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**NEW POLL SHOWS CALIFORNIA VOTERS WANT MORE REGULATION
OF TOBACCO TO PROTECT YOUTH**

The American Lung Association in California's Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing releases results from a new statewide survey about tobacco policies in the retail environment.

August 2, 2011 (Sacramento, CA) California voters overwhelmingly support more regulation of tobacco products and greater enforcement of laws against the sales of tobacco products to minors, according to a public opinion survey conducted by the American Lung Association in California's Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing.

"More must be done to stem the tide of illegal tobacco sales to minors in California," said Paul Kneprath, Vice President of Advocacy and Health Initiatives, American Lung Association in California. "The enormous support shown by voters to crack down on this problem represents a deep commitment by Californians to protect kids from tobacco."

The poll showed overwhelming support for the idea that store owners should be required to obtain a license in order to sell cigarettes. Eighty three percent (83%) of respondents support ordinances that require store owners to pay a fee to secure a license with the fee revenues being used to enforce the law against illegal sales to minors. Enforcement measures include using underage youth decoys, accompanied by law enforcement personnel, to check on whether stores are breaking the law.

In addition to support for enacting tobacco licenses, California voters strongly support regulating how and where tobacco products are sold. Highlights from the survey include:

- 88% of voters agree that a store owner who repeatedly sells cigarettes to minors should have their license to sell tobacco products suspended.
- 80% of California voters favor a fee of a few hundred dollars a year that would be used to enforce the law against selling cigarettes to minors.
- 82% of voters support requiring stores that sell tobacco products to post warning signs with graphic images about the dangers of tobacco use.
- 73% of voters support a law prohibiting any business located within 1,000 feet of a school from selling tobacco products.

In addition to the statewide results, the survey looked specifically at voter opinions in Los Angeles County and Santa Clara County. While these local results also reflected strong voter support, in some cases, they exceeded the support shown by the statewide results.

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The results in Los Angeles County were stronger on several policies tested, which may reflect the leadership played by policy makers to enact local licensing ordinances by the County and cities within the county. One policy that polled significantly higher than the statewide results was that requiring posting of graphic health warning signs about the dangers of tobacco use in stores. Los Angeles County voters support such a policy by an overwhelmingly 87 percent.

“A tobacco retailer licensing ordinance can be effective at reducing tobacco sales to youth, but there is even more we can do,” said Paul Simon, MD, MPH, Director of the Division of Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention at the LA County Department of Public Health. “This survey shows strong support for policy options that can be incorporated within basic tobacco licensing ordinances to better protect vulnerable populations from the predatory marketing practices of the tobacco industry, including combating the growing popularity of tobacco products other than traditional cigarettes.”

Similarly, voters in Santa Clara County support some of these tobacco policies at greater levels than the statewide results showed. For example, 88 percent of voters support tobacco retailer licensing ordinances, compared to 83 percent statewide, still a significant majority of voters.

“These results prove that Santa Clara County residents do not want to see their kids start a lifelong addiction by having easy access to tobacco,” said Supervisor Ken Yeager, Santa Clara County. “Passing a tobacco retail licensing requirement at the County level has given us more resources for keeping tobacco out of the hands of minors. We are eager to see our local cities pass ordinances of their own.”

More than eighty-five cities and counties in California have adopted a strong local tobacco retailer licensing ordinance. Other municipalities are considering the new policy options asked about in this survey and incorporating them into local licensing laws.

Fact sheets and memos that summarize the survey results are available on the Center’s website at www.Center4TobaccoPolicy.org/polling-retailer-policies. The statewide survey was conducted by Goodwin Simon Strategic Research and interviewed 600 California voters by telephone with interviews conducted in both English and Spanish. The margin of error for the survey results is plus or minus 4% at a 95% confidence level.

About the American Lung Association

Now in its second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is “Fighting for Air” through research, education and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit www.lungusa.org/california.

The Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing is a project of the American Lung Association in California and funded by the California Department of Public Health. The Center assists local communities address tobacco related policies using community organizing strategies, and provides policy information and analysis regarding tobacco related legislation and policy issues.