



# Majority of Ohio adults favor raising minimum sale age for tobacco to 21

The **Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP)** is conducted every year to learn more about the health opinions, behaviors and status of Ohio adults. In 2018, OHIP asked Ohio adults about their tobacco use and whether they support several tobacco control policy changes.

## WHAT DID OHIP FIND?

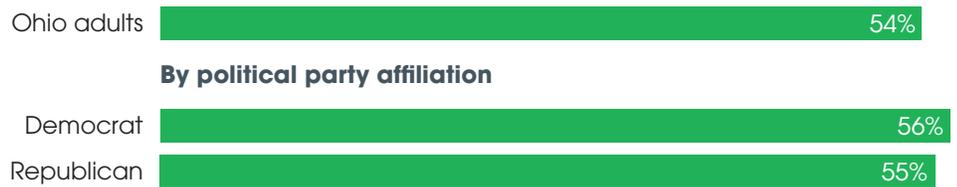
OHIP asked Ohio adults, "Do you favor or oppose increasing the minimum legal age of sale for tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age?" This policy is commonly known as Tobacco 21. About half of Ohio adults (54%) favor raising the minimum legal sale age of tobacco. This is lower than the nearly 8 in 10 adults nationwide (75%) who favor raising the minimum legal sale age of tobacco.<sup>1</sup> Support for such a law in Ohio has not changed since this question was first asked in 2016.

## Majorities of both political parties favor Tobacco 21

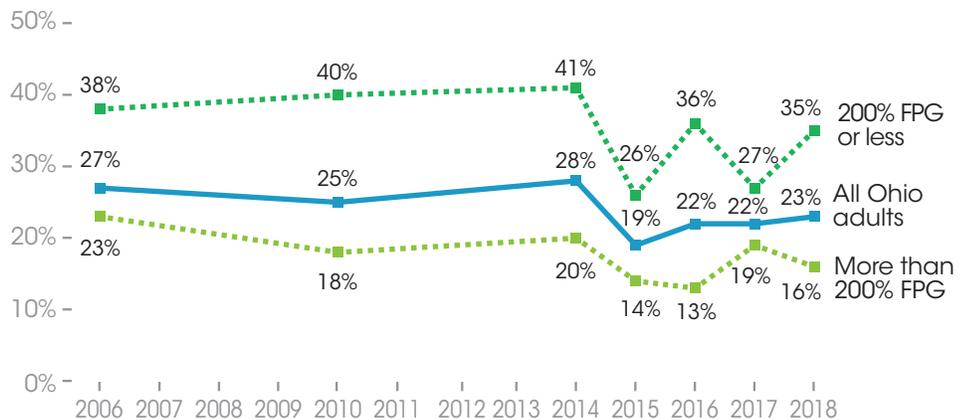
Most Democrats (56%) and Republicans (55%) in Ohio favor raising the minimum legal sale age of tobacco products. Additionally,

<sup>1</sup> King, B.A., Jama, A.O., Marynak, K.L., & Promoff, G.R. (2015). Attitudes Toward Raising the Minimum Age of Sale for Tobacco Among U.S. Adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 49 (4), 583-588.

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



## Percentage of Ohio adults who are current smokers, by income\*



\* 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) in 2017 was \$49,200 for a family of four.

SOURCE: 2018 Ohio Health Issues Poll (released December 2018)



adults who are previous smokers (51%) or who have never smoked (63%) are more likely than current smokers (37%) to favor a Tobacco 21 policy.

## Ohio smoking rate still higher than nation

In 2018, about 2 in 10 Ohio adults reported being current smokers

(23%). About 5 in 10 Ohio adults (52%) said they had never smoked cigarettes. Two in 10 reported being previous smokers (25%). These percentages have remained relatively stable since OHIP began asking about smoking status in 2006. However, Ohio adults are more likely than adults nationwide to report being current smokers.

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In 2017, fewer than 2 in 10 adults in the nation were current smokers (15%). Just more than 2 in 10 U.S. adults were previous smokers (25%). Six in 10 U.S. adults had never smoked (60%).<sup>2</sup>

Ohio adults who earn 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG)<sup>3</sup> or less were about twice as likely to report being current smokers (35%) as adults earning more than 200% FPG (16%). Although the percentage of smokers among Ohio adults who earn more than 200% FPG has decreased since 2006, this percentage has not changed among Ohio adults who

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Health Statistics. (2018, June 26). *2017 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) Sample Adult Public Use File (samadult)*. Retrieved from: [ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health\\_Statistics/NCHS/Dataset\\_Documentation/NHIS/2017/sa-madult\\_freq.pdf](ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/Dataset_Documentation/NHIS/2017/sa-madult_freq.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> In 2017, 200% FPG for a family of four was \$49,200.

earn 200% FPG or less. (See graph on first page.)

## Ohio adults' opinions on other tobacco policies

OHIP asked Ohio adults whether they favored or opposed three other policies that could be useful to reduce tobacco use:

- A law that prohibits the sale of tobacco products in stores located near schools: 52% in favor, 41% opposed.
- A \$1 per pack increase in the cost of cigarettes: 41% in favor, 55% opposed.
- A law that prohibits discounts such as coupons or special offers for tobacco products sold in stores: 38% in favor, 55% opposed.

## WHY DO WE ASK THESE QUESTIONS?

Tobacco control policies can be a very effective tool to reduce tobacco use. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most cigarette users begin smoking before age 21.<sup>4</sup> Making it more difficult for youth to access tobacco products and less likely to become addicted at a young age is part of a larger strategy to reduce tobacco use. In addition, monitoring the percentage of adults who smoke is important for understanding the burden of tobacco and nicotine addiction in our region.

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018, June 25). *Smoking & Tobacco Use - Youth and Tobacco Use*. Retrieved from: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/youth\\_data/tobacco\\_use/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm).

## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

As of December 2018, Tobacco 21 policies have been passed in six states—California, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Oregon—and 380 municipalities nationwide.<sup>5</sup> Cincinnati is the 16th municipality in Ohio to pass such a policy, joining Columbus, Cleveland and Akron. Once passed, many jurisdictions work to implement effective enforcement strategies such as compliance checks with retailers and tobacco retail licensing programs.

<sup>5</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. (2018, December 6). *States and Localities that Have Raised the Minimum Legal Sale Age for Tobacco Products to 21*. Retrieved from: [https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/what\\_we\\_do/state\\_local\\_issues/sales\\_21/states\\_localities\\_MLSA\\_21.pdf](https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/what_we_do/state_local_issues/sales_21/states_localities_MLSA_21.pdf).