



BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR STATE TOBACCO TAX INCREASES (Quotes from Republican & Democratic Office Holders)

Since the beginning of 2002, 46 states and the District of Columbia have passed 99 separate state cigarette tax increases.¹ Support for tax increases has been strong and bipartisan, with 43 of the state cigarette tax increases being signed into law by a Republican governor and 44 by a Democratic governor.² Similarly, 21 were passed by a Republican controlled legislature, 44 by a Democratic controlled legislature, and 21 by state legislatures where the control of the state houses was split between the parties. The average size of these state cigarette tax increases was 55 cents per pack.

This bipartisan support for tobacco tax increases extends to the voting public, as well. In more than 35 state polls asking questions about state tobacco taxes, majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents all support increasing the state tobacco tax.³

Below are some Republican and Democratic governors and legislators quotes in support of state tobacco tax increases that reflect the strong bipartisan support for state tobacco tax increases to raise revenue, reduce smoking, and promote public health.

Quotes by Republican Governors Supporting Tobacco Tax Increases

Governor Charlie Crist (R-FL): "I think the cigarette tax is appropriate and I really view it as a health issue more than I do a tax issue." [*The Buzz*, blog from the *St. Petersburg Times*, May 19, 2009]

Governor Haley Barbour (R-MS, Former Lobbyist for Philip Morris): "If we're really serious about health policy, we shouldn't be subsidizing cigarettes." [*The Mississippi Clarion Ledger*, May 7, 2009]

Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. (R-UT): "The cigarette tax increase is one that I'm very supportive of and I think it's a very legitimate revenue producer, particularly in the ways we can use those revenues and help in basic research, with higher ed[ucation] with health, to me, that's a fair trade-off." [*The Salt Lake Tribune*, February 26, 2008]

Governor Mitch Daniels (R-IN): "This summer, the governor proposed creating a new health-insurance program for poor adults who constitute the 'core uninsured.' Because he is financing it with a 44-cent per-pack increase in the cigarette tax, the proposal drew fire from Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform. Mr. Daniels was undeterred, arguing that the program will have the added benefit of reducing smoking. . . . 'I know my supply-side catechism,' he explained in an interview with me. 'A consumption tax on a product you'd just as soon have less of doesn't violate the rules I learned under Ronald Reagan.' Mr. Daniels was political director of the Reagan White House from 1985 to 1987." [*The Wall Street Journal*, September 15, 2007]

Governor Mitch Daniels (R-IN): "We have it in our power to make a huge difference. We know how to reduce smoking, and in particular to dissuade young people from starting to smoke. It starts with a higher price for the product. It is no coincidence that Hoosiers pay less for cigarettes than the vast majority of Americans and smoke at the highest rates around. But we can and must do more. Back when state government was struggling with deficits, our tobacco reduction programs were cut by two-thirds. They should be restored, to levels where they can be fully effective." [Excerpts from Governor Daniels' State of the State Speech delivered January 16, 2007, as provided by the Governor's office]

Governor Tim Pawlenty (R-MN): "This [cigarette tax increase] will not only increase revenues...but it will also decrease smoking, it will improve health, and not be a drag, or discouragement, to future job growth and investment in our state." [Press Conference by Governor Pawlenty and Republican legislators, 2005]

¹ Some of the separate cigarette tax increases were part of multi-year increases that were passed all at the same time in a single piece of legislation.

² The listed cigarette tax increases for WA in 2002, OR, AZ, CO, MT, and OK in 2005, and AZ and SD in 2006 were passed or confirmed by the states' voters in a ballot question.

³ For more information, see TFK Factsheet, *Voters Across the Country Support Significant Increases in State Tobacco Taxes*, <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0167.pdf>.

Governor Rick Perry (R-TX): “[Using tobacco tax increases to decrease property taxes and fund education] is a responsible plan that appeals to Texans’ sense of fairness, encourages investments in jobs and workers, discourages harmful addictions like smoking, and utilizes a portion of the surplus to give the people a well-deserved tax cut without leaving future legislatures a mountain of debt.” [Office of the Governor Press Release, June 21, 2005]

Governor Bill Graves (R-KS): “I still don’t have a lot of sympathy for the notion that we have some obligation to make acquiring cigarettes easy and inexpensive for Kansans.” [*The Iola Register*, July 12, 2002]

Governor Mark Schweiker (R-PA): “As a Republican leader who’s worked hard to cut taxes, standing in front of 12 million Pennsylvanians and proposing a tax increase is new for me...But this increase will not only keep cigarettes out of the hands of children and save lives, it will go a long, long way toward helping us deal with the most significant fiscal dilemma this state has faced in years.” [*Associated Press*, June 6, 2002] “In the end, this isn’t about revenues, spreadsheets or Rainy Day Funds...This is about stopping a child from buying that first pack of cigarettes or chewing tobacco. This is about saving lives.” [*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 7, 2002]

Governor George Pataki (R-NY): The cigarette tax increase will “fight the scourge of teen tobacco use by increasing the price on cigarettes, making them less affordable for price-sensitive youngsters.” [Press Release upon signing new tax increase into law, January 25, 2002]

Governor Mike Johanns (R-NE): “I’ve pretty well signed off on a cigarette-tax increase...for a number of reasons. One is obviously there are health-care issues with cigarette smoking. It does impact the Medicaid program. Money goes into the Medicaid program, then I just think that that makes sense.” [*NebraskaStatePaper.com*, February 26, 2002] “I don’t think you’re going to get much debate that medical costs are higher when you smoke.” [*Omaha World-Herald*, March 10, 2002] “Cigarette and tobacco use may be a choice, but every one of us pays for its use, either with our health or our pocketbooks, or both.” [*Omaha World Herald*, March 18, 2002]

Governor John Engler (R-MI): “A cigarette tax is good for the health of Michigan and the health of the budget...I think people would overwhelmingly support this over other options.” [*Detroit News*, May 31, 2002]

Quotes by Democratic Governors Supporting Tobacco Tax Increases

Governor Mark Parkinson (D-KS): “I’ve talked to you about my view that we should raise the cigarette tax. We’re 60 cents a pack below the national average. That makes our cigarettes cheaper and it makes them more accessible to teenagers. So not only would we raise money when we raise the cigarette tax, we would also reduce teen smoking. So, I’m very comfortable in telling you that’s a tax increase that i will definitely be seeking.” [KTKA 49 ABC (Topeka, KS), December 22, 2009]

Governor Steve Beshear (D-KY): “In answering a question about Kentuckians’ relative unhealthiness at a breakfast with Louisville business people, Beshear said the state should ‘continue to look at increasing our cigarette tax.’...’No question it makes a lot of difference. We have got a lot of teens smoking in this state.” [*The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), November 10, 2009]

Governor Jim Doyle (D-WI): “The goal for me on the cigarettes is not revenue. The goal is to have people stop. So that’s why you have to have these really sharp tax increases, because if you just did a tax increase of a penny or five pennies or something like that on cigarettes, it doesn’t have any effect on behavior.” [*The Post-Crescent*, February 18, 2009]

Governor Mike Beebe (D-AR): “...the savings that decreased smoking will bring to our health-care system will be a welcome offset to any revenue lost from decreased tobacco sales. Caring for tobacco users costs an estimated \$620 million a year in Arkansas. By simultaneously reforming our tax on smokeless tobacco, we will prevent driving young people away from increased cigarette prices and directly to another harmful form of tobacco.” [State of the State Address, January 13, 2009]

Governor Steve Beshear (D-KY): “It is time that we make a difference for our people in their health. By far the quickest way of doing that is by substantially raising our cigarette tax and other tobacco taxes.” [*The Lexington Herald Leader*, January 24, 2009]

“In addition, Gov. Beshear said a hike in the cigarette tax, while popular among a large majority of Kentuckians, would create a ‘healthier population and substantially decrease long-term health-care costs.

This is not only a revenue measure but a permanent antidote to what ails much of our state.” [Office of Governor Beshear Press Release, December 11, 2008]

Governor Katherine Sebelius (D-KS): “It is a win/win/win solution. Studies have repeatedly shown that raising the price of cigarettes decreases tobacco use among teens. Since young smokers are very price-sensitive, by raising the price we can prevent young people from ever becoming smokers. The new source of revenue it creates can be used to open the doors of health care to more children and to working Kansans.” [Governor’s Column, June 3, 2008]

Governor Deval Patrick (D-MA): “Gov. Deval L. Patrick yesterday said he would support an increase in the cigarette tax. ‘There’s a lot of public health wisdom in a cigarette tax,’ he said.” [The Republican (Springfield, MA), April 8, 2008]

Governor Bill Ritter (D-CO): “Ritter said increased cigarette taxes have allowed the state to expand its education campaign, persuading more smokers to drop the habit.” [Associated Press, September 24, 2007]

Governor John Lynch (D-NH): Governor Lynch has proposed a cigarette tax increase to fund the state’s budget and reduce youth smoking, stating in his budget address that raising the cigarette tax would not only raise \$87 million over two years but “also allows us to accomplish an important public health goal - deterring young people from smoking.” [The Concord Monitor, February 16, 2007]

Governor Phil Bredesen (D-TN): Governor Bredesen called his proposal to increase the cigarette tax to 60 cents per pack along with a state smoking ban “a powerful force in fighting the detrimental effects of smoking.” “It’s time to complete the circle and take smoking out of the privileged position it has enjoyed for years,” Bredesen said. “I hope that not only health advocates but farmers and others will recognize that this is something that makes sense and support it.” [Associated Press, February 9, 2007]

Governor Ruth Ann Minner (D-DE): In her State of the State address to the General Assembly, Governor Minner stated, “Statistics show clearly that this [cigarette tax] is the single most effective way to prevent smoking among our youth.” [Associated Press, January 19, 2007]

Governor Chet Culver (D-IA): “We’ve been very adamant about the importance of increasing the cigarette tax by a dollar for a lot of reasons. First and foremost you have to raise the cigarette tax a significant amount to deter those young people, especially, from smoking in the first place...It has not been raised for a number of years and this will allow Iowa to be more in the area of the national average when it comes to this important tax.” [Sioux City Journal, January 24, 2007]

Governor Jim Doyle (D-WI): After announcing that he will ask lawmakers to approve a 62 percent cigarette tax increase, Governor Doyle stated, “Throughout my career in public life, I’ve fought to protect our kids and our citizens from the scourge of tobacco. Despite our progress over the last few years, too many of our kids are still lighting up, too many lives are being cut short, and the cost of treating tobacco related illnesses in Wisconsin alone has swelled into the billions.” [Post-Crescent, January 24, 2007]

Governor Ed Rendell (D-PA): “How can we sit there and tax cigarette smoking and not tax smokeless tobacco and cigar smoking when we know the health risks and the cost to the overall public health system are just as great?” [Associated Press, January 18, 2007]

Governor John Baldacci (D-ME): Defending his proposal to increase the cigarette tax by \$1.00 per pack to \$3.00 per pack, Governor Baldacci said, “If the Legislature agrees, Maine would have the highest cigarette taxes in the country. We want to send a message about smoking, how bad it is.” [Portland Press Herald, January 7, 2007]

Other Republican Quotes Supporting Tobacco Tax Increases

Florida State Senator Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville): “I favored the [cigarette tax increase] bill because of the health aspect more so than as a way to create revenue. If we stop some youngster from smoking, we will stop heartbreak later on in their lives.” [The Florida Times-Union, July 10, 2009]

South Carolina State Senator Thomas Alexander (R-Walhalla): “I feel very comfortable with the plan. The quicker we can have this tax increase, the quicker we can help people. With the unemployment we have and everything else, I think it’s important that we move forward as quickly as we can.” [Associated Press, May 4, 2009]

Florida State Representative Ellyn Bogdanoff (R-District 91): “But in terms of all the increases, most people thought the cigarette tax was most palatable. It’s a sin tax, like gambling. Look, if a Republican is going to raise a tax, it’s going to be on a sin.” [*The Miami Herald*, May 4, 2009]

South Carolina State Senator Hugh Leatherman (R-Florence): “I want to see the cigarette tax go up so we can cut down on smoking, particularly among the teenage youngsters out there.” [*The State* (SC), April 6, 2008]

South Carolina State Representative Chip Limehouse (R-Charleston): “Limehouse said he generally opposes all tax increases. But he argues the state is underwriting the health care costs of smoking. ‘We’re close to getting a tobacco tax passed,’ he said. ‘I just think we’re being short-sighted. I’m a Republican. I’m a fiscal conservative. ... It’s money that the state is leaving on the table.’” [*The State* (SC), February 25, 2007]

Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR): In support of Governor Ted Kulongoski’s proposal to increase Oregon’s cigarette tax by 84.5 cents per pack, Senator Smith said it is “‘the only tax increase I have ever enthusiastically or consciously voted for.’ Tobacco imposes ‘tremendous costs on our health care system,’ he said, adding that he believes it’s appropriate to ask smokers to pay more for tobacco to benefit children’s health.” [*The Oregonian*, February 22, 2007]

State Senator Marc Basnight (R-NC): “Why not pass it? Cigarettes cause health problems, which cost all of us money. Why not recover some of that cost?” [*Star News* (NC), May 7, 2004]

U.S. Secretary of Health & Human Services Tommy Thompson (R): “[HHS Secretary Thompson] said he would back higher taxes on cigarettes as a way of discouraging youth smoking, although he cautioned that he was not speaking on that subject for the White House. . . . ‘Why not? I’m for it, but I’m talking as Tommy Thompson now, not as a member of the administration,’ he said.” [*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 5, 2002]

Mayor Bloomberg (R-NYC): “Raising [cigarette] taxes, you can see it. You raise it, consumption goes down. You raise it more, consumption keeps going down.” [*Associated Press*, February 13, 2002]

Former State Senator Lynn Dean (R-LA): “Sen. Lynn Dean, R-Caernarvon, who usually opposes taxes, urged passage of the 12-cent increase. ‘This is one I am for,’ he said. ‘As the price of cigarettes goes up, fewer people smoke. . . . We as taxpayers have to reach into our pockets to pay for medical bills they can’t afford because of the money they wasted on cigarettes all these years.’” [*The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), June 1, 2002]

Former State Senator Sandy Praeger, now Commissioner of the Kansas Department of Insurance (R-KS): “If increasing the cigarette tax drives down the number of people who smoke, great, let’s do it because we’ll save money on our medical costs.” [*Capital-Journal* (Topeka, KS), April 4, 2002.]

Former State Rep. John Edmonds (R-KS): Explaining why he reversed his opposition to all tax increases and introduced bills to increase the state sales tax, raise the cigarette tax from 24 cents per pack to \$1 per pack, and increase other tobacco taxes from 10 percent to 40 percent, Rep. Edmonds “said he asked constituents this weekend what tax they would like to see increased, if they had no choice. He said they said the sales tax because everyone pays that and the cigarette tax because the increase would prevent some young people from smoking.” [*Lawrence Journal-World*, April 10, 2002.]

State Senator Jim Barnett (R-KS): “Every state that has increased the cigarette tax significantly has seen two things happen,” he said. “Consumption has gone down, which is a good thing, and revenue has gone up.” [*Capital-Journal*, May 9, 2002]

Former House Republican Leader Bill Peterson (R- SD): “It’s as much a user fee as a tax,” said Peterson. “Like other states, South Dakota is in financial difficulty, and a lot of direct (government) costs can be associated with tobacco.” [*Argus Leader*, November 26, 2002]

Former Rep. George Curtsey (R-WY): “Smoking is an addictive process; nicotine is an addictive drug...I’m all for raising the tax and raising it a lot.” [*Rocky Mountain News*, December 10, 2002]

Brian Hicks, Former Chief of Staff for Governor Bob Taft (R-OH): “He said the 50-cent increase provides a triple benefit: increased revenue, a decrease in smoking rates, especially among teens, and the potential of long-term savings in health costs.” [*Associated Press*, May 24, 2002]

Former State Rep. Stephen Ehardt (R-MI): “I don’t think the cigarette tax is a tax increase. It’s a smoking cessation plan.” [*Associated Press*, June 17, 2002]

Other Democratic Quotes Supporting Tobacco Tax Increases

State Senate President John Cullerton (D-Chicago, IL): “A cigarette tax increase is one of the most important agenda items for the coming year. It will generate new revenue, reduce Medicaid costs attributed to smoking-related health concerns, and most importantly, it will dramatically reduce people’s desire to smoke.” [*The State Journal-Register* (Springfield, IL), January 4, 2011]

State Representative Danice Picraux (D-Albuquerque, NM): “It’s a health issue. This is a case where levying a dollar – we hope – deters people, especially young folks, from starting smoking or continuing smoking, and that’s our way to do it.” [KOB.com, January 26, 2010]

State Representative Eugene DePasquale (D-York County, PA): “As I thought we should’ve done in the last budget, and I think we should do in the next budget...what I really think is an embarrassment to Pennsylvania, 49 states have a tax on smokeless tobacco. One state, Pennsylvania, does not. I believe this tax can not only help make sure that we’re fighting cancer by reducing the amount of people that use smokeless tobacco, but for the people that do purchase the product, we can use that money to go right back into the smoking and tobacco cessation programs that we unfortunately had to cut in the last budget.” [State Representative’s Podcast, January 18, 2010]

State Representative Dan Foster (D-Kanawha, WV): “It raises revenue for the state, in the short-term, greater than \$100 million a year. And, it decreases the number of smokers which has the potential to decrease our long-term health care costs.” [*The State Journal*, December 9, 2009]

State Representative Jim Waldman (D-Coconut Creek, FL): Referring to Florida’s most recent \$1.00 cigarette tax increase on July 1, 2009: “It’s working exactly the way it was designed to work. People are quitting. If I could, I’d raise it another dollar.” [*South Florida Sun Sentinel*, November 16, 2009]

State Representative Bobby Moak (D-Bogue Chitto, MS): “That’s one of the main reasons for the tax - to hopefully get some folks to kick the habit. Mississippi will begin to see immediate reductions in some of our medical costs if we have a reduction in the number of packs sold and smokers.” [*Daily Leader*, March 23, 2009]

State Representative Kim Hixson (D-Whitewater, WI): “After we increased the cigarette tax in the last budget, the amount of calls made to the state quit-line were more in one month than they had been in the entire previous year. A higher cigarette cost means less teenagers smoking.” [*Royal Purple Online* (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater student paper), March 4, 2009]

State Representative Dale Miller (D-Cleveland, OH): “It eliminates the disparity where currently the tax on tobacco products other than cigarettes is much less, despite the fact that many of these products are just as harmful.” [Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 28, 2009]

State Representative Tyrone Yates (D-Cincinnati, OH): [On his proposal to increase tax rates on non-cigarette tobacco products to parallel the state cigarette tax rate]: “I can’t see a rationale for not doing it, because it’s a very healthy policy. A number of constituents that I serve are starting to use these other tobacco products.” [*Associated Press*, February 26, 2009]

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-New York): “I’m a big believer in raising tobacco taxes,” Mrs. Clinton said when asked whether an increase should be on the table. “You know, when we were working on the Children’s Health Insurance Program, that’s the funding stream that the Congress came up with, which was bipartisan, which worked out very well. At some point, there’s going to be diminishing returns. But, sure, why not? I don’t have any objection to that.” [*The New York Times*, March 28, 2008]

State Senator Jeremy Ring (D-Broward County, FL): “I see a cigarette tax as an absolute win-win. Any time we can try to get new revenue and at the same time try to halt people from smoking, to me it’s an absolute no-brainer.” [*Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, March 10, 2008]

State Rep. Salvatore F. DiMasi (D-MA): “It’s probably an initiative that can work both ways: raise money and discourage young kids from smoking....I would direct that right to healthcare.” [*The Boston Globe*, February 6, 2008]

Former Governor Barbara Roberts (D-OR): “A tobacco tax increase is not your ordinary tax increase. In addition to generating more revenue for state health programs, it is a useful tool to help curb rising health care costs and prevent our children from becoming addicted to tobacco.” [*The Statesman Journal* (OR), February 23, 2007]

State Rep. B. Patrick Bauer (D-IN), House Speaker: “I’ve had both Democrats and Republicans tell me...that [the public health] testimony makes them feel they could vote for a cigarette tax increase.” [*The Courier-Journal* (Indianapolis), January 21, 2002]

Former State Senator Barbara A. Hoffman (D-MD): “People are in favor of a tobacco tax because it’s a user fee.” [*Baltimore Sun*, March 1, 2002]

Former State Rep. John Gregg (D-IN): “I’ll raise the cigarette tax any day . . . if it means keeping our schools open and our roads fixed.” [*Associated Press*, March 11, 2002.]

Former State Rep. Mitch Landrieu (D-LA): Responding to cigarette industry complaints about the proposed 12-cent cigarette tax increase: “Landrieu said some 6,400 people in the state die of smoking-related illnesses each year, and Louisiana spends more than \$2 billion each year treating those diseases. ‘The industry’s been looked to and hasn’t paid their fair share, frankly,’ he said.” [*The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 23, 2002]

State Rep. Mickey Michaux (D-NC): [Speaking of his proposed \$1 cigarette tax increase] “It’s extremely important, particularly in these times of budget crisis, to find ways to increase our revenue . . . And tobacco is no longer king in North Carolina.” [*Greensboro News & Record*, June 12, 2002] “I am a smoker and have been for years, and I enjoy it . . . But I don’t know if I’ll enjoy paying \$1 extra [per] pack, and it might induce me to quit.” [*Herald Sun*, June 11, 2002]

Former Assembly Speaker Herb Wesson (D-CA): “This is the only tax that saves lives . . . It’s entirely voluntary - nobody has to pay this tax - if you don’t smoke, you don’t pay.” [*Reuters*, August 6, 2002]

Other Quotes in Favor of Tobacco Tax Increases

Andy Downs, Former Senior Vice President, KY Chamber of Commerce, commenting on Chamber’s endorsement of an increase to KY’s current cigarette tax of three cents per pack to address state budget deficit: “the timing was right, and it just makes business sense.” [*Associated Press*, November 16, 2002]

Smoker Quote: Pack-a-day smoker Mariella Posey (VA) [commenting on Alexandria, VA’s increase of its local cigarette tax from 30 to 50 cents per pack]: “It’ll cost me 20 cents a day. It won’t kill me.” [*Northern Virginia Journal*, December 16, 2002]

Tobacco Lobbyist Quote: “Another prime target [for raising Illinois state revenues] is the tobacco tax. New York dramatically increased cigarette taxes not long ago. Sales declined significantly, but state revenues rose over \$400 million. And the people who stopped buying smokes were mostly teenagers. ‘It’s a win-win-win situation for the state,’ groaned one contract lobbyist with tobacco industry clients.” [*Capitol Fax*, February 15, 2002]

Please send additional quotes on tobacco tax increases to: Ann Boonn, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, aboonn@tobaccofreekids.org, Fax: 202-296-5427

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