaches, dizziness, and an increased heart rate. Supporters cite studies that show that too much soda early in childhood can increase the risk of obesity, tooth decay, and other health problems.

### Feel Good and Learn!



Opponents of the proposed legislation counter that there are some benefits to drinking soda. Studies have shown links to improved digestion and improvements to upset stomachs when consumed. For some students, caffeine may help them be more alert and ready to engage and learn. They also argue that many other flavored waters and juices that are sold on school campuses contain just as much, if not more, sugar than soda. In addition, schools may enjoy earning extra money from those sales.

### Interested?

This will be a tough decision for the Florida lawmakers. Should they vote to pass this bill or not? There are individuals and groups who represent all sides of this debate and are very interested in whether this becomes a new law or not. Being responsible citizens, people want to stay engaged in these important decisions that will have an impact on their lives

Varying Viewpoints			
Students	Pediatricians	Soda Manufacturers	Schools

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