

My name is John Dedie Professor of Political Science and Zero Sugar Coke drinker.

With a \$300 million deficit and a structural deficit, instead of cutting Kirwin funding citizens are again being made responsible for reckless spending.

Labeled "For Our Kids Act" it hurts tax paying adults. Using this title is clever but if you put lipstick on a pig, it is still a pig. The "For Our Kids Act" will increase the price of soda by 2 cents an ounce, making a 2-liter soda cost increase by \$1.36. All sugary beverages such as soda, sports drinks, and energy drinks, will contain a 2-cents-per-ounce tax.

A two-liter soda is approximately 68 ounces so add another \$1.36 to your purchase. This is a tax on poor people. In 2020 you could find 99 cents two-liter sodas. Today three for five dollars is a bargain.

The state claims the tax is expected to generate up to \$500 million annually. Under the idea of covering the \$300 million deficit the legislature created. If you live within 10 miles of the Stateline driving to Delaware, DC, West Virginia or Pennsylvania, it would be worth the trip to save money on just one two-liter soda. Now a family of four that drinks conservatively speaking 10 two-liter sodas a week would now pay \$13.60 more for soda. Road trip! And they just will not buy soda. They will check out the sale paper for other bargains at the out of state Giant, Food Lion or Safeway like they do when they shopped in Maryland. That is more sales tax revenue leaving the state.

Soft drinks are already subject to a 6% sales tax, the only food product so taxed. Consider a \$1.99 two-liter Coke would carry a \$1.36 excise tax, that's higher than beer, wine or liquor. I can't imagine any reasonable legislator wants to pile on a burdensome levy on voters already reeling from inflation, BG&E bills, higher fees and taxes.

This will also increase the cost of soda at places like McDonalds and any restaurant. As someone who no longer drinks alcohol, it might be cheaper for me to start drinking rum than Coke or Royal Crown.

This misguided trial balloon should be deflated, or better yet pass the bill and have it only cover PG and Montgomery residents since their delegations support it.

Thank you.