

Cook County Soda Tax Testimony
By Allan Mellis

Madam President and commissioners, my name is Allan Mellis. I've been a community leader for over 40 years and a drinker of diet soda. I support 17-4704, the repeal of the sweetened beverage tax, but offer a compromise solution.

While there is overall consensus for the need to support essential county services, it is also clear from every newspaper article and editorial that there need to be some changes to the existing, confusing Cook County sweetened beverage tax legislation.

To address the budget shortfall, and to eliminate the confusion of how much should be charged on fountain drinks, free refills, and whether ice counts as part of the drink, I propose the following compromise:

- **Eliminate the unfilled Cook County vacant positions.**
- **Tax only those drinks that contain sugar.** (There will be an actual health benefit when people switch from drinks with sugar to diet drinks.)
Let me quote from a Chicago Tribune Article this past Monday -
"Bloomberg, the owner of a media empire, already has committed \$5 million to a TV advertising campaign promoting what he views as the health benefits of the tax, which public health advocates say **will reduce the sugar consumption** that can contribute to obesity, diabetes and heart disease."
- **Tax only those drinks that are sold in cans, bottles or pre-packaged containers.** (This will eliminate the implementation confusion, especially in restaurants.)

In closing, I usually buy my 12 ounce diet soda cans in 12 cans to a fridge pack when they are on sale - four fridge packs for \$8.88.

The one-cent per ounce tax comes to \$5.76 or a **tax of 65 percent**.

Thank you and I would be interested in hearing your thoughts.
