



# Most favor raising age to buy tobacco; split on tax increase

The **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)**, sponsored by Interact for Health and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, asked Kentucky adults their opinions about two tobacco policies. Do you favor or oppose raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age? Do you favor or oppose raising the state's excise tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$1?

These policies can deter young people from starting to smoke cigarettes.<sup>1</sup> More than one in 4 Kentucky adults (26%) reported being a smoker. Nationally, 18.1% of adults reported smoking cigarettes.<sup>2</sup>

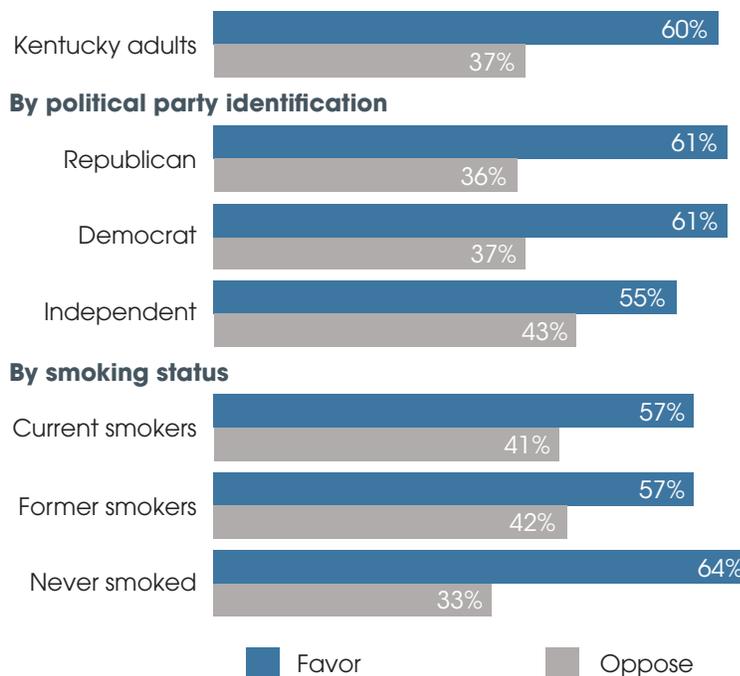
## Kentucky adults favor raising age to buy tobacco to 21

Raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products would likely delay young adults from starting to smoke and, in the long run, reduce

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs (Section I. State and Community Interventions), 2014. Retrieved from: <http://1.usa.gov/1RL9try>

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://1.usa.gov/1PADDxR>

**Do you favor or oppose increasing the minimum legal age to purchase tobacco products from 18 years of age to 21 years of age?\*** (Percentages do not add to 100% because the responses "no opinion" and "don't know" are not included.)



\* KHIP asked: "Some people favor increasing the minimum legal age to purchase tobacco products from 18 years of age to 21 years of age, while others do not. What about you? Do you favor or oppose increasing the minimum legal age to purchase tobacco products from 18 years of age to 21 years of age?"

smoking-related health problems.<sup>3</sup> Only one state, Hawaii, has raised the minimum legal age for buying tobacco products to 21. At present, 115 local jurisdictions in nine states

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products, March 2015. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1NlIGxj>

have enacted laws to raise the age to 21.<sup>4</sup> Six in 10 Kentucky adults (60%) favored raising the legal age to buy tobacco to 21.

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<sup>4</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Increasing the Minimum Legal Sale Age for Tobacco Products to 21, Jan. 2016. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1OZ5QbW>

These findings unless otherwise noted are from the Kentucky Health Issues Poll, funded by the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and Interact for Health. The Kentucky Health Issues Poll was conducted Sept. 17-Oct. 7, 2015, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 1,608 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. This included 986 landline interviews and 622 cell phone interviews with cell phone users. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to  $\pm 2.4\%$ . 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 Kentucky Health Issues Poll, please visit [www.healthy-ky.org](http://www.healthy-ky.org) or [www.interactforhealth.org/kentucky-health-issues-poll](http://www.interactforhealth.org/kentucky-health-issues-poll).

## Majorities of all political parties favor raising legal age to buy tobacco

Majorities of Republicans (61%), Democrats (61%) and Independents (55%) all favored raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21.

## Majorities of smokers, former smokers and nonsmokers favor raising minimum age

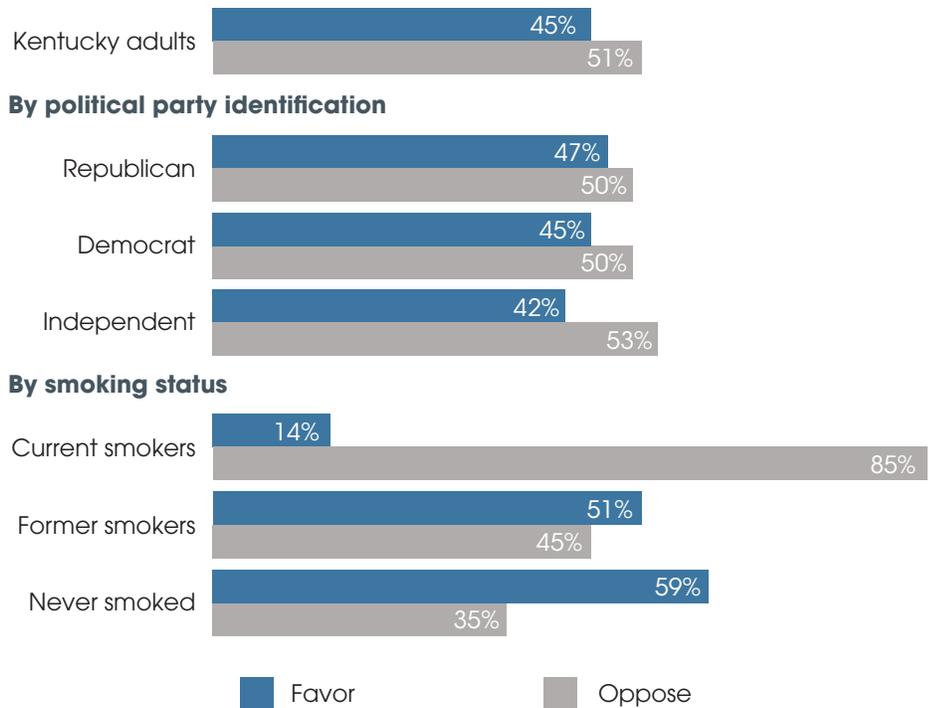
Fifty-seven percent of current cigarette smokers and 57% of former smokers favored raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. Likewise, a majority of Kentucky adults who never smoked (64%) favored this change.

## Adults divided on tax; holds across political party lines

In Kentucky the excise tax on a pack of cigarettes is 60 cents per pack. Kentucky is one of 11 states with an excise tax of 60 cents or less.<sup>5</sup> Kentucky adults were nearly evenly divided when asked if the tax should be raised by \$1, with slightly more opposing the increase. Fifty-one percent opposed and 45% favored increasing the tax. Likewise, Democrats, Republicans and Independents reported similar divisions about raising the tax.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, STATE System Excise Tax Fact Sheet, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://chronicdata.cdc.gov/Legislation/STATE-System-Excise-Tax-Fact-Sheet/tsmn-nssw>

**Do you favor or oppose increasing the excise tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$1?\*** (Percentages do not add to 100% because the responses "no opinion" and "don't know" are not included.)



\* KHIP asked: "The Commonwealth of Kentucky currently places BOTH a sales tax AND a \$0.60 cent per pack excise tax on the sale of cigarettes. One proposal would raise the current excise tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$1.00. This would bring the total excise tax on a pack of cigarettes to \$1.60 per pack. Do you favor or oppose increasing the excise tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$1.00?"

## Current smokers oppose raising excise tax

More than 8 in 10 current smokers (85%) opposed raising Kentucky's excise tax on cigarettes by \$1. Former smokers were split about raising the tax. About 4 in 10 former smokers (45%) opposed raising the tax, while 5 in 10 (51%) favored raising it. Adults who reported never having smoked were most likely to favor raising the tax. One in four Kentucky adults reported being a current smoker (26%) or a former smoker (26%), and nearly half (47%) reported they had never smoked.