

Pro-Vending Maching Change

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America: addicted to junk food since the first invention of the potato chip. It seems as though the struggle to fight obesity has been an uphill battle since then, because with the potato chip came the cream filled cookies, and with the cookies came the fast food chains. It's no wonder that America is one of the countries with the highest obesity rates in the world. So now, America is scrambling to fight this disease overcoming America, starting with ridding our schools of unhealthy vending machine items.

For anyone living under a rock who didn't already know, the Doritos, Snickers, and Coke in the vending machines have been replaced with baked chips, granola, water, and juice. The reaction from the student body has been less than enthusiastic. While, of course, teachers approve of the change, there is also a decent number of students who can look past the fact that they can't have chocolate for the seven hours that they're in school. Senior Rami George is one of them. "Obesity and high blood pressure are major problems in society today and the junk food and sugar loaded content in our vending machines were just contributing to this epidemic in our own school," he said.

With obesity statistics rising every day, it seems like we don't need such an accessible source of fat and calories at our fingertips. According to obesity.org, 30.4 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 19 are overweight, and 15.5 percent suffer from obesity. Do we really need more people dying from heart attacks at the tender age of 35? Obesity is already the second highest preventable death in America after smoking.

Not only does unhealthy food contribute to obesity problems, the caffeine and sugar makes kids obnoxiously hyper. Concentration is clearly more difficult, and class disruption more common. As I was sitting in Don Gavitte's third period AP Government class, he brought up the fact that he couldn't help but notice that the halls were creepily quiet this year: "I can't help but wonder if this is because of the new vending machines." He then added with a chuckle, "I'm going to lose ten pounds this year."

True, some people took advantage of the old vending machines more than others, but even drinking one Coke each day could be a detriment to your health. According to the New York Times, a recent study at Harvard Medical School showed that your chances of obesity shoot up to 60 percent with each daily consumption of an extra sugar sweetened drink.

The truth is, junk food may fill you up at first, but that nice, full feeling hardly lasts. Instead, eating a Powerbar or some peanuts would fill you up and keep you filled up. Comparably, a Powerbar from the vending machines for \$1.75 is far healthier than a Snickers bar, for example. While a Snickers bar has 14 grams of fat and 273 calories, a Powerbar has only 2.5 grams of fat and 230 calories, as well as 100% vitamin C and E. It may be a bit more spendy, but honestly, you can't buy your health. In fact, you probably end up saving more money because you won't have to buy extra food later after you're hungry again so soon afterwards. The extra protein is what keeps you going. One won't have to worry about keeling over dead at 35 years old because your Doritos formed a nice blood clot and stopped your heart. So the next time you're feeling peckish, don't write off the new snacks just because they're healthier. Some of them actually aren't half bad. I'm pro health, and belief that this is just another small step towards a waddle-free America.