

Why Coke, you might wonder. Why not Pepsi? The answer is that diet coke is my soft drink of choice. It's easy for me to boycott other soft drinks since I don't drink them anyway. I *like* diet coke, so that's the subject of my boycott.

But why boycott soft drinks at all? Answer: Because I'm concerned about their contribution to obesity, especially childhood obesity, and I'm disgusted by the tactics of the industry is using to fight sensible regulation. It [turns out](#), for example, that American kids get something like 20% of their recommended daily calories from soft drinks, and there are good reasons to link this behavior with obesity. Yet the industry fights off even the mildest efforts to limit consumption.

I don't really expect them to embrace regulation, though it wouldn't kill them to go along with regulation of the most egregious efforts to get consumers to consume too much sugar. For instance, a New York judge recently [ruled](#) against a pathbreaking New York City ordinance, which limited only the very largest sizes of sugared soft drinks. Couldn't Pepsi and Coke live with this very modest restriction on the use of their product? For that matter, why don't Pepsi and Coke impose this restriction on sale of their products themselves, rather than leaving it to the government?

The New York ruling also brings up the question of industry tactics. The law suit was brought by the NAACP and other minority representatives, using a law firm that just by coincidence has deep connections with the industry. (You might suspect something from the fact that this New York case was brought by a firm from Atlanta, which is Coke's hometown.) And it turns out that the industry has worked hard to enlist these groups despite the fact that obesity is an especially big problem for minority communities. The NY Times recently [reported](#) on the long-term effort of the industry to suborn community groups and minority representatives, which echo the kinds of underhanded tactics used by the tobacco industry.

I started writing this post at an airport, and to tell the truth I really wanted a cola right then. But the industry is going to have to act a little more like responsible corporate citizens before I'm going to help fund its activities with my consumer dollars.