

Ohio Sen. Jon Husted wants to ban junk food from being purchased with SNAP benefits

The Healthy SNAP Act would exclude soft drinks, candy, ice cream and prepared desserts from being bought with SNAP benefits

**By Anthony Shoemaker
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U.S. Sen. Jon Husted, R-Ohio, is cosponsoring a bill that would prohibit people from using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to buy junk food.

The Healthy SNAP Act would exclude soft drinks, candy, ice cream and prepared desserts from being bought with SNAP benefits.

“American taxpayers are footing the bill on both ends of a broken system: first, by subsidizing the consumption of unhealthy, ultra-processed foods, and then again by covering the skyrocketing health care costs caused by the chronic diseases those foods contribute to,” Husted said in a press release. “In effect, we’re paying to make ourselves sick—and then paying again to treat the sickness.”

The bill would require the Secretary of Agriculture to ensure SNAP-eligible food promotes recipients’ health and reflects nutrition science as well as public health concerns. The bill would also require the Agriculture Department to review which foods qualify under SNAP every five years so that SNAP food guidelines reflect current nutrition data, according to the statement.

A companion bill was also introduced in the U.S. House.

The bill, sponsored by Utah Sen. Mike Lee, goes along with a push by the Trump administration for states to ban food stamp recipients from buying soda and other processed foods with their benefits.

In an opinion piece published by USA TODAY, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr. and Agriculture Secretary

Brooke Rollins pushed for states to crack down on junk food purchases with food stamps.

"Our two agencies are pursuing reform to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We will encourage taxpayer dollars to go toward wholesome foods, such as whole milk, fruits, vegetables and meats. For this reason, we call on all governors to submit waivers to help promote access to these critical sources of nutrition, including waivers that can limit what can be purchased with food stamps, get healthy foods to rural communities and prioritize nutritional standards in school meals," they wrote.