A large, thin, yellow arc curves from the top right towards the bottom right, framing the title. A solid green rectangle is in the top left corner. A thin grey line runs horizontally across the page, intersecting a vertical grey line that runs down the right side. A small yellow square is at the intersection of these lines, and another small yellow square is at the intersection of the horizontal line and the vertical line on the left side.

**Funding Health and
Long-Term Care: A
Survey on Increasing
Virginia's Cigarette Tax**

Published December 2002



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Increasing Virginia's Cigarette Tax**

Data Collected by Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc.

**Report Prepared
By Rachelle Cummins**

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people 50 and over. We provide information and resources; advocate on legislative, consumer, and legal issues; assist members to serve their communities; and offer a wide range of unique benefits, special products, and services for our members. These benefits include AARP Webplace at www.aarp.org, *AARP Modern Maturity*, and *My Generation* magazines, the monthly *AARP Bulletin*, and a Spanish-language newspaper, *Segunda Juventud*. Active in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP celebrates the attitude that age is just a number and life is what you make it.

Acknowledgements

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Background

Like many states, Virginia is experiencing a severe economic downturn and a large increase in health and long-term care spending. Virginia has already cut \$3.8 billion dollars from its budget. It currently faces about a \$2 billion shortfall. Balancing the state budget will require significant spending cuts from health and long-term care services that fund medical care for children and long-term care services for older persons and those with disabilities in nursing homes and at home.

Concerned about the current and future health and long-term care needs of Virginians, AARP is examining ways to increase state revenue. Under one proposal, Virginia could join other states confronting similar economic problems by increasing its state cigarette tax.

Currently, there is a 2.5-cent tax on a pack of cigarettes in Virginia. This tax is the lowest in the country and was last increased in 1960.¹ By increasing the cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 62.5 cents, Virginia could generate about \$367 million annually. Alternatively, a 30-cent increase could generate \$183 million annually. The average national state tax on cigarettes is about 60 cents. In Virginia where 21 percent of adults smoke, \$1.62 billion in annual health care costs are directly related to tobacco use.² Revenues generated from a cigarette tax increase could be dedicated to the health and long-term care services budget.

This survey measures the opinion of Virginians age 18 and older about generating money for health and long-term care services by increasing Virginia's cigarette tax. Specifically, this telephone survey of 803 randomly selected Virginia adults explores:

- Importance of maintaining current funding levels for health and long-term care services
- Likelihood of voting for state candidates who supports maintaining the delivery of health and long-term services even if state revenues must be generated
- Support for funding health and long-term care services by increasing the state's cigarette tax
- Likelihood of voting for state candidates who support increasing the cigarette tax as a means of raising revenue to finance health and long-term care services

An annotated questionnaire, appended to this report, discloses exact question wording and all weighted responses to the survey. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding or non-response.

¹ State Cigarette Taxes & Projected Benefits from Raising Them. (2002, October). <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0148.pdf>.

² The Toll of Tobacco in Virginia. (2002). <http://tobaccofreekids.org/reports/settlements/TobaccoToll.php3?StateID=VA>.

Highlights

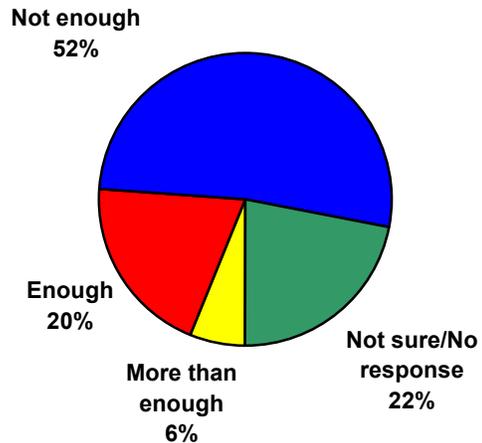
- Over half of Virginians think that there is not enough money in the state budget for health and long-term care services, compared to just six percent who say there is more than enough money in the budget.
- Three-quarters of Virginians believe that it is very important for the Commonwealth to maintain current levels of funding for health and long-term care services.
- Half of Virginians would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supports maintaining the delivery of health and long-term care services, even if it means generating additional state revenues. Just one in ten would be less likely to vote for such a candidate.
- Over six in ten Virginians support either strongly (51%) or somewhat (10%) an increase in the state's cigarette tax from 2.5 cents per pack to 62.5 cents per pack.
- Two-thirds of Virginians support at least a 30-cent-per-pack increase in the state's cigarette tax.
- Over half of Virginians would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supports increasing the cigarette tax to generate money for health and long-term care services. Just 16 percent would be less likely to vote for such a candidate.

Findings

Most Virginians think there is not enough money in the state's budget for health and long-term care services.

Over half of Virginians age 18 and over think there is not enough money in the state budget for health and long-term care services. Just six percent say there is more than enough money in the budget.

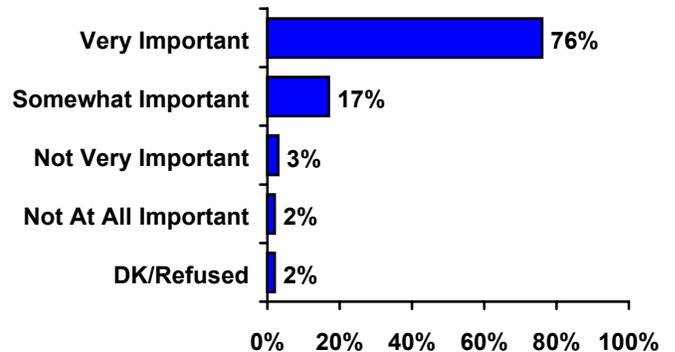
Adequacy of Virginia's Health and Long-Term Care Budget
(Weighted n=801)



Nearly all of Virginia residents say it is important to maintain current funding levels for health and long-term care services.

Nearly all of Virginians age 18 and over think it is either very or somewhat important that the Commonwealth maintain current levels of funding for health and long-term care services.

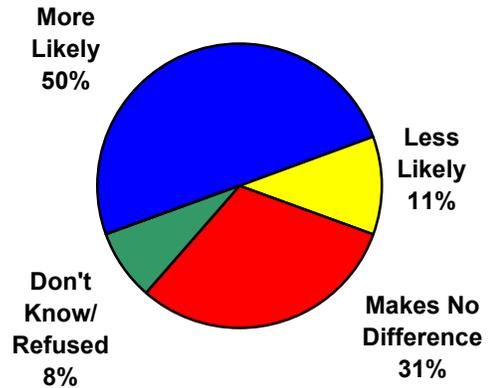
Importance of Maintaining Current Funding for Health and Long-Term Care Services
(Weighted n=801)



Virginians are almost five times more likely than less likely to say they would vote for a candidate who supports maintaining the delivery of health and long-term care services even if it means generating additional revenues.

Half of Virginians say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office that supports maintaining the delivery of health and long-term care services, even if it means generating additional state revenues, compared to just one in ten who would be less likely to vote for such a candidate.

Vote for Candidate Who Supports Maintaining the Delivery of Health and Long-Term Care Services Even by Generating Additional State Revenues (Weighted n=801)



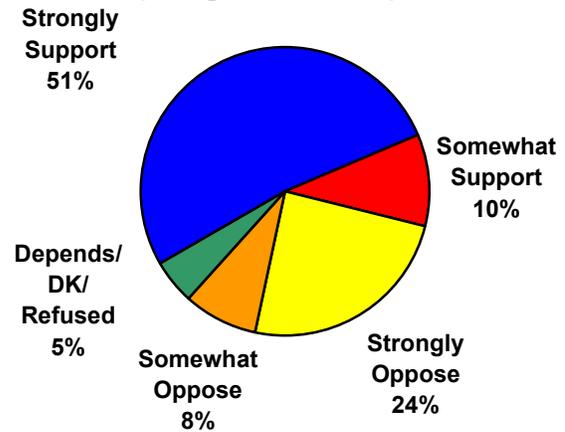
Virginians strongly support a tax increase of 60-cents per pack on cigarettes to maintain health and long-term care services.

Over six in ten adults support increasing Virginia's cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 62.5 cents per pack in order to maintain current funding for health and long-term care services in the Commonwealth.³

About one quarter of smokers who comprise 25 percent of Virginians support either strongly (16%) or somewhat (7%) the 60-cent per pack cigarette tax increase while a little more than two-thirds (68%) oppose the increase.

A 60-cent tax increase may decrease smoking. Almost four in ten (39%) of smokers say they would most likely quit smoking, and about two in ten say they would smoke less. A quarter (26%) would continue to smoke as much with the 60-cent tax increase.

Support for Increasing Virginia's Cigarette Tax by 60 Cents Per Pack to Pay for Health and Long-Term Care Services (Weighted n=801)



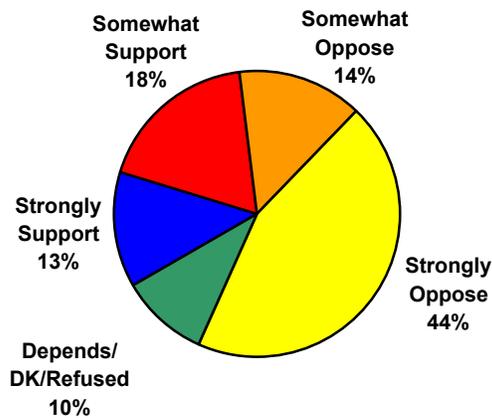
³ This result is similar to a survey of registered voters conducted in August 2002 by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. In that survey, 67 percent of registered voters favor a 60-cent-per-pack increase in the state's cigarette tax. The survey's margin of error was ± 4 percent. See Blackell, John Reid. *Raise cigarette tax in Va.?* (August 22, 2002). www.timesdispatch.com.

Two-thirds of Virginians support a tax increase of 30 cents per pack on cigarettes to maintain health and long-term care services.

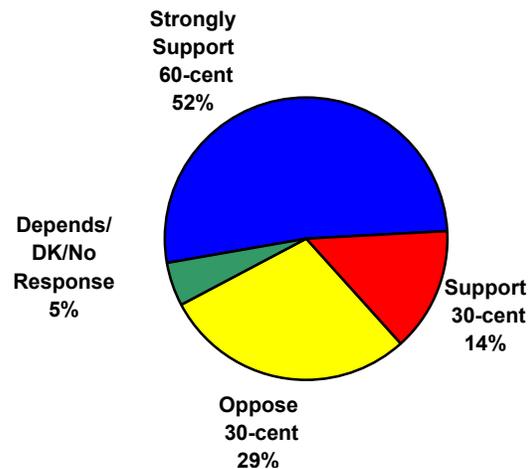
Among Virginians who do not strongly support the 60-cent per pack increase in the state's cigarette tax, almost one in three support a 30-cent per pack increase to maintain current levels of funding for health and long-term care services in the Commonwealth.

When those who strongly support the 60-cent increase (n=410) are combined with those who support the 30-cent increase (n=121), 66 percent of Virginians support at least a 30-cent increase, compared to 29 percent who oppose even a 30-cent increase (n=229). Five percent of Virginians are indecisive saying it depends, they don't know, or refusing to answer whether they support or oppose a 30-cent increase (n=41).

Among Virginians Who Do Not Strongly Support 60-cent Increase, Support for a 30-Cent-Per-Pack Tax Increase on Cigarettes to Pay for Health and Long-Term Care Services (Weighted base=391)

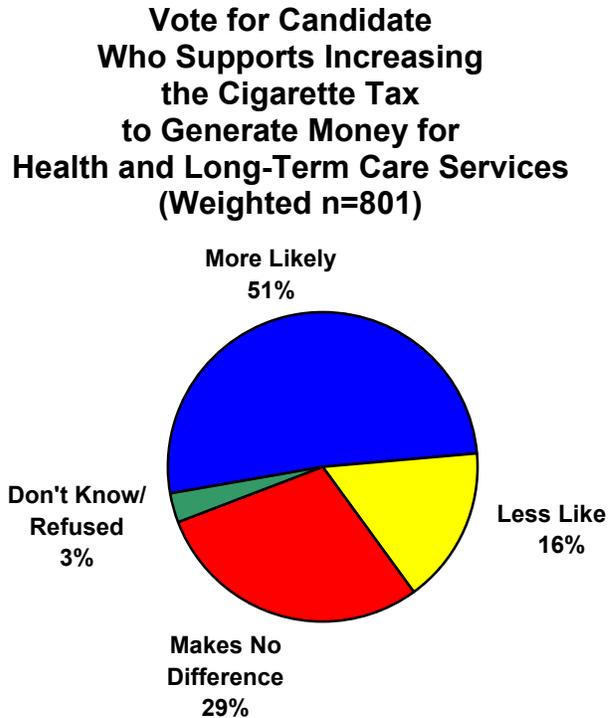


Among All Virginians, Support for at Least a 30-Cent-Per-Pack Tax Increase on Cigarettes to Pay for Health and Long-Term Care Services (Weighted n=801)



Virginians are three times more likely than less likely to say they would vote for a candidate who supports increasing the cigarette tax to generate money for health and long-term care.

Over half of Virginians say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate that supported increasing Virginia's cigarette tax to generate money for health and long-term care services while just 16 percent would be less likely to vote for such a candidate.



Conclusions

Most Virginians believe that it is important for the state to maintain current levels of funding for health and long-term care services. As Virginia seeks ways to raise revenues to pay for health and long-term care services, increasing the cigarette tax is an action that more than 60 percent of Virginians support. Moreover, maintaining the delivery of health and long-term care services and increasing the state's cigarette tax to do so could influence Virginians' voting behavior. About five times as many Virginians (50%) are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports maintaining the delivery of health and long-term care services, even if it means generating additional state revenues, compared to those (11%) who are less likely to vote for such a candidate. A little more than three times as many Virginians (51%) are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports increasing the state's cigarette tax to generate money for health and long-term care services, compared to those (16%) who are less likely to vote for such a candidate.

Methodology

AARP commissioned Southeastern Institute of Research of Richmond, Virginia to conduct a random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey of adults age 18 or older in Virginia. From a random sample of 3,675, a total of 803 interviews with a quota of 350 interviews among adults age 50 and older were completed from September 9 – October 4, 2002, yielding a 24 percent response rate and 32 percent cooperation rate.⁴ The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percent. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would fall in a range of ± 3.5 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every person in Virginia age 18 or older had been surveyed. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of age, gender, and education in the adult population of Virginia. Due to rounding of the weights, the final number of cases for the weighted dataset is 801. Weighted responses to all survey questions are in the attached annotated questionnaire.

For more information about this study, contact Rachelle Cummins, AARP Knowledge Management, (202) 434-6297.

⁴ The response rate is Response Rate 3 and the cooperation rate is Cooperation Rate 3 from the following publication: The American Association for Public Opinion Research. 2000. *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: AAPOR.

Appendix I
Annotated Questionnaire

Virginia Health and Long-Term Care Services Survey

n = 803 Virginians Age 18+, Response Rate = 24%, Sampling Error = $\pm 3.5\%$
Weighted n = 801

(Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.)

Questionnaire # _____ (-)

Start time: _____

Introduction

[NEW INTRODUCTION:] Hello, I'm calling from a national opinion research firm. We are calling residents of Virginia to ask their opinion about an important issue facing the state. Tonight we would like to speak with the YOUNGEST male in your household who is at home right now, AND IS AT LEAST 18 years of age. [IF NECESSARY, ASK: May I please speak to this person?]

[IF NECESSARY USE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

My name is _____.

I'm calling from Southeastern Institute of Research, a national opinion research firm located in Richmond, Virginia.

This is not a sales call.

We are not telemarketers.

You will not be asked to buy anything either now or later.

All of your responses are kept entirely confidential.

The survey should only take a few minutes of your time depending on your answers.

The survey should only take about 5 minutes of your time.]

- 1) Yes, Person on Phone is Youngest Male
- 2) Yes, Youngest Male Coming to Phone
- 3) No, Youngest Male Not Available Right Now
- 4) No, Youngest Male Never Available
- 5) DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
- 6) REFUSED

Screening

S1. RECORD GENDER OF PERSON WHO ANSWERED PHONE:

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

S2. **[IF INTRO = 1, SKIP TO S4; IF INTRO = 2, SKIP TO S3; IF INTRO = 3, SCHEDULE CALLBACK; IF INTRO = 6, SKIP TO R1]** Then may I speak to the OLDEST female who is at home right now AND IS AT LEAST 18 years old?

- 1) Yes, Person on Phone is Oldest Female → **[SKIP TO S4]**
- 2) Yes, Oldest Female Coming to Phone
- 3) No, Oldest Female Not Available Right Now → **[SCHEDULE CALLBACK]**
- 4) No, Oldest Female Never Available → **[TERMINATE]**
- 5) REFUSED → **[SKIP TO R1]**

S3. **[PROGRAMMERS, SELECT APPROPRIATE PHRASE BELOW: YOUNGEST MALE / OLDEST FEMALE]** Hello, I'm calling from a national opinion research firm. We are calling residents of Virginia to ask their opinion about an important issue facing the state. Tonight we would like to speak with the "YOUNGEST male/OLDEST female" in your household who is at home right now AND IS AT LEAST 18 years of age. Are you this person?

- 1) Yes, Youngest Male / Oldest Female on phone
- 2) Yes, Youngest Male / Oldest Female Coming to Phone → **[SKIP TO S3]**
- 3) Youngest Male Not Available → **[SKIP TO S2]**
- 4) Oldest Female Not Available Right Now → **[SCHEDULE CALLBACK]**
- 5) Oldest Female Never Available → **[TERMINATE]**
- 6) REFUSED → **[SKIP TO R1]**

S4. In order to save time and ensure I only ask you questions relevant to someone in your age group, could you tell me whether you are aged 50 or older, or are you under 50?

[PROGRAMMERS: WE NEED 350 RESPONDENTS 50 OR OLDER.]

- 1) Age 50 or older
- 2) Under 50
- 3) DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
- 4) REFUSED]

Main Questions

Q1. Which of the following best describes Virginia's current funding for health and long-term care services? Do you think....(ROTATE 1-3. ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE.).

- %
- 6 There is *more than enough* money in the state budget to meet the need for services and ensure quality
 - 20 There is *enough* money in the state budget to meet the need for services and ensure quality **Or do you think....**
 - 52 There is *not enough* money in the state budget to meet the need for services and ensure quality
 - 22 DON'T KNOW
 - <.5 REFUSED

Q2. Virginia has already cut \$3.8 billion from its budget and currently faces about a \$2 billion shortfall in the next budget year. This could result in up to \$500 million in cuts in spending from the Health and Human Services' budget. This includes health care for children and long-term care services for older persons and those with disabilities both in their homes and in nursing homes.

How important is it to you for Virginia to maintain current levels of funding for health and long-term care services?

- %
- 76 Very Important
 - 17 Somewhat Important
 - 3 Not Very Important
 - 2 Not At All Important
 - 2 DON'T KNOW
 - <.5 REFUSED

Q3. If a candidate for state office in Virginia supported maintaining the delivery of health and long-term care services even if it means generating additional state revenues, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for them, or would it not make any difference?

- %
- 50 More likely
 - 11 Less likely
 - 31 Would Not Make a Difference
 - 7 DON'T KNOW
 - 1 REFUSED

Q4. Now, I'd like to get your opinion on a proposal to generate money to maintain funding for health and long-term care services.

Virginia has a 2.5-cents per pack tax on cigarettes. This tax is the lowest in the country. It was last increased in 1960. One proposal to generate money for health and long-term care services calls for an increase in the cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 62.5 cents. This 60-cent increase would generate about \$367 million annually.

To maintain current levels of funding for health and long-term care services in Virginia, do you support or oppose increasing Virginia's cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 62.5 cents?

<u>%</u>		
62	Support	→ [SKIP TO Q6]
33	Oppose	
3	IT DEPENDS [VOLUNTEERED]	→ [SKIP TO Q7]
2	DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE	→ [SKIP TO Q7]
<.5	REFUSED	→ [SKIP TO Q7]

Q5. And do you strongly oppose or somewhat oppose increasing Virginia's cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 62.5 cents per pack?

<u>%</u>	
24	Strongly
8	Somewhat
1	DON'T KNOW
0	REFUSED

[SKIP TO Q7]

Q6. And do you strongly support or somewhat support increasing Virginia's cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 62.5 cents per pack?

<u>%</u>		
51	Strongly	→ [SKIP TO Q10]
10	Somewhat	
<.5	DON'T KNOW	
0	REFUSED	

Q7. To maintain current levels of funding for health and long-term care services in Virginia, do you support or oppose increasing Virginia's cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 32.5 cents? This 30-cent increase would generate about \$183 million annually. Is that strongly or somewhat?

(base = 391 Who Do Not Strongly Support the 60-cent Increase)

<u>%</u>		
31	Support	→ [SKIP TO Q9]
58	Oppose	
5	IT DEPENDS [VOLUNTEERED]	→ [SKIP TO Q10]
5	DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE	→ [SKIP TO Q10]
<.5	REFUSED	→ [SKIP TO Q10]

Q8. And do you strongly oppose or somewhat oppose increasing Virginia's cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 32.5 cents per pack?

(base = 391 Who Do Not Strongly Support the 60-cent Increase)

<u>%</u>	
44	Strongly
14	Somewhat
1	DON'T KNOW
<.5	REFUSED

[SKIP TO Q10]

Q9. And do you strongly support or somewhat support increasing Virginia's cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to 32.5 cents per pack?

(base = 391 Who Do Not Strongly Support the 60-cent Increase)

<u>%</u>	
13	Strongly
18	Somewhat
0	DON'T KNOW
<.5	REFUSED

Q10. If a candidate for state office in Virginia supported increasing Virginia's cigarette tax to generate money for health and long-term care services, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for them, or would it not make any difference.

%
51 More likely
16 Less likely
29 Would Not Make a Difference
3 DON'T KNOW
<.5 REFUSED

Demographics

My last few questions are for classification purposes only!

D1. What is your marital status? Are you currently.....

%
55 Married,
11 Divorced,
4 Separated,
10 Widowed,
19 Or have you never been married?
1 Living with partner [VOLUNTEERED]
<.5 DON'T KNOW
1 REFUSED

D2. What is your age as of your last birthday? [RECORD IN YEARS]

%
31 18-34
31 35-49
21 50-64
15 65 or older
2 REFUSED

D3. [ASK ONLY IF (D2 > 49 AND S4 = 2) OR (D2 < 50 AND S4 = 1)] Earlier in the survey I recorded that you were [INSERT ANSWER FROM S4] and now I have your age as being [INSERT ANSWER FROM D2]. Am I correct that you said you are currently [INSERT ANSWER FROM D2] years old?

Yes
No → [SKIP TO D2]
DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
REFUSED

D4. Are you or your spouse a member of A-A-R-P formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons? [IF NOT "MARRIED" ASK, "Are you a member..."]

%
18 Yes
81 No
1 DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
<.5 REFUSED

D5. Thinking about your state elections for Virginia Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior? Would you say you always vote, sometimes miss one, rarely vote, or never vote?

%
49 Always vote
24 Sometimes miss one
9 Rarely vote
16 Never vote
1 DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
1 REFUSED

D6. What is the highest level of education you have completed? **(READ)**

%
17 Less than high school
27 High school graduate or equivalent
23 Some college or technical training beyond high school
22 College graduate
11 or, Post-graduate or professional degree?
0 DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
<.5 REFUSED

D7. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? Are you currently....

%
58 Employed or Self-Employed full-time
9 Employed or Self-Employed part-time
16 Retired and not working
4 Unemployed and looking for work
6 Homemaker
4 Disabled
2 Student
<.5 Or something else? [Specify: _____]
0 DON'T KNOW
1 REFUSED

D8. Now, for statistical purposes only, please stop me when I get to the category that includes your household's income before taxes in 2001. Was it... **(READ)**

%
7 Less than \$10,000
9 \$10,000 but less than \$20,000
11 \$20,000 but less than \$30,000
13 \$30,000 but less than \$40,000
9 \$40,000 but less than \$50,000
18 \$50,000 but less than \$75,000
19 or was your income \$75,000 or more
5 DON'T KNOW
9 REFUSED

D9. Do you currently smoke cigarettes on a regular basis?

%
25 Yes
74 No → [SKIP TO D11]
<.5 DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE → [SKIP TO D11]
1 REFUSED → [SKIP TO D11]

D10. If a 60-cent cigarette tax were enacted, would you most likely....

(base = 203 Cigarette Smokers)

%
26 Continue to smoke as much,
19 Smoke less,
39 OR would you most likely quit smoking?
6 DEPENDS (VOLUNTEER)
9 DON'T KNOW
1 REFUSED

D11. What is your 5-digit zipcode?

— — — — —

D12. And, finally, may I verify that I reached you at:

() _____

Thank you for participating! Your Opinion Counts.

Respondent gender:

%
49 Male
51 Female

[SKIP TO INTERVIEWER NAME]

Refusal Sequence

R1. Thank you for your time anyway. Have a good night.

RECORD GENDER OF PERSON WHO REFUSED

- 1) Male
- 2) Female
- 3) Do Not Know

R2. WHEN DID PERSON REFUSE:

- 1) DURING INTRODUCTION
- 2) DURING SELECTION OF RESPONDENT (YOUNGEST MALE/OLDEST FEMALE)
- 3) AFTER HAND-OFF WAS MADE
- 4) OTHER [SPECIFY: _____]

R3. RECORD UP TO THREE REASONS FOR REFUSAL

- 1) Doesn't Do Surveys
- 2) Eating/ Having Dinner
- 3) Doesn't Have Time/Too Busy
- 4) Concerned About Privacy
- 5) Telemarketing or Other Laws Against Surveys
- 6) No Opinion About Survey Topic
- 7) Not Interested in Survey Topic
- 8) Hearing
- 9) Person Refused for Someone Else
- 10) Other [Specify: _____]
- 11) **NO REASON GIVEN**

R4. WAS THIS A "HARD" REFUSAL?

- 1) YES
- 2) NO

HARD REFUSAL =

- ➔ PERSON HUNG-UP IMMEDIATELY
- ➔ PERSON WAS ANGRY
- ➔ PERSON WAS INSULTING OR VERBALLY ABUSIVE
- ➔ PERSON HUNG-UP WHILE YOU WERE SPEAKING

R5. HOW COMFORTABLE WOULD YOU, PERSONALLY, BE CALLING THIS PERSON
BACK ONE WEEK FROM NOW?

- 1) VERY COMFORTABLE
- 2) SOMEWHAT COMFORTABLE
- 3) NOT VERY COMFORTABLE
- 4) WOULD NOT CALL BACK

Interviewer name: _____

Date: _____

Time end: _____

Length of interview: _____

Interviewer ID # _____

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