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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. Those living in rural areas are also more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke and less likely to live in communities with smokefree air policies. Understanding rural voters' perceptions to secondhand smoke is necessary to protect the right to breath clean air.

In July 2018, The American Lung Association's Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing commissioned an over sampled survey of nearly 350 California voters from rural communities to assess their views about secondhand smoke and to gauge their level of support for reducing exposure to secondhand smoke. This document reports survey highlights and key findings.

Survey Methodology

Goodwin Simon Victoria Research conducted a dual mode survey of California voters. First, a main sample of 582 voters (including urban, suburban, and rural) was drawn from a list of registered voters in California. Then pollsters over sampled an additional 260 rural voters. Combined samples provide results for a total of 339 rural voters. Rural voters were identified via a combination of census data and the Nielsen Claritas Prizm database. Interviews were completed online and by land line and wireless telephones, and in English and Spanish. Fielding took place between July 25 and August 5, 2018. The margin of error for the main study is +/- 4% and +/- 5.5% for rural only at a 95% confidence level.

Resources

The Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing has many resources on secondhand smoke policies including additional survey results available at www.center4tobaccopolicy.org/tobacco-policy/smokefree-outdoor-areas/

For model ordinance language for many of the policies in the survey, visit the website of the ChangeLabSolutions at www.changelabsolutions.org/

Summary of Key Findings



1. Rural Voters Support Secondhand Smoke Restrictions in Outdoor Areas

- 93%** 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
- 52%** Have been bothered by secondhand smoke exposure in outdoor areas in the past year
- 68%** Support a comprehensive ban on outdoor smoking in all areas accessible to the public except for designated smoking areas



2. Arguments in Favor of Restricting Smoking in Outdoor Areas

California rural voters are receptive to statements in favor of restricting smoking in outdoor areas. Below are CA rural voters' five top good reasons to support smoking restrictions.

- 92%** Discarded cigarette butts are eaten by wildlife and can cause injury or death
- 89%** Cigarette butts are the number one cause of litter on beaches, parks and sidewalks and restricting smoking will greatly reduce litter
- 84%** Scientific studies show that secondhand smoke can be harmful even in outdoor areas
- 88%** 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
- 79%** Fewer kids will see adults smoking and thus reduce smoking among youth



3. Arguments in Favor of Restricting Smoking in Outdoor Dining Areas

Statements in favor of restricting smoking at outdoor dining were very effective and resonated with California rural voters. Below are the top three reasons CA rural voters were more likely to support smoking restrictions.

- 74% Protect diners from having to inhale dangerous secondhand smoke while dining

- 70% Protect workers at restaurants and bars from having to inhale dangerous secondhand smoke

- 59% 150 cities in California, plus three other states, have similar laws and have had almost no impact on the ability of bars and restaurants to make money



4. Secondhand Smoke from Emerging Tobacco Products

California rural voters were asked several questions specifically focused on understanding their perceptions of secondhand smoke from other tobacco products like e-cigarettes or vaporizers.

- 67% Believe that vapor from electronic cigarettes is harmful for people exposed to it

- 62% Know or have heard that e-cigarettes and vaporizers contain nicotine (32% are still unsure)

- 58% Support a law banning the use of e-cigs and vaporizers in all outdoor areas accessible to the public except for designated smoking areas



5. Secondhand Smoke from Marijuana

California rural voters were asked about their perceptions of harm from secondhand smoke from marijuana compared to tobacco.

- 39% Secondhand smoke from marijuana is less harmful than second hand smoke from tobacco

- 33% Secondhand smoke from marijuana results in about the same level of harm as secondhand smoke from tobacco

- 13% Second hand smoke from marijuana is more harmful than secondhand smoke from tobacco
