

**Letter to the Editor – *Washington Post*
October 25, 2022**

Post Article Is a Disservice to the Nation’s Registered Dietitian Nutritionists

The *Post*’s October 24 online article “Group shaping nutrition policy earned millions from junk food makers” falsely implies the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is largely funded, and thus influenced, by the food industry.

The article and the deeply flawed report on which it is based are an affront to tens of thousands of registered dietitian nutritionists who are on the front lines of helping Americans improve their health through nutrition. As the nation’s leading organization of food and nutrition professionals, the Academy advocates for policies and practices that benefit individuals and communities alike; encourage food security and equity; and work to eradicate hunger and malnutrition especially among at-risk populations.

Academy members, the majority of whom are registered dietitian nutritionists, conduct rigorous scientific studies to develop realistic solutions for improving nutrition, health and wellness at every stage of life, from prenatal to elder care.

It is preposterous to say the Academy is “funded” by industry sponsors when, in our most recent fiscal year, 95% of the Academy’s annual budget came from members’ dues; credentialing fees, participation in educational events; purchase of publications and subscriptions; and our accreditation program. This information was easily available for the asking.

Similarly, the Academy’s Foundation, which funds scholarships, fellowships and research studies that advance and diversify our profession, receives the vast majority of its fundings from nutrition and dietetics professionals. Just over 10% of the Foundation’s 2022 revenue in the last fiscal year came from outside corporate support of any kind, not just food companies. Approximately 1.5% of the Academy’s total holdings are in food industry-related investments. And *all* our investments are managed independently by a fund manager with no input from the Academy.

All of this is information, and more is fully transparent to the public and is included in audited annual reports that are published to the Academy’s website.

With more reporting and a less credulous attitude toward a juicy-sounding story, the *Post* would have learned these facts. You also would have learned that the authors of this questionable and misleading report include zealots who seek to demonize industry and are themselves funded by corporations with a business interest in competing with registered dietitian nutritionists, with little regard for the facts.

The Academy takes pride in our realistic and pragmatic approach to working with the food industry. We have stringent guidelines for corporate sponsorships that ensure all relationships help achieve the Academy’s vision and mission; promote nutrition science; share our members’ knowledge, and reach the widest possible audience of consumers, other health professionals and policy makers.

Ellen R. Shanley, MBA, RDN, CDN, FAND
President, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
President@eatright.org