

# What Ohioans Think about *Increasing the State Cigarette Tax*



The  
**Health**  
Foundation  
of Greater Cincinnati

Like many states, Ohio is facing current and future state budget deficits. Concerns about these deficits and the negative effects of smoking have renewed Ohio's interest in an increase in the state cigarette tax. Some believe that increasing this tax will not only bring in more revenue for the state, it will also reduce smoking, especially among teens.

While 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. (18%) are current smokers,<sup>1</sup> the *Poll* found that 1 in 4 Ohio adults (25%) are current smokers. An estimated 22% of Ohio youth in grades 9–12 are current smokers.<sup>2</sup>

Smoking is costly, not only to the health of those exposed to cigarette smoke but also to the community. In 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that the total economic cost associated with cigarette smoking in Ohio was \$9.19 for each pack of cigarettes sold here.<sup>3</sup> This includes direct medical

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, accessed on 6/29/2010 from: <http://www.cdc.gov/BRFSS/>

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, accessed 7/7/2010 from <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Default.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Sustaining State Programs for Tobacco Control: Data Highlights 2006*, accessed on 6/29/2010 from: [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/state\\_data/data\\_highlights/2006/pdfs/dataHighlights06rev.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/state_data/data_highlights/2006/pdfs/dataHighlights06rev.pdf)

## Ohioans who favor a \$0.40 per pack tax increase in the cost of cigarettes



costs of \$4.45 per pack and lost productivity costs of \$4.74 per pack.

The 2010 *Ohio Health Issues Poll* asked Ohio adults if they would support an increase in the state tax on cigarettes.

## Ohioans Split on \$0.40 Increase in Cigarette Tax

Just under half of Ohio adults (48%) favor a \$0.40 increase in cigarette taxes, and half (50%) oppose it.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, the majority of Ohioans who have never smoked (65%) supported the tax increase.

Support for an increase in cigarette taxes was highest among college graduates (69%), Ohioans living above 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG; 55%),<sup>5</sup> and young adults ages 18–24

<sup>4</sup> The remaining 2% of Ohioans answered "neither," "don't know," or "not sure."

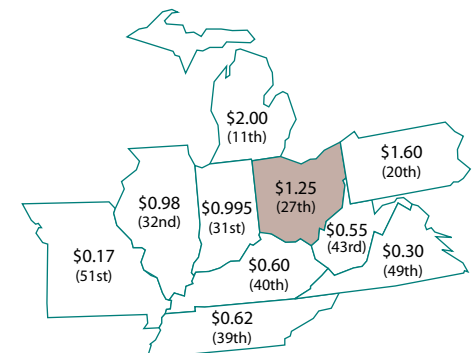
<sup>5</sup> 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2009 was an annual household income of \$44,100 for a family of 4.

(53%) (please see the graphic on the back page). These are the same subgroups that reported higher rates of having never smoked.

## State Cigarette Taxes

As of July 1, 2010, state cigarette taxes ranged from \$4.35 in New York to \$0.17 in Missouri, according to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.<sup>6</sup>

Ohio has the 27th lowest cigarette tax rate at \$1.25 per pack. Ohio has a higher tax rate than all of its Southern neighbors and Indiana, but a lower rate than its Northern neighbors.



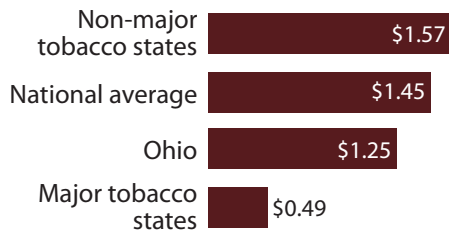
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<sup>6</sup> Data available at <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0097.pdf>

These findings unless otherwise noted are from The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati's *Ohio Health Issues Poll*, part of the *Ohio Poll* conducted May 11–20, 2010, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 898 adults from throughout Ohio was interviewed by telephone. This included 818 landline interviews and 80 cell phone interviews with people who did not have a landline telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, statewide estimates will be accurate to  $\pm 3.3\%$ . In addition to sampling error, there are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias. For more information about the *Ohio Health Issues Poll*, please visit [www.healthfoundation.org/ohip.html](http://www.healthfoundation.org/ohip.html).

The national average for cigarette taxes, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is \$1.45 per pack.

### Average state tobacco taxes per pack

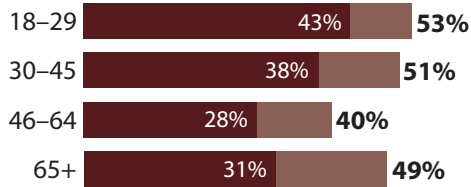


Source: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, available at [www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0097.pdf](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0097.pdf).

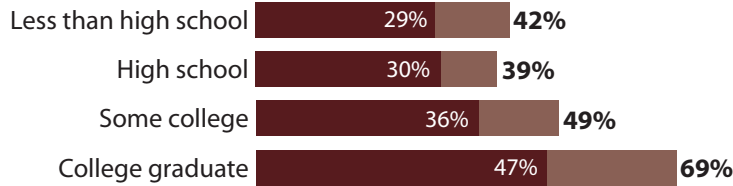
### Ohioans who favor a \$0.40 per pack tax increase in the cost of cigarettes



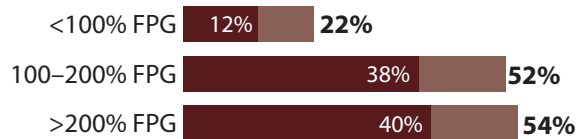
#### Age



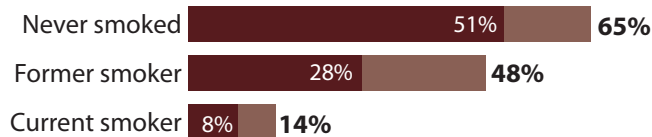
#### Highest level of education completed



#### Household income\*



#### Smoking status



Strongly favor Favor somewhat

\*100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2009 was an annual household income of \$22,050 for a family of 4.