



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

The **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)**, sponsored by Interact for Health and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, asked Kentucky adults their opinions about raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21.<sup>1</sup> As of January 2018, the age to buy tobacco has been raised to 21 in five states – California, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey and Oregon, – and 285 cities and counties.<sup>2</sup> Research shows that raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco is likely to delay the age at which young adults start to smoke. Over time, this will reduce smoking-related health problems and deaths.<sup>3</sup>

Kentucky state law requires that a person be 18 years old to buy tobacco. This law states that it cannot be preempted or changed by any local law, ordinance or regulation

<sup>1</sup> KHIP asked, "Do you favor or oppose increasing the minimum legal age to purchase tobacco products from 18 years of age to 21 years of age?"

<sup>2</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, December 2017. Accessed Jan. 11, 2018, from <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what-we-do/us/sale-age-21>.

<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. Accessed Jan. 8, 2018, from <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2015/TobaccoMinimumAgeReport.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. (2012). *Laws Related to Tobacco: Youth Access - Enforcement*. Retrieved Jan. 11, 2018, from <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/mch/hp/TobaccoLaws.htm>.

**"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 response "don't know" is not included.)



SOURCE: 2017 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released February 2018)



that would change this age in either direction. This means that at this time only a state law can raise to 21 the minimum legal age to buy tobacco.<sup>4</sup>

## 6 IN 10 KENTUCKY ADULTS FAVOR RAISING AGE TO 21

Nearly 6 in 10 Kentucky adults (58%) favor raising to 21 the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products. This percentage has held steady since 2015, the first time KHIP asked this question.

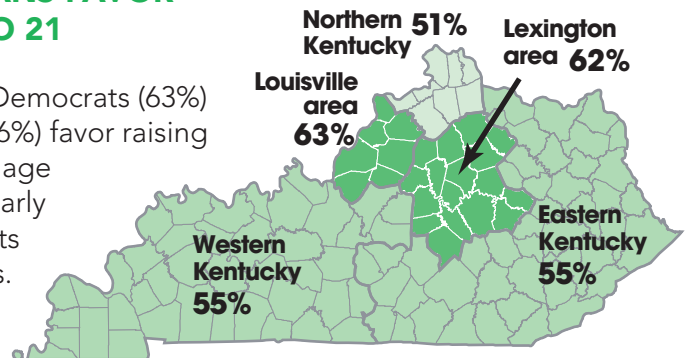
## MAJORITIES OF DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS FAVOR RAISING AGE TO 21

Majorities of both Democrats (63%) and Republicans (56%) favor raising to 21 the minimum age to buy tobacco. Nearly half of Independents (46%) also favor this.

## SUPPORT VARIES ACROSS KENTUCKY

Six in 10 adults in the Louisville (63%) and Lexington (62%) areas favor raising to 21 the minimum age to buy tobacco. That compares with more than half of Western Kentucky (55%) and Eastern Kentucky (55%) adults, and about half of Northern Kentucky adults (51%).

### Percentage of Kentucky adults who favor raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21, by region



SOURCE: 2017 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released February 2018)

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 Oct. 24-Dec. 2, 2017, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 1,692 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. This included 861 landline interviews and 831 cell phone interviews with cell phone users. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to ±2.4%. There are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as nonresponse, 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).