

***Missouri Voters’
Opinions On
Tobacco Taxation***

Survey of Registered Voters

**Center for Social Sciences and Public Policy Research
Missouri State University**

March 2007

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Table of Contents

Background of Study	iii
Executive Summary	iv
Responses to Survey Questions	
Should We Spend Settlement Money On Prevention?.....	1
What Percentage of Settlement Should Be Spent on Prevention?.....	1
Did You Vote in Last November's Election?	2
How Did You Vote on Proposal to Increase Tax to \$.80?.....	2
Why Did You Favor the Tax Increase?	3
Why Did You Oppose the Tax Increase?	3
Would You Vote for a Smaller Tax Increase?.....	4
How Many Cents Tax Increase Would You Support?	4
Demographics	
Respondent's Age Category.....	5
Respondent's Political Party Preference.....	5
Smokes at Least Most Days of the Week	6
Respondent's Sex	6
Crosstabulations	
How Voted on Proposed Tobacco Tax by Age.....	7
Should Spend Settlement Money on Prevention by Sex.....	7
How Voted on Proposed Tobacco Tax by Sex.....	8
Should Spend Settlement Money on Prevention by Smoking Status.....	8
How Voted on Proposed Tobacco Tax by Smoking Status.....	9
Would Vote for Smaller Tax by Smoking Status.....	9
Responses to Narrative Questions	10

Background of the Study

In this study the Center for Social Sciences and Public Policy Research (CSSPPR) measured the comments and opinions of a random sample of 690 registered voters in Missouri. Questions focused primarily on opinions of how the settlement money acquired by the state as a result of a law suit of the tobacco industry should be spent and reasons why respondents voted either for or against a November 2006 proposal to increase taxation of tobacco products. This report summarizes dominant trends in opinions and voting behaviors. The analysis also includes crosstabulation of opinions by demographic categories where statistically significant relationships exist.

Between February 21 and March 3, 2007, 690 random registered voters in Missouri were contacted by telephone and administered a questionnaire. The interviews were conducted by students in Dr. Timothy Knapp and Dr. Gary Brinker's research methods classes. Interviewers were supervised by one or both of these researchers, as well as by experienced CSSPPR staff members. Data were collected utilizing CSSPPR's computer-assisted telephone interviewing system, which utilizes state-of-the-art software to manage the sample, automatically dial respondents' phone numbers, monitor interviewer performance and directly enter responses into a digital data base. Using these automated features greatly enhances the validity of the survey data collected.

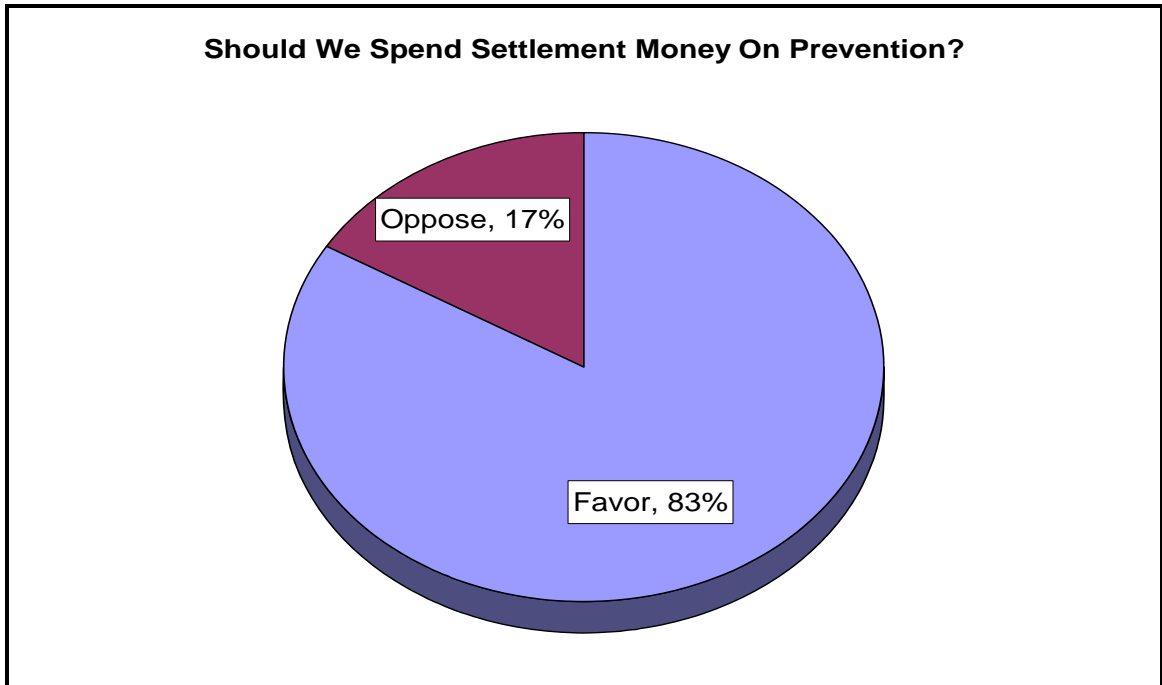
The sample size of 690 results in a margin of error of +/- 3.8%, with a response rate of 56%. In the detailed analysis following the Executive Summary, the results of the survey are presented in the order that questions were asked. For the open-ended questions, responses are shown as submitted by the respondent, edited only for punctuation and grammar.

Executive Summary

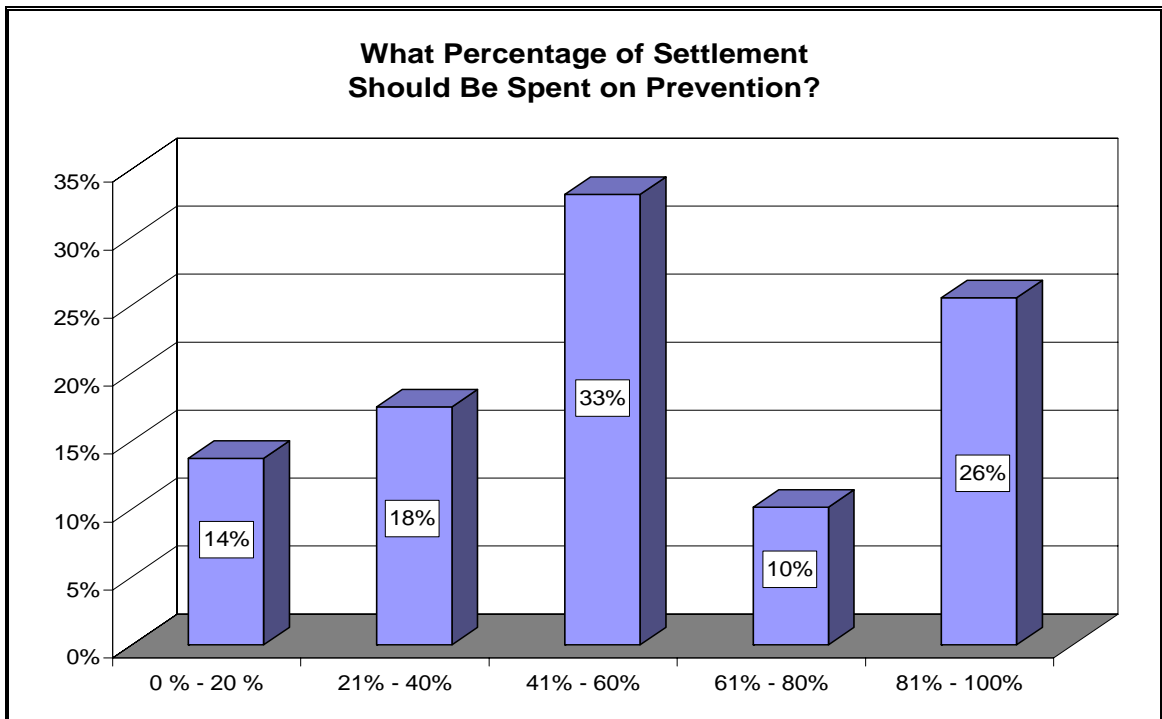
- Over four-fifths of respondents favored spending at least some of the tobacco settlement money on prevention. On average, those favoring this measure wanted 57% of the settlement money spent on prevention.
- Over half of respondents said they voted in favor of the proposed 80¢ per pack tobacco tax. Of those who voted against the proposed tax, about one-third said they would support a smaller tax averaging 40¢ per pack.
- The most commonly cited reasons for favoring the tobacco tax were to encourage people to quit, to support tobacco cessation programs and to prevent tobacco use by youth.
- The most commonly cited reasons for opposing the tobacco tax were because the respondent was a smoker, the respondent does not trust the government to spend the tax revenues as intended and the respondent is generally opposed to “sin” taxes.
- Cross-tabulations and statistical tests were used to determine if four demographic factors were related to three attitude and behavior variables. The background factors were: age category, political party affiliation, gender, and whether or not respondents use tobacco regularly. Political party affiliation was not related to any of the three outcome variables.
- While strong majorities of smokers and nonsmokers agree that Missouri should spend some tobacco settlement money on programs to prevent people from starting to smoke or to help current smokers quit, nonsmokers (85%) were more likely to agree than smokers (77.6%). (sig. \leq .05)
- Gender also was related to respondents’ opinion about spending some tobacco settlement money for smoking prevention programs. Nearly 87% of females favored such spending, while 80% of males did. (sig. \leq .05)

- Two demographic factors were related to how people voted on last November's proposed 80 cents per pack tobacco tax increase. Not surprisingly, 78.4% of regular tobacco users voted against the proposal, while only 36.4% of non-smokers voted against the proposed tax hike. (sig. \leq .01)
- Gender also affected how people voted on the cigarette tax increase proposal. Males were fairly evenly split on the issue, with 51% for and 49% against a tax increase. However, a clear majority, 61.3%, of women voted for the proposal. (sig. \leq .05)
- Among those who opposed last November's proposed cigarette tax hike, regular tobacco use and age category affected whether respondents would vote for a smaller tax increase in the future. Again, not surprisingly, just fewer than 29% of regular smokers would vote for a smaller future increase in tobacco taxes, while 42% of nonsmokers who voted "No" to the 80¢ per pack increase last November said they would support a smaller future tax increase. (sig. \leq .05)
- Age also was related to views about future smaller tobacco tax hikes. Majorities in the youngest and oldest age categories (63.6% of those 18 to 29, and 51.9% of those 70 or older) would vote for a smaller tax increase in the future. Stronger majorities in the middle age categories would vote against such a measure. (sig. \leq .10)

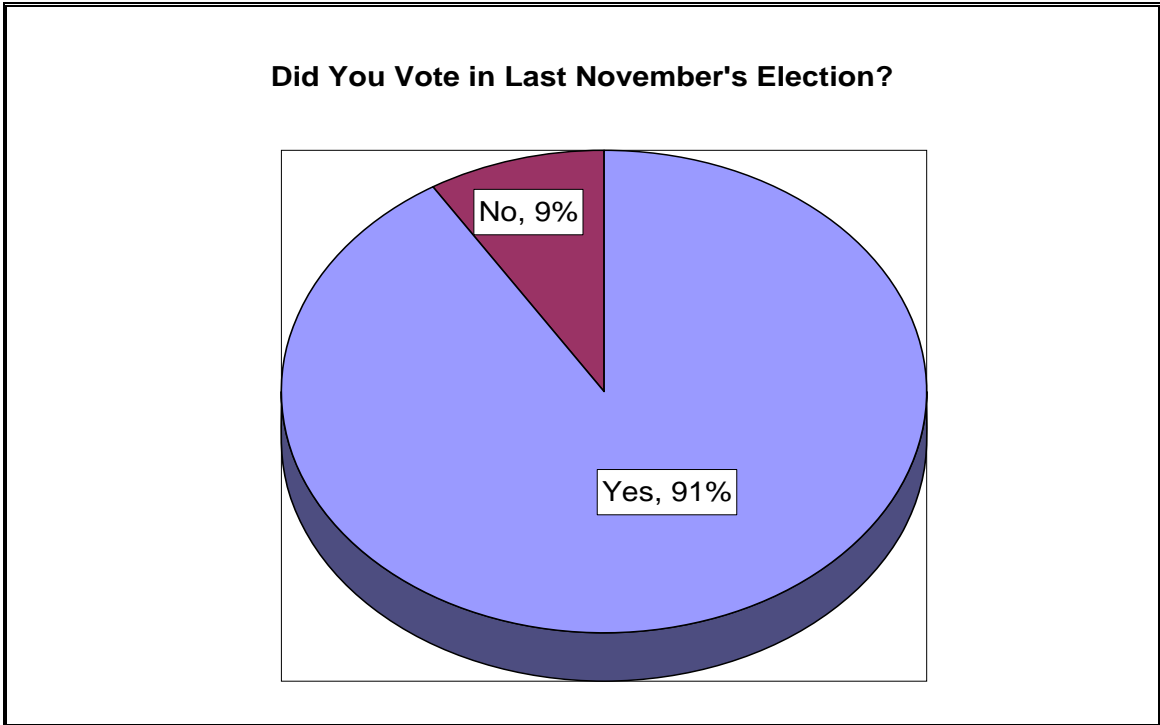
Survey Questions



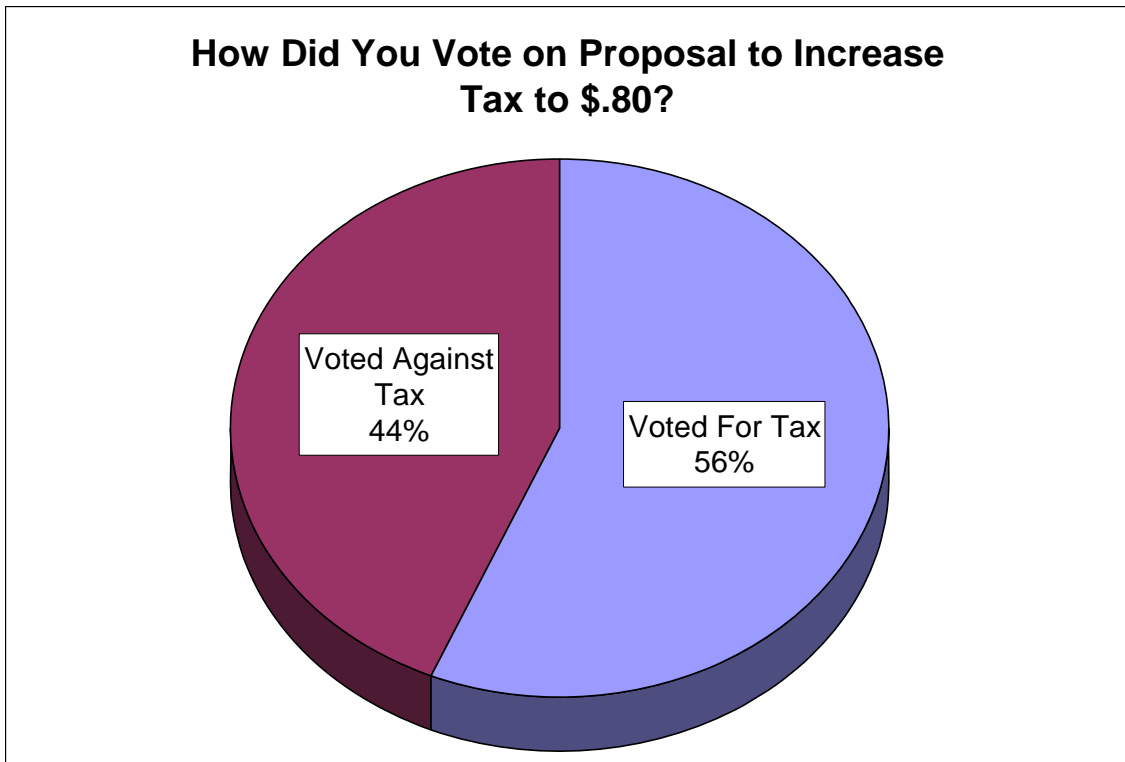
Over four-fifths of those responding to the question (77.8% of the sample) said they favored spending at least some of the 160 million dollar tobacco settlement money on prevention.



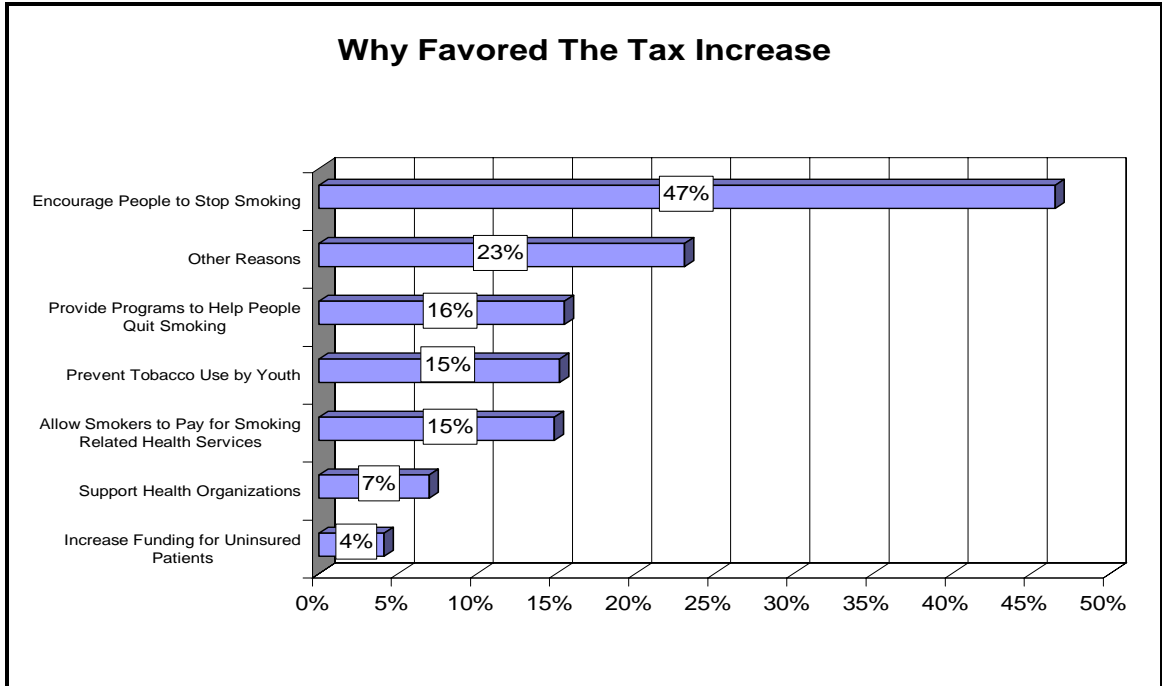
Among the 83% of respondents who said they favored spending some of the tobacco settlement money on prevention, one-third said about half of the money should be spent for this purpose. Just under one-third favored spending less than 41% on prevention, while over one-third said more than 60% of the settlement money should be spent on prevention. Almost one-fourth favored spending all of the money on prevention.



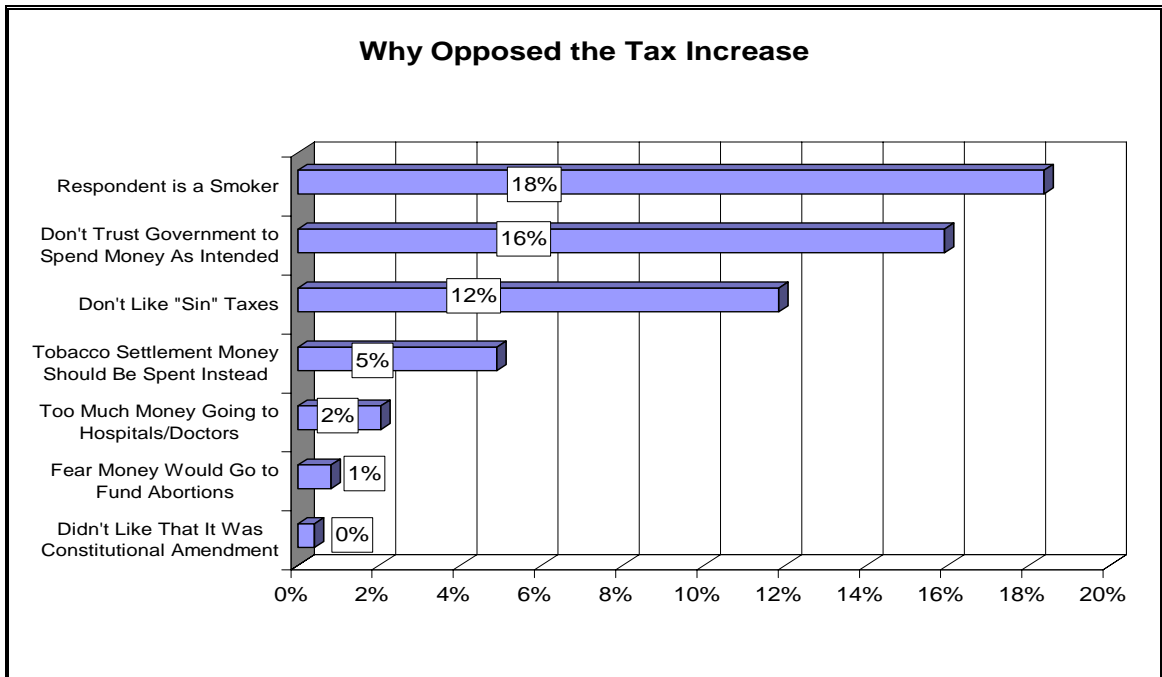
All respondents of the survey reported being a registered voter, while over nine-tenths of these registered voters said they had voted in the last election.



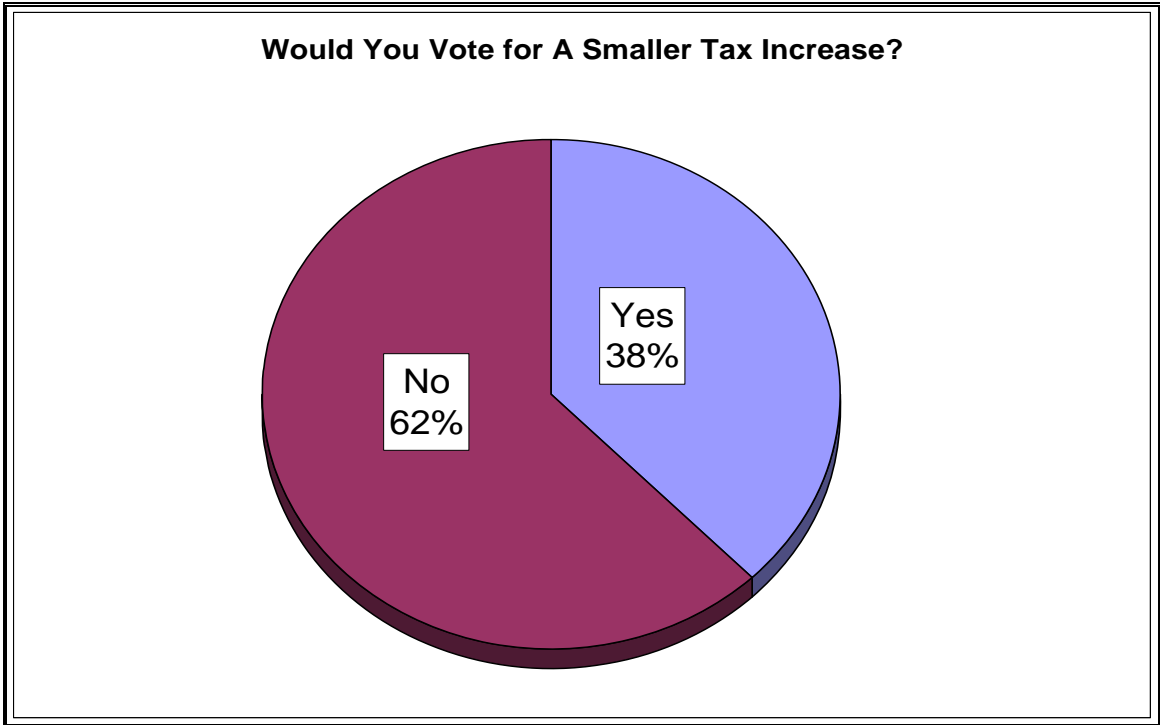
Of the registered voters who voted in the last election, just over half said they voted in favor of the 80¢ per pack cigarette tax, while just under half said they voted against the tax.



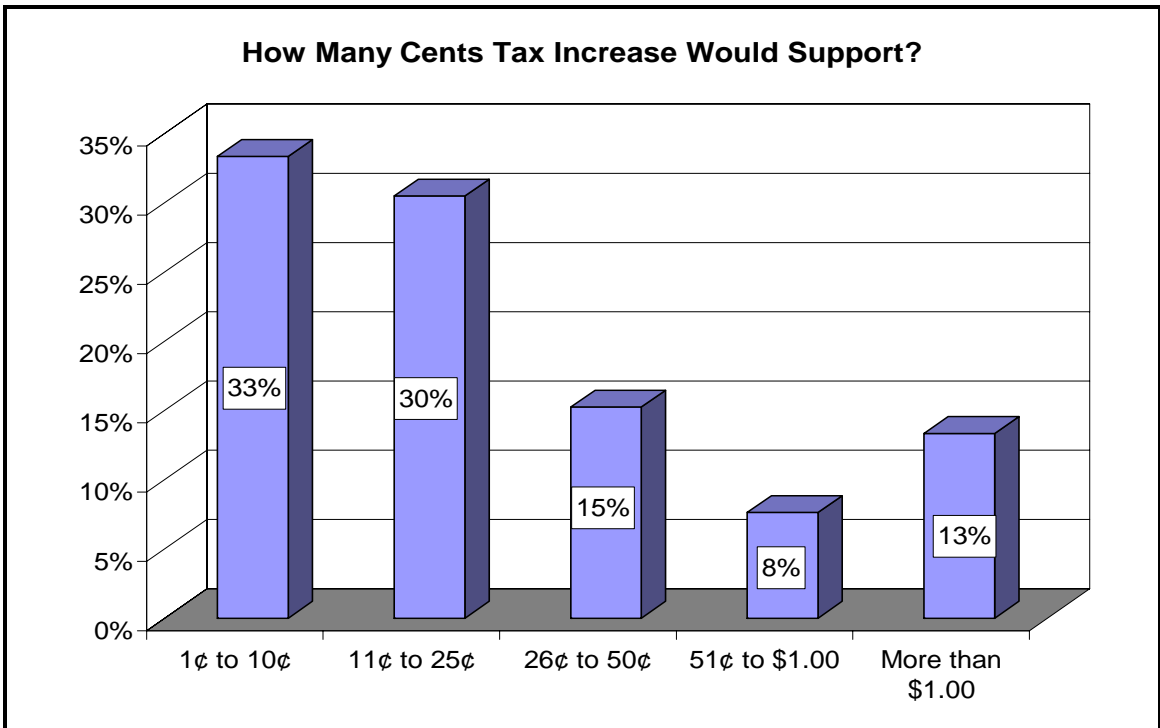
Voters who said they voted in favor of the tobacco tax were asked why. The most commonly cited reasons were to encourage other people to quit, to prevent tobacco use by youth and to provide a way to allow smokers to help pay for smoking related health services.



Voters who said they voted against the tobacco tax were also asked why. The most common reasons cited for opposing increased tobacco taxation by these respondents were that they were smokers, they didn't trust the government to spend the money as intended and that they were generally opposed to "sin" taxes.

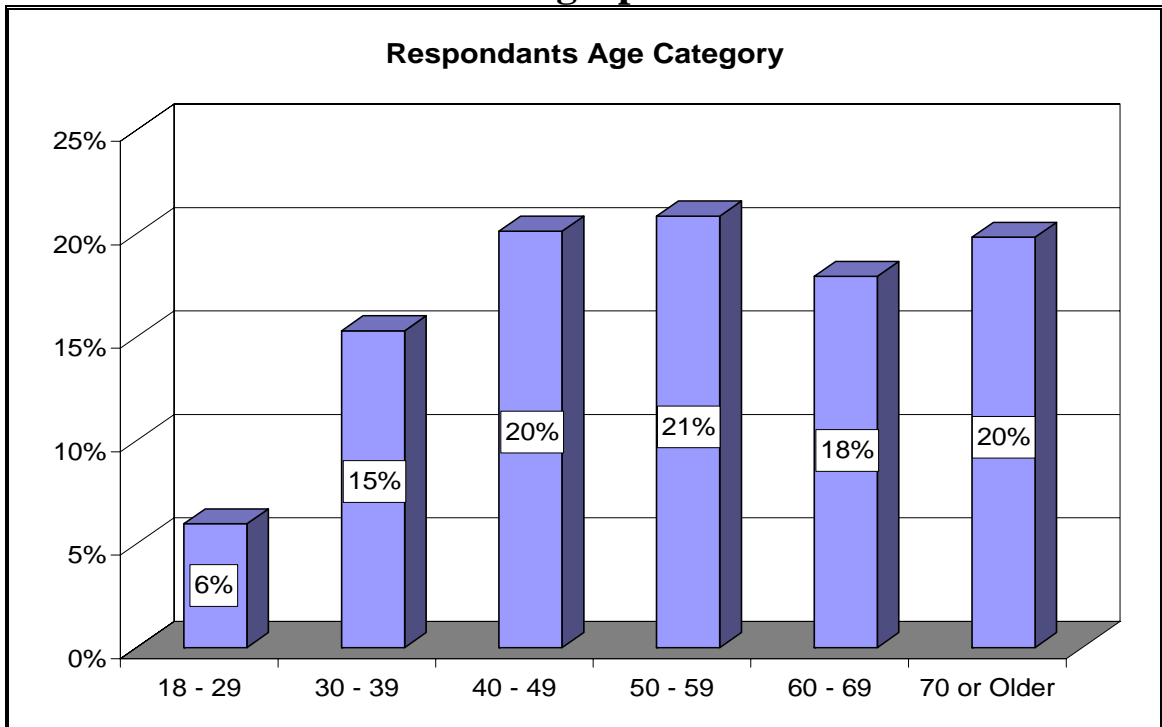


Among the respondents who said they voted against the tobacco taxation legislation, over one-third said they would have voted for a smaller tax increase. Almost two-thirds of those who voted against the 80¢ tax indicated they would not support any increase in tobacco taxation at all.

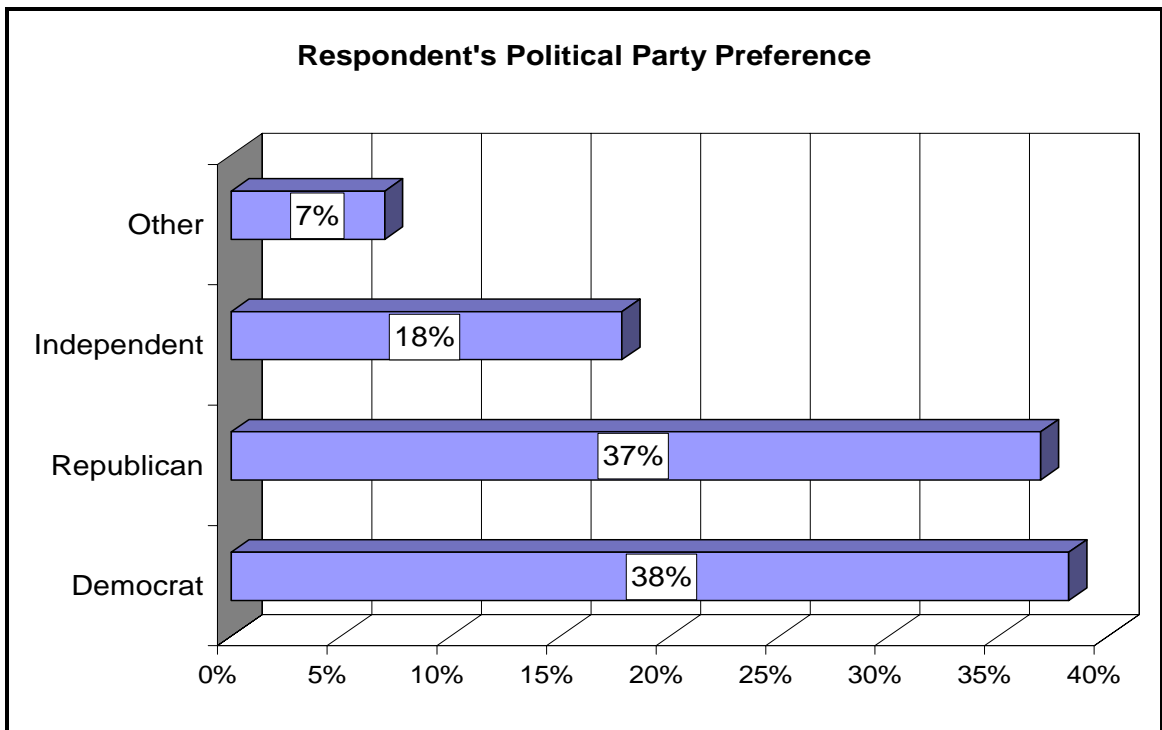


Among the respondents who voted against the 80¢ per pack increase, but would have voted for a smaller increase, about one-third favored a tax hike of less than 10¢ per pack, while two-thirds favored a tax increase of less than 25¢ per pack. Ironically, 13% said they would support a tax increase of over \$1.00 per pack.

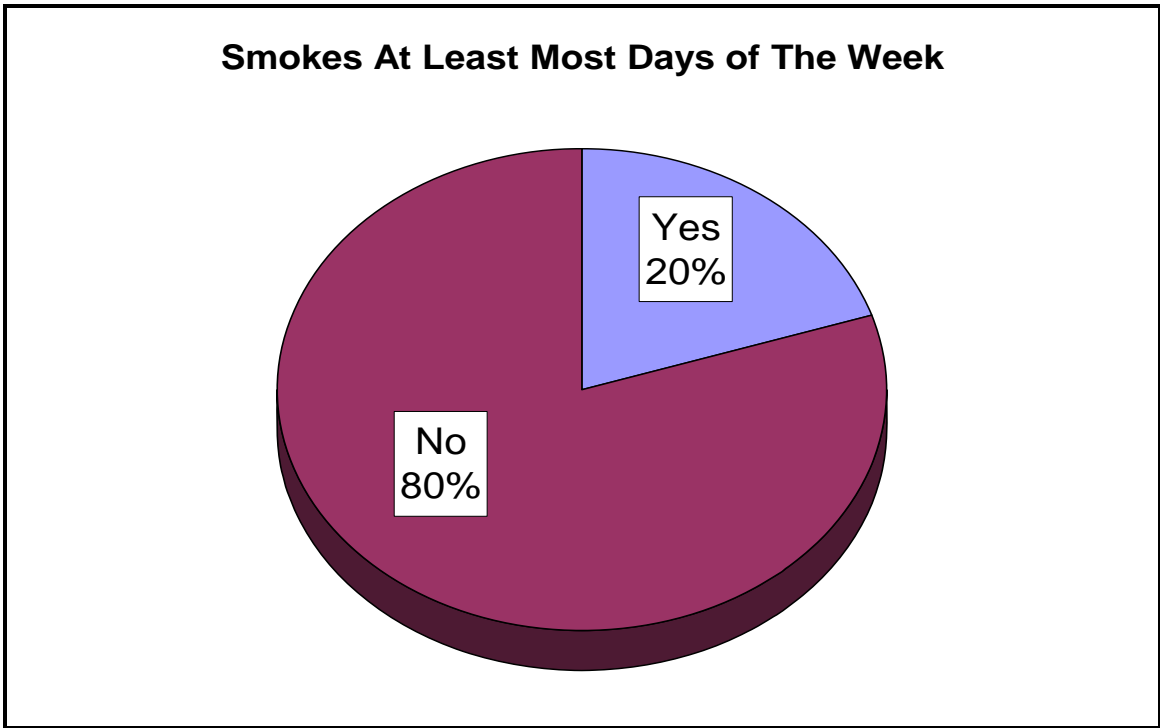
Demographics



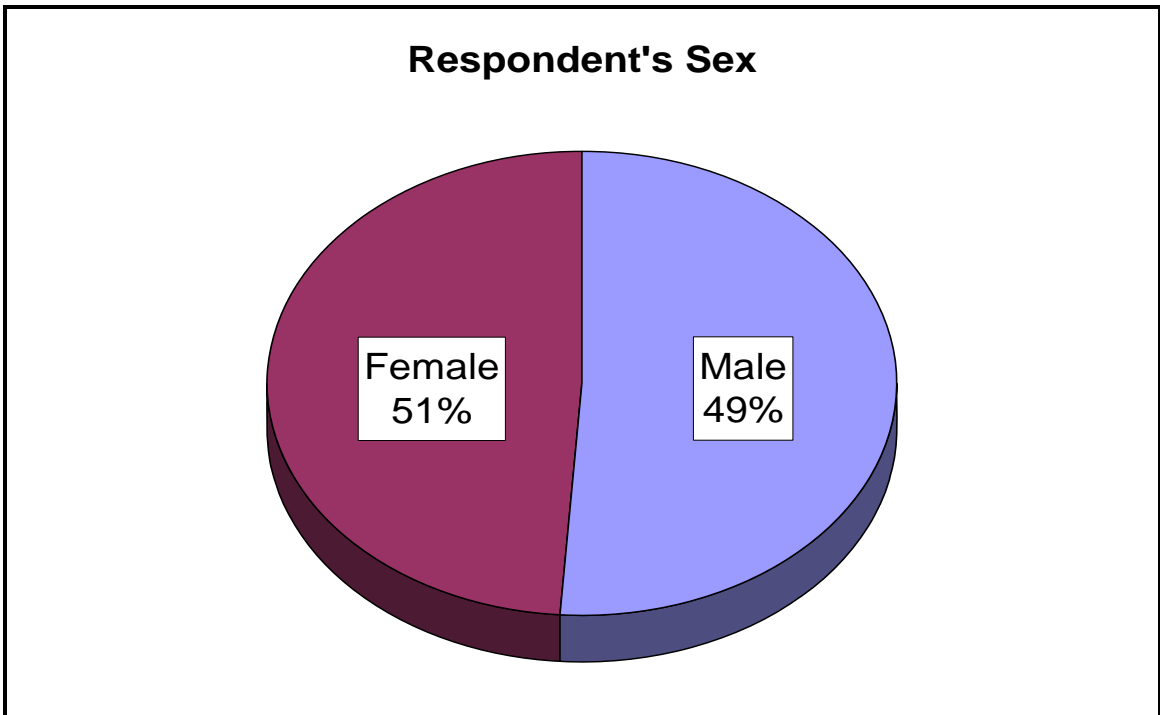
The sample age distribution shows roughly equal participation by most age groups. The low percentage of respondents under 29 suggests low voter registration and survey participation in this age range.



The sample statistics show equal participation by members of both major political parties. Independents and persons from non-traditional parties are also represented in the sample.

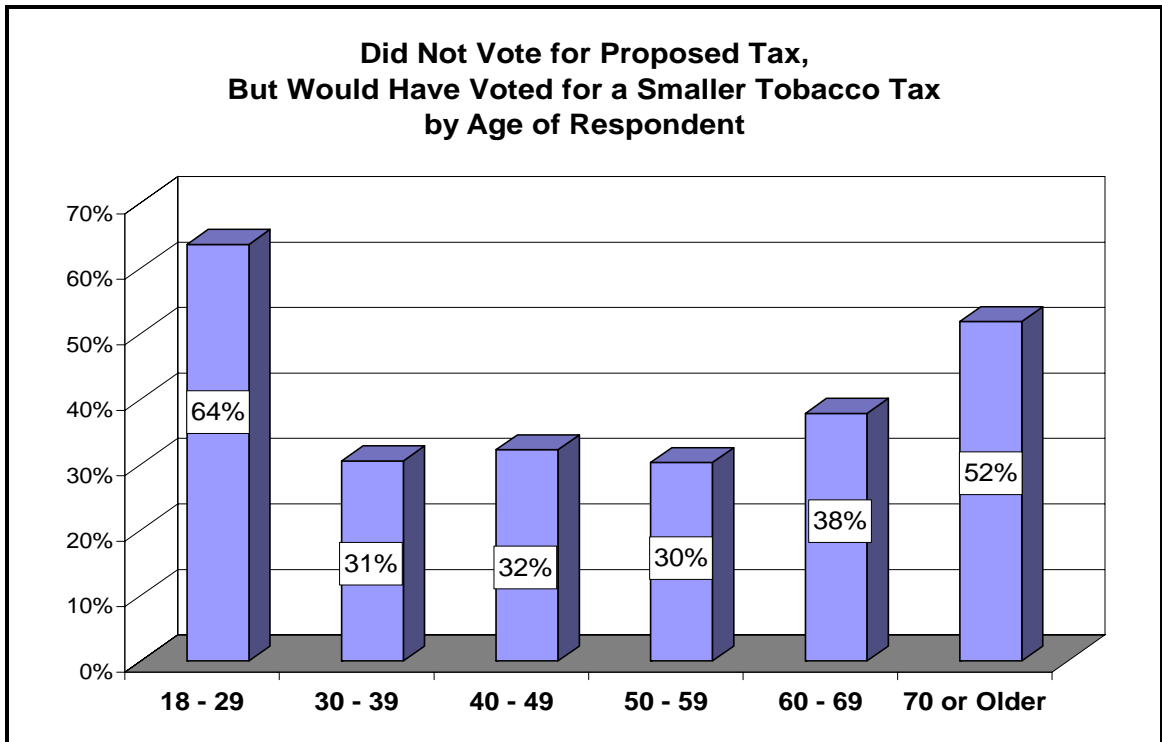


About one-fifth of respondents were regular smokers.

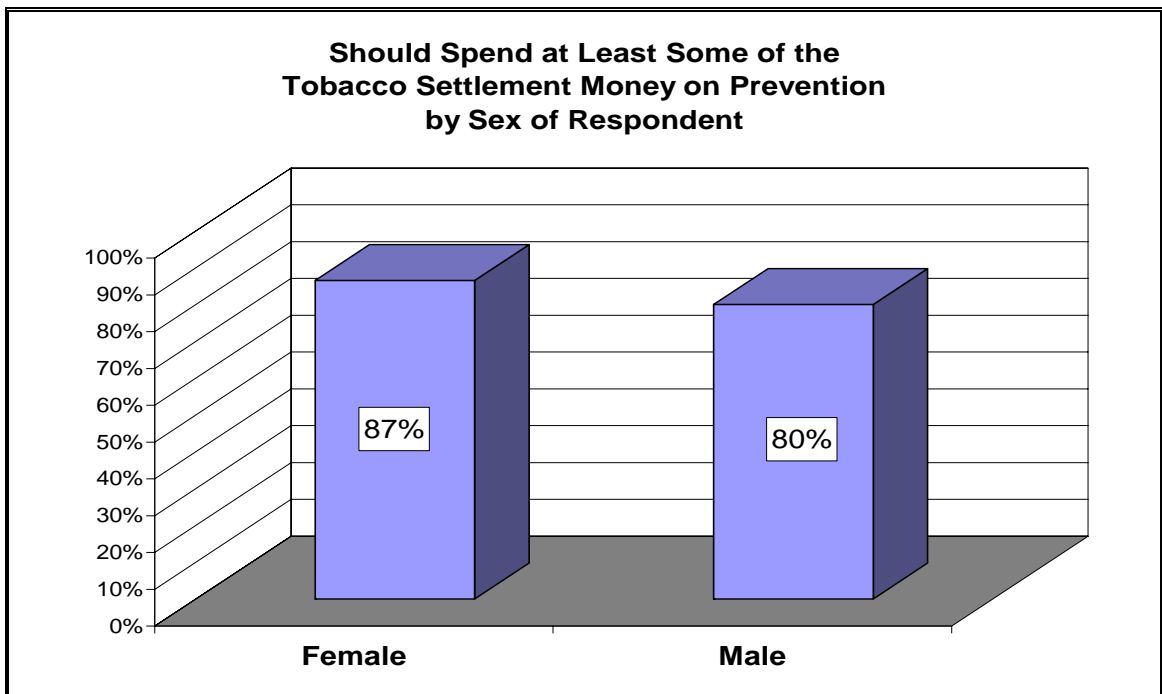


Males and females were equally represented in the survey sample.

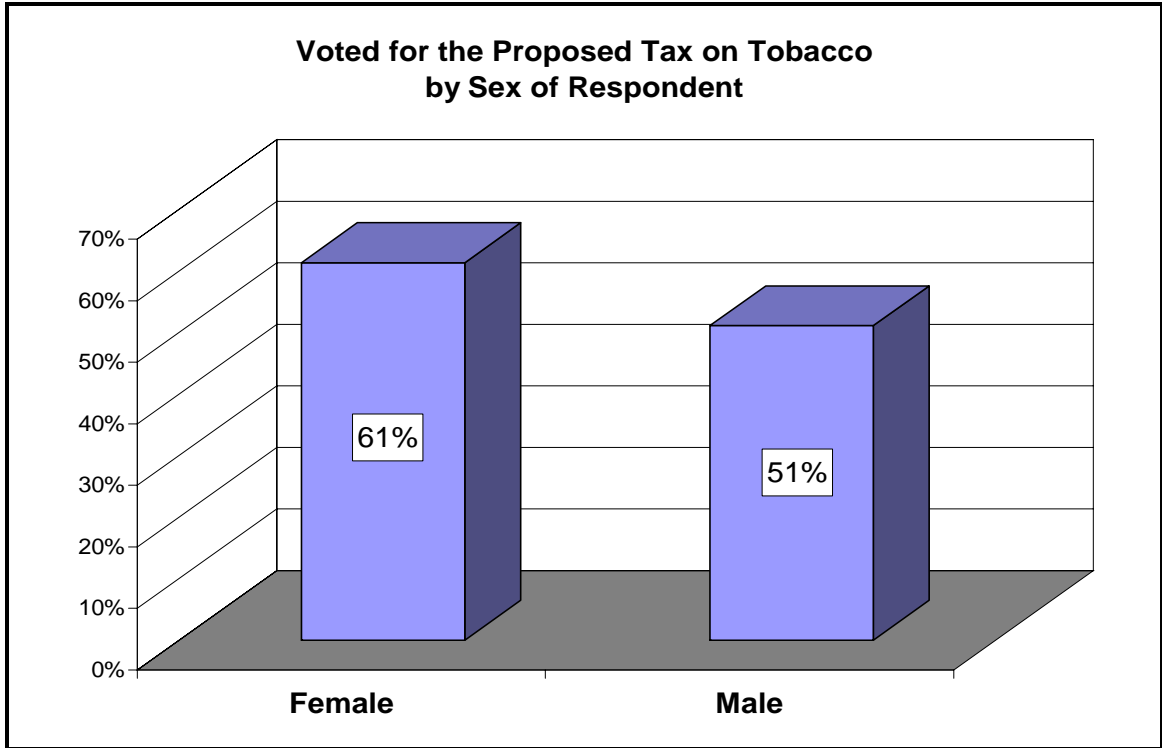
Crosstabulations



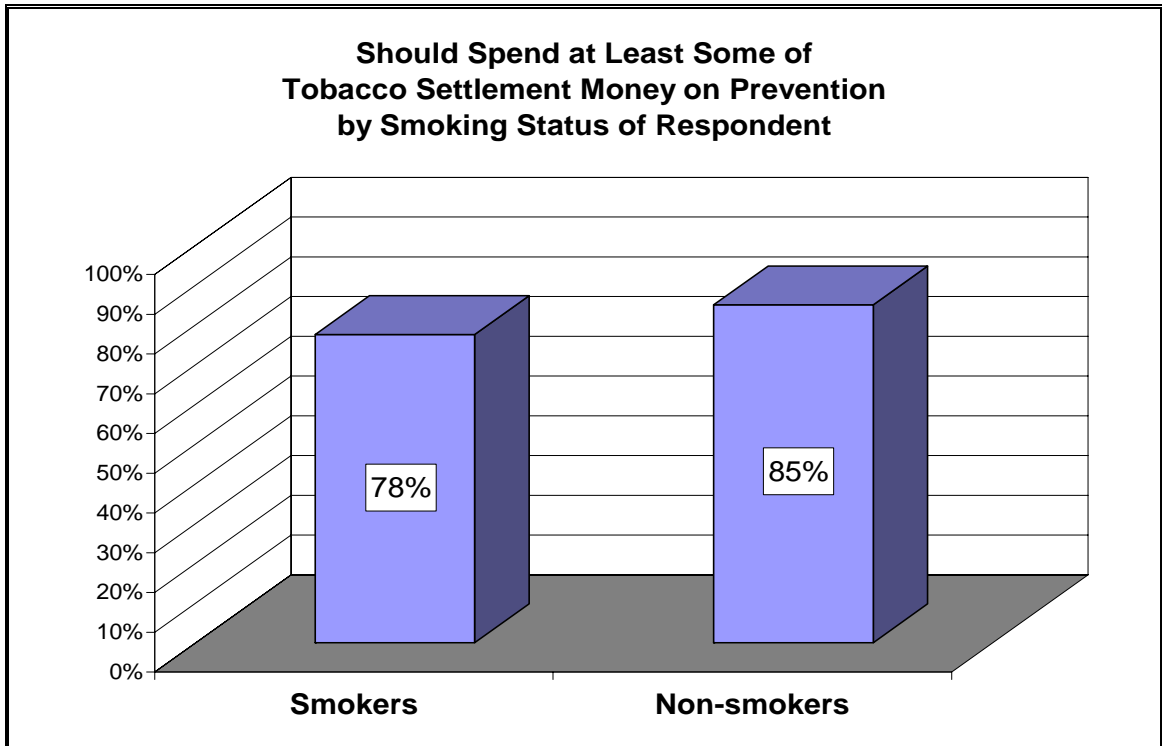
Of the respondents who voted against the proposed tobacco tax, those under 30 or over 69 years of age were most likely to say they would have voted for a smaller tobacco tax. Only about one-third of these respondents age 30 to 59 said they would vote for a smaller tax.



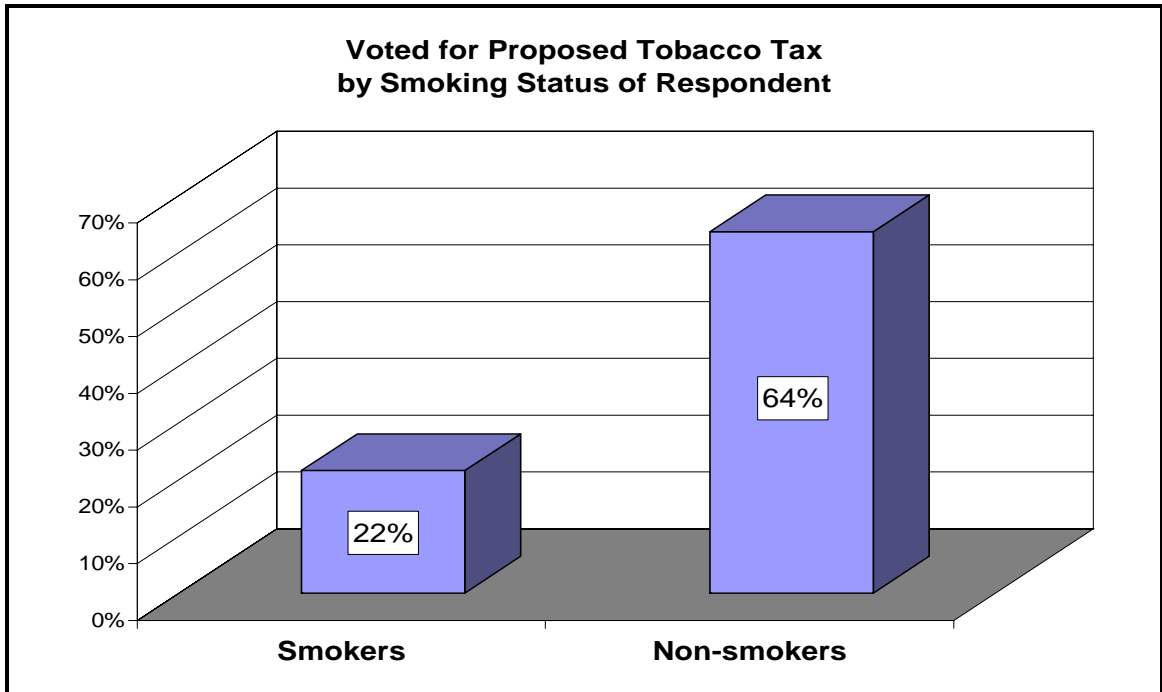
Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to say they favored spending at least some of the tobacco settlement money on prevention.



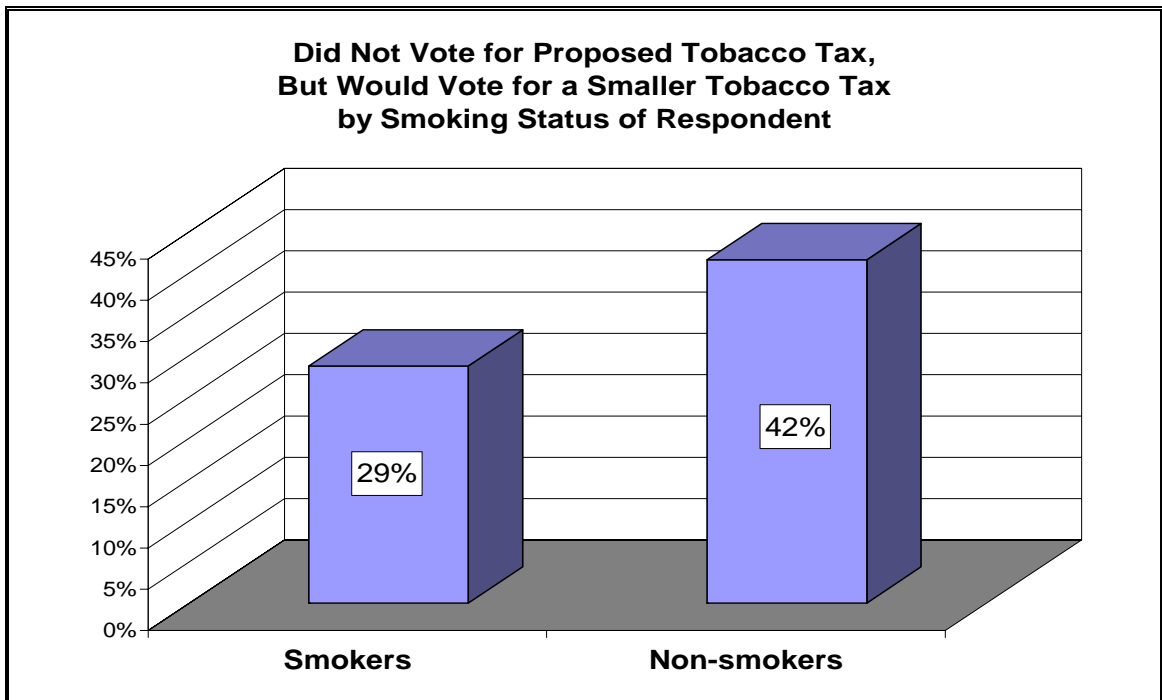
Female respondents were also more likely than male respondents to say they voted for the proposed 80¢ per pack tax on tobacco.



Although over three-fourths of smoking respondents favored spending at least some of the tobacco settlement money on prevention programs, non-smoking respondents were somewhat more likely to favor this policy.



Non-smoking respondents were much more likely than smokers to say they voted for the proposed tobacco tax.



Of the respondents who said they did not vote for the proposed tobacco tax, non-smokers were more likely than smokers to say they would support a smaller tobacco tax.

Narrative Responses

Q5: Why did you vote FOR the proposed 80 cents per pack increase in taxes on cigarettes? [Other]

I don't smoke. (7)

To prevent all people from starting to smoke.

To make people quit smoking.

Just to help people quit.

To help family members quit.

The revenue could be spent for other things such as to help family members quit.

It might make people quit.

Hopefully it will keep going up and people will quit.

I'm an anti-smoker and need to do whatever it takes to get them to quit.

If they cost more people would more likely quit.

I'm against smoking.

I want the money to help prevent smoking.

If they cost more people will be less likely to smoke.

To hopefully prevent (not sure) due to expense.

It would help.

To make cigarettes harder to get.

To decrease tobacco use.

People need to stop smoking.

Higher taxes mean fewer smokers.

Smoking kills

Smokers cost too much in health care.

Tobacco is harmful.

I had a family member die from smoking.

Cigarette smoking killed my father.

Because it's harmful for your health.

Grandmother died of cancer.

I want to prevent cancer because I'm a doctor.

Health reasons for my husband.

Parent had died from the need to pay for their own mistakes.

I'm flat against smoking.

I don't believe in smoking.

Hate smoking

It should be outlawed.

Tax people who use/spend their own money.

I'm concerned about my husband's smoking.

If they want to smoke cigarettes, then they will smoke them.

For the cigarettes to be too expensive to purchase.

We need it.

If you smoke you should pay more.

Don't enjoy being around smoke.
It's a good program.
To hurt the business.
I think cigarettes should be banned totally.
It's personal.
To keep my kids from smoking.
For the use of.
The cost.
I don't remember.
I don't smoke, and if they are going to continue then it should go for programs.
To pass.
Smokers cost the state money.
They should pay the tax to me.
Voted as mistake.
I am a smoker.
Don't see anything wrong with raising taxes on something that is bad for you.
Something should be done about it.
I'm against tobacco use.
Missouri has the lowest tobacco tax.
Appropriate.
Because the family said so.
I want the money to go to stem cell research.
I don't like smokers.
I want the tax money to go towards schools.

Q6: Why did you vote AGAINST the proposed 80 cents per pack increase in taxes on cigarettes? [Other]

To target a group of smokers.
Need to learn to spend money in the first place.
I want them to tax something else.
No more taxes.
Not sure what the money was going for.
Enough taxes.
It's an unfair tax.
Don't target one group.
It's not fair.
It is wrong against people.
Don't think it really helps.
They would switch money from one account to another.
People couldn't afford the cigarettes.
Too high.
Not sure.
I didn't think it was right.

Too small of an amount on prevention programs.
Don't think the state needs to make more money off of cigarettes.
My husband smokes.
I have family that smokes.
I'm not a smoker.
Can't handle money we have now.
They can tax others for a change.
What's the purpose?
It's personal.
Too expensive for people who cannot afford smoking but can't stop.
Prefer not to answer.
They are trying to be politically correct.
It would not accomplish what it was said to be used for.
We are slowly losing our rights per the constitution.
Welfare people wouldn't be able to buy that/other things would be forfeited.
It's stupid.
The state spends enough of my money.
I'm against all taxes.
No taxes.
Wrong for tax issues, and then sue the tax corporation.
It's not going to work.
Too much government involvement.
The government doesn't know who to manage money.
People shouldn't have cigarettes at all.
Against any tax.
It's the states way of getting money out of the taxpayers.
My husband is a smoker.
Don't think it is necessary. The tax was too high.
Unjustly target cigarettes for tax increases.
It's just another burden on people who smoke and don't have a lot of money.
Don't feel it motivates quitting.
Doesn't help people quit smoking.
I don't think they need to pay more.
No new taxes.
I have family that smokes and I don't think we should have to pay for it.
The money will go to politicians.
It's unfair for the group of smokers.
Don't believe in taxing a minority.
Didn't like the increase.
Don't like taxes.
It's a persons own right to smoke or chew.
Did not like it.
Don't like taxes, and I smoked at one time.
Too many taxes.
There are other issues with the bill.
My son smokes.

I own Phillip Morris stock.
I don't smoke but it seems like a high amount.
Not a smoker.
Smoking is on the decline and there is no need for it.
Too much tax already. Not a good source when people keep quitting and not fair for those who smoke.
What about alcohol?
There's enough tax already.
They are still going to smoke no matter what.
Too much taxation; everyone feels they should be robin hood.
Not for taxes.
None is spent the right way; never see any programs.
It's a smoker's choice.
Opposed in general any tax specifically on that one large amount.
Put money in the pile for money taxes yet the money is not going anywhere. Find smoking as a freedom.
Republican friends need to think we need to cut taxes instead of raise them.
I think it's repressive against lower income people.
Thought it was drastic.
Don't believe it's the government's job to do this.
Tax is said to go to public education, and other areas, yet the money does not go to these programs. Unequal tax distribution.
Nobody's business if they want to smoke. Let them smoke.

Q:10 Which political party do you most consider yourself a part of?

No affiliation. (12)
None. Neither party does anything and I'm sick of all of them.
Neither Republican or Democrat.
Votes for the person.
Look at people and not the party.
Whoever does the best job.
Best Interests
Vote on the issue and not the party.
Other (2)
Didn't support any party.
Depends on the candidate.
Vote for who I like.
Best choice (2)
For candidates/rep.
Registered Republican but votes for the person that is most qualified.
Either way, Democrat or Republican.
Moderate
Conservative (2)