



Secondhand Smoke Survey

California Voters' Attitudes About Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Public Opinion Research Survey: November 2008

Background

There is a growing body of scientific evidence that documents the harmful effects of secondhand smoke exposure, including the US Surgeon General's finding that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and the California Air Resources Board designation of secondhand smoke as a toxic air contaminant. Yet Californians are still exposed to secondhand smoke in outdoor areas, in multi-unit housing and in Indian casinos. Many cities and counties throughout the state have passed laws to restrict smoking in outdoor areas such as parks, beaches, farmer's markets and outdoor seating at bars and restaurants and some cities have passed laws to create nonsmoking sections of apartments in multi-unit housing. In addition, some California Indian tribes have voluntarily created nonsmoking sections in Indian casinos.

In November 2008, the Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing commissioned a survey of 600 California voters to assess their views about secondhand smoke and to gauge their level of support for reducing exposure to secondhand smoke. Specifically, the survey explored general attitudes about restricting smoking in outdoors areas, in outdoor dining areas, in multi-unit housing, and in Indian casinos.

This document highlights the Summary of Key Findings for the entire secondhand smoke survey. Additionally, there are three distinct Summary of Key Findings that highlight the results for outdoor dining, the results for multi-unit housing and the results for Indian casinos. The survey was conducted by Goodwin Simon Victoria Research. Complete survey results and the other summary documents are available at www.Center4TobaccoPolicy.org/polling-shs.

Summary of Key Findings

Secondhand Smoke Restrictions in Outdoor Areas

California voters know that secondhand smoke is harmful and are bothered by secondhand smoke in outdoor areas:

- 97% believe that secondhand smoke is harmful to those who inhale it
- 88% believe that secondhand smoke is harmful to those who inhale it in outdoor areas
- 65% have been bothered by secondhand smoke exposure in outdoor areas in the past year

California voters strongly support a law that restricts smoking in all outdoor areas of a community and support restricting smoking in specific outdoor areas to varying degrees (see table on next page):

- 73% support a comprehensive ban on outdoor smoking in all areas accessible to the public except for designated smoking areas

The table below lists California voters' level of support for restricting smoking in various outdoor areas:

Outdoor Area	Percent who Support	Outdoor Area	Percent who Support
In front of doors and windows into offices, restaurants and other buildings	77%	Bus Stops	56%
Outdoor areas of nursing homes, hospitals and long-term care facilities	70%	Outdoor areas of bars and restaurants, such as patios and outdoor eating areas	56%
Farmer's markets	69%	City and Regional Parks	55%
Nature areas, trails and campgrounds	65%	Fairs and Rodeos	55%
Outdoor concerts and sporting events	62%	Outdoor areas of downtown business zones	49%
Outdoor areas of shopping malls and shopping centers	60%	Outdoor worksites, such as construction zones	46%
Beaches	59%	Public sidewalks	44%
Outdoor areas of college campuses	57%	Parking lots	40%

California voters are receptive to statements in favor of restricting smoking in outdoor areas. The four statements rated as most important are listed below:

- 91% think an important reason to support smoking restrictions is that burning cigarettes tossed by careless smokers cause fires in parks and recreation areas and prohibiting smoking in these areas can protect the environment and save lives and money
- 89% think an important reason to support smoking restrictions is that scientific studies show that secondhand smoke can be harmful even in outdoor areas
- 87% think an important reason to support smoking restrictions is that cigarette butts are the number one cause of litter on beaches, parks and sidewalks and restricting smoking will greatly reduce litter
- 86% think an important reason to support smoking restrictions is that discarded cigarette butts are eaten by wildlife and can cause injury or death

Secondhand Smoke Restrictions in Outdoor Dining Areas

California voters were asked several questions specifically focused on restricting smoking in outdoor seating areas of bars and restaurants:

- 60% have been bothered by secondhand smoke exposure in outdoor dining areas in the past year
- 56% support restricting smoking at outdoor areas of bars and restaurants

California voters are receptive to the arguments in support of restricting smoking in outdoor dining. The top two statements are listed below:

- 74% were more likely to support smoking restrictions when they heard that it would protect workers at restaurants and bars from having to inhale dangerous secondhand smoke
- 72% were more likely to support smoking restrictions when they heard that it would protect diners from having to inhale dangerous secondhand smoke while dining

Opposition statements to restricting smoking at outdoor dining were less effective. In fact, opposition arguments were more likely to have no impact on voters or to make them more likely to support smoking restrictions. The top two opposition statements are listed below:

- 38% were more likely to oppose smoking restrictions when they heard that it would hurt bars and restaurants and drive away customers, while 61% said this argument had no effect or made them more likely to support smoking restrictions
- 36% were more likely to oppose smoking restrictions when they heard that it would be difficult to enforce and would place an unfair burden on bar and restaurant owners, while 63% said this argument had no effect or made them more likely to support smoking restrictions

Secondhand Smoke Restrictions in Multi-Unit Housing

California voters were also asked a series of questions about restricting smoking in multi-unit housing and are supportive of many types of policies to protect people from secondhand smoke exposure in multi-unit housing:

- 69% support a law to restrict smoking in outdoor common areas of apartments
- 78% support a law requiring apartment buildings to offer nonsmoking sections
- 74% support requiring 50 percent of apartments to be nonsmoking
- 58% support requiring 75 percent of apartments to be nonsmoking
- 42% support requiring 100 percent of apartments to be nonsmoking
- 56% feel that a law requiring apartment buildings to offer nonsmoking sections should apply to condominiums as well
- 70% think that a person moving into an apartment should be told if the tenant next door smokes

California voters are receptive to the arguments in support of restricting smoking in multi-unit housing. The top two statements are listed below:

- 76% were more likely to support smoking restrictions when they heard that scientific studies prove that secondhand smoke is harmful in apartment buildings and nonsmokers are exposed to dangerous secondhand smoke in the one place where they spend the most time
- 76% were more likely to support smoking restrictions when they heard that restricting smoking in apartment buildings will reduce the risk of fire

Opposition statements to restricting smoking in multi-unit housing were less effective. In fact, opposition arguments were more likely to have no impact on voters or to make them more likely to support smoking restrictions. The top two opposition statements are listed below:

- 40% were more likely to oppose smoking restrictions when they heard that it would take away a person's right to smoke in their home if they wanted to, while 58% said the argument had no effect or made them more likely to support smoking restrictions
- 37% were more likely to oppose smoking restrictions when they heard that it would discriminate against smokers and make it difficult for them to find a place to rent, while 61% said this argument had no effect or made them more likely to support smoking restrictions

California voters were also asked about a problem faced by decision makers when considering whether to restrict smoking in public housing. 64% of California voters agree with those who argue that it is more important to protect low-income children and families who cannot move away from secondhand smoke exposure. Only 17% of voters agree with those who argue that it is more important to protect tenants who smoke and cannot afford to move and who might be evicted if they smoke in their apartment should it be designated as nonsmoking.

Secondhand Smoke Restrictions in Enclosed Areas (Indian Casinos, Foster Homes, Cars)

California voters were also asked about restricting smoking in certain enclosed areas including California Indian casinos, foster homes, and cars. Overall, voters are supportive of restricting smoking in these areas:

- 90% would either be more inclined to visit or would be unaffected if smoking were prohibited in California Indian casinos, while only 8% would be less inclined to visit the casinos
- 69% feel that employees in California Indian casinos should have the same protections from secondhand smoke as other employees in California
- 77% support having child protective agencies require foster homes to be nonsmoking in order to protect children in foster homes from being exposed to secondhand smoke
- 80% support the new state law that prohibits smoking in vehicles where minor children are present