



73% OF GEORGIA VOTERS FAVOR \$1 TOBACCO TAX INCREASE TO HELP CUT STATE'S BUDGET DEFICIT

Results of a survey conducted by Glen Bolger, Public Opinion Strategies, February 23-25, 2010, of 500 likely voters in Georgia with a margin of error of +/-4.38%

- 73 percent of Georgia voters support raising the tobacco tax by \$1 per pack to cut the state's budget deficit and help preserve Medicaid funding in the state.
- This support comes from a broad-based coalition of voters, including 72 percent of Republicans, 79 percent of Democrats, and 65 percent of Independents.
- Half of smokers (50 percent) support the tobacco tax increase to preserve health care funding.

Increasing the tobacco tax also is by far the most palatable approach to addressing Georgia's budget woes. While 71 percent of voters supported increasing the tobacco tax for this purpose, more than two-thirds opposed every other option presented, including increasing state income and sales taxes, implementing a grocery tax and a hospital bed tax, and reducing funding for education and health care programs.

Proposal	Total Favor	Total Oppose
Increase the state tobacco tax	71%	28%
Reduce funding for Medicaid services	28%	71%
Reduce the number of days in a school week	27%	68%
Increase the state sales tax	27%	71%
Increase class size for state schools	24%	73%
Reduce funding for state health care programs	22%	73%
Increase the state income tax	19%	78%
Implement a state tax on groceries	13%	85%
Reduce funding for K-12 education	13%	86%
Implement a hospital bed tax	10%	81%

The survey also found among Georgia voters:

- 60 percent are more likely to support candidates who favor the proposal, while just 19 percent are less likely to do so.
- 77 percent favor taxing other tobacco products such as cigars and smokeless tobacco at a rate comparable to cigarettes.

Georgia's current cigarette tax is 37 cents per pack, which ranks 47th in the nation and is well below the national average of \$1.34 per pack.

A recent report by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and other public health organizations found that a **\$1 increase** in Georgia's tobacco tax would raise **\$354.5 million in new annual revenue**. Such an increase would also **prevent 79,600 Georgia kids from smoking, save 38,400 state residents from premature, smoking-caused deaths** and **save \$1.8 billion in tobacco-related health care costs** (for more information, go to www.tobaccofreekids.org/winwinwin).

The survey of 500 registered Georgia voters was released by a coalition of groups including the American Heart Association, American Lung Association, American Cancer Society and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Learn more at:

www.howmanyreasons.org