



# 6 in 10 Ohio adults favor raising minimum age to buy tobacco to 21

The **Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP)** is conducted every year to learn more about the health opinions, behaviors and status of adults in Ohio. In 2017, OHIP asked Ohio adults questions about tobacco policies.

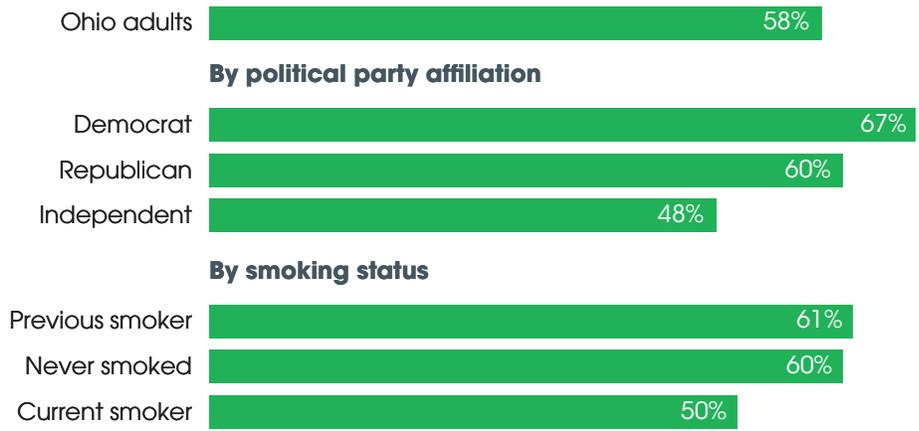
## WHAT DID OHIP FIND?

Raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products is likely to delay young adults from starting to smoke and, in the long run, reduce smoking-related health problems.<sup>1</sup>

OHIP asked Ohio adults whether they favored or opposed raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. Six in 10 Ohio adults (58%) reported that they favored legislation to raise the minimum legal age to 21. This is slightly more than in 2016, when 53% of adults favored such a law.

<sup>1</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://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2015/TobaccoMinimumAgeReport.aspx>.

## Percentage of Ohio adults who favor increasing the minimum legal age to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21



## Majorities of Democrats, Republicans favor raising minimum age to buy tobacco

A majority of both Democrats and Republicans and just less than half of Independents favored raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco to 21 (see graph). Support for this policy varied by smoking status. Six in 10 adults who had never smoked (60%) and who used to smoke (61%) favored raising the minimum legal age. That compares with about half of

adults who were current smokers (50%).

## Half of Ohio adults support increasing tax on cigarettes

OHIP also asked Ohio adults if they favored or opposed a 65 cent per pack tax increase in the cost of cigarettes, a proposal under consideration at the time of the poll. More than half of Ohio adults (53%) favored a tax increase. About 6 in 10

**Continued on next page**

Democrats (58%) and Republicans (60%) and 4 in 10 Independents (40%) favored this increase.

## 2 in 10 Ohio adults are current smokers, higher than nation

In 2017, 22% of Ohio adults reported being current smokers. An additional 23% were former smokers. This is higher than the 17% of adults nationwide who are current smokers, and much higher than the Healthy People 2020 goal of 12%.

### WHY DO WE ASK THESE QUESTIONS?

The one thing that would improve health most in Ohio would be to reduce tobacco use. Smokers who quit can add 10 years to their lives. These OHIP questions

### Percentage of Ohio adults who favor a 65 cent per pack tax increase in the cost of cigarettes



INTERACT  
FOR HEALTH

explore public support for two policy changes that research has shown can have a positive impact on reducing tobacco use. It is valuable for policymakers to understand where public opinion stands on these initiatives. The fact that these measures are widely supported regardless of political party is a useful piece of information for our legislators as they consider policies at the state level.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

Laws raising the minimum legal age to buy tobacco to 21 have passed across Ohio in the cities of Columbus, Cleveland, New Albany, Grandview Heights, Bexley, Upper Arlington, Powell and Euclid.<sup>2</sup> Tobacco 21 laws are supported by the American Heart Association, American Lung Association and American Medical Association, and is included in the Ohio State Health Improvement Plan.

<sup>2</sup> State By State Tobacco Laws, Taxes, and Statistics. Retrieved Dec. 11, 2017, from <http://tobacco21.org/state-by-state/>.