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Eat What You Can

Government assistance has always been a sensitive topic, especially in poor communities. Many times, poor communities are judged just because they’re able to get help from the government. In ways its very contradicting. Many people talk about helping those who are less fortunate, but end up envious because they aren’t receiving the same help. Electronic Benefits Transfer is a very huge program provided to those in need of help due to low income. The biggest controversy pertaining to EBT is the food choices recipients purchase with their cards. Many people feel as if recipients should buy healthier food choices, but in reality, taxes on healthier foods and the government make this nearly impossible.

Normally when people hear about food choices, they automatically think about fast food restaurants, but that is not what is being referred to this time. Media outlets actually tend to manipulate the topic of poverty and fast-food. Believe it or not poor people actually do not consume fast foods more than those of a higher income. In a survey it showed that, “the poorest children surveyed got the least amount of their daily calorie intake from fast food at just eleven percent.”. That may be shocking to others, but it is a known fact that most young people consume almost forty percent of fast food. The income is completely irrelevant to be quite honest when it comes to fast food restaurants. Yes, some fast food places accept EBT cards, but they aren’t the best example for poor food choices.

Poor food choices are typically things people tend to buy in the grocery store. Potato chips, soda, candy, pastries, and margarine are great examples. When those with EBT cards are seen buying things as such, they are frowned upon. On the other hand, if they buy healthier options such as, “steak, crab legs and filet mignons.” People think they shouldn’t be able to. The main reason being why is because those without assistance do not tend to buy these kind of food choices regularly. It's very hypocritical to be quite honest. Why complain about someone trying to better a simple aspect of their lives just by eating healthier?

Often times when poor food choices in poor communities are discussed, the topic of obesity is immediately dragged in. Yes, obesity can become a factor but there are many reasons why. Most times households receiving Food Stamps tend to get more money than the actual amount they need. This causes households to buy more food than they need to consume. The second reason of obesity becoming a factor is the tax on healthier foods. Yes, households may receive more money but the tax on healthier food options quickly make healthier choices become overshadowed. A person isn’t going to go out of their way to spend money on one little item that is overpriced. Especially when they can go and buy five things that will be around the same price in total.

Tax on healthier foods is an extremely important topic when talking about food assistance from the government. Many people try to place all the blame on poor communities for what they eat, but in reality, sometimes they have no choice. Believe it or not but many government officials want to ban some healthy options! This is a prime example of how hypocritical people can be. Republicans in Missouri want to ban seafood and steak! Yet, they also want to ban things like energy drinks and cookies. It makes sense to try and ban things that aren’t healthy, but what would they gain from it? Banning certain junk food isn’t going to stop people from getting it somehow. It’s very ridiculous that they would even impose the idea of banning health food choices like seafood. Especially since seafood isn’t that expensive compared to other healthier options.

Food sufficiency within the community is already low. In most low-income neighborhoods, there are more low costing markets around rather than your typical Kroger and Publix. In these markets there tends to be a huge amount of poor food choices compared to healthier food choices offered in other demographics. You would think that a low costing market in an area full of people who aren’t as fortunate would have lower prices for healthier foods. Well, that certainly isn’t the case. Believe it or not but healthier foods in lower income areas tend to be higher than in areas of those better off. Now, this is one thing people can’t place the blame on communities for. Communities don’t really get to decide what the government decides to place in their areas. It just isn’t realistic at all.

Recipients would overall make better food choices, if prices were not so unrealistic. The expectation is held to a very higher standard for poor communities, meanwhile the government doesn’t try to actually help. Sure, they are providing government assistance, but what good is it even people aren’t actually benefiting. People would actually try to eat healthier if they were able to realistically afford it. It is possible for them to buy healthy things here and there, but the expectation of everything in their baskets being healthy is not realistic at all. Until taxes on beneficial foods go down, people are still going to buy things they can get a higher quantity of for a cheaper price. In the end, it's up to those in the higher position to help those in need not only become better financially, but also health wise.

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