



Should Governments Tax Soda, Sweets, and Junk Food?

Speaker Biographies

Maeve Gearing

Maeve Gearing is a research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, where she specializes in qualitative and quantitative analysis of nutrition and obesity, particularly in children and other vulnerable populations. She has worked with community interventions aimed at reducing child obesity and food insecurity and decreasing child out-of-home placement among families with unstable housing.

Before joining Urban, Gearing completed a PhD in public policy at Duke University, where she used growth mixture modeling and in-depth interviews to examine trajectories of obesity in children and the effects of family intervention on reducing obesity.

Donald Marron

Donald Marron is an Institute fellow and director of economic policy initiatives at the Urban Institute. In this capacity, he conducts research on tax reform, long-run fiscal challenges, and federal budgeting; identifies opportunities for Urban to develop policy-relevant research; and helps cultivate cross-center initiatives focused on macroeconomic growth, higher education, and public finance. From 2010 to 2013, he led the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center.

Before joining Urban, Marron served in senior government positions, including as a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers and acting director of the Congressional Budget Office. He has also taught at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute and the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business; consulted on major antitrust cases; and served as chief financial officer of a health care software startup. He has broad experience in economic policy issues, including America's fiscal challenges, tax reform, energy and environment, and the financial crisis. He testifies frequently before Congress, appears often at conferences and in the media to discuss economic policy, and works to popularize economics through his blog and writings. He is the editor of *30-Second Economics*, a short book that introduces readers to 50 of the most important theories in economics. He also advises several startup companies.

Marron studied mathematics at Harvard College and received his PhD in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Baylen J. Linnekin

Baylen Linnekin is an attorney and an adjunct professor at George Mason University Law School, where he developed and teaches the Food Law & Policy Seminar. He is also an adjunct faculty member at American University, where he teaches courses on food policy. Linnekin founded and led the food freedom nonprofit Keep Food Legal. He was recently an expert witness in an ongoing federal First Amendment case that focuses on skim-milk labeling, and he authored an amicus curiae brief in a US Supreme Court case that centered on raisins. Linnekin's first book, *Food (Un)Chained*, which focuses on ways that laws and regulations often serve to proscribe sustainable food practices, will be published in 2016 by Island Press.

Linnekin's research centers on the historical origins of American constitutional rights—particularly as they relate to historical protections or violations of rights in food—and the implications of those rights on contemporary American food law and policy. His scholarly writings have appeared in many law reviews, and his opinion pieces, expert commentary, and quotes have appeared in several media outlets. He has presented research at Harvard Law School, Yale Law School, University of Chicago Law School, Duke Law School, and other top law schools and universities.

Linnekin earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from American University, a master's degree in learning sciences from Northwestern University, a juris doctor degree from Washington College of Law, and a master of laws degree in agricultural and food law from the University of Arkansas School of Law.

Margot Sanger-Katz

Margot Sanger-Katz is a domestic correspondent for the *New York Times*, where she writes about health care for "The Upshot," the *Times*' site about politics, economics, and everyday life. Before joining the *Times*, she was a reporter at *National Journal* and the *Concord Monitor* and an editor at *Legal Affairs* and the *Yale Alumni Magazine*. In 2014, she completed a Knight-Bagehot Fellowship in economics and business journalism at Columbia University.



Claire Wang

Claire Wang is associate professor of health policy and management at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. She codirects the Obesity Prevention Initiative, a cross-disciplinary team focusing on environmental and policy approaches to prevent obesity in communities. She is also the faculty director of the school's certificate program in comparative effectiveness and outcomes research, and she teaches decision analysis and economic evaluation of health technologies to graduate students and clinical scientists.

Wang's research applies mathematical modeling to synthesize evidence for informing policy and practice. In 2012, she published one of the first papers to estimate the medical cost savings from a penny-an-ounce tax on soda to prevent diabetes and heart disease. Her current research focuses on developing and evaluating policies to promote healthy choices and to address the obesity epidemic, especially in terms of cost-effectiveness and downstream health and cost impact.

Wang is a fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine and of The Obesity Society. She serves on the advisory committee of AGree, a cross-sector initiative funded by nine of the world's leading foundations to drive positive transformative change in the food and agriculture system. Wang has an MD from National Taiwan University in Taipei, Taiwan, and an MS in epidemiology and ScD in health policy and decision sciences from Harvard School of Public Health.