



Missouri 2012 Tobacco Tax

Why Support a Tobacco Tax Increase in Missouri?

Each year thousands of Missourians are diagnosed with tobacco-related cancer and some will lose their lives to this devastating disease. This ballot measure will mean increased longevity, improved quality of life, and fewer Missourians who will needlessly suffer and die from tobacco-caused diseases. Evidence clearly shows that raising tobacco tax rates encourages tobacco users to quit or cut down and prevents kids from ever starting to smoke.

Raising the tobacco tax is one of the most effective ways to reduce smoking rates and other tobacco product use, and helps prevent our youth from ever starting. This ballot measure raises the tobacco tax and allocates a portion of the generated revenue to tobacco control and prevention. This will ultimately improve the health of all Missourians.

By increasing taxes on cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco and other tobacco products, our state can:

1. save lives,
2. reduce health care costs, and
3. generate much-needed revenue to help fund the state's tobacco control programs, elementary and secondary education, and higher education.

The Problem:

- Missouri has the lowest tobacco tax of any state in the country at 17 cents and has some of the highest smoking rates, lung cancer rates, and heart disease rates in the country.
- Tobacco use in the state costs an estimated \$565 per household in public expenditures, and claims 9,500 lives per year in Missouri from cancer and other smoking-related diseases.
- Tobacco use accounts for at least 30 percent of all cancer deaths and 87 percent of lung cancer deaths.

The Facts

- Missouri currently has no general revenue funding for tobacco prevention.
- 8,600 Missouri kids (under 18) become new daily smokers each year

- Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined.
- Each year, annual health care costs in Missouri directly caused by smoking \$2.13 billion and \$532 million is spent on the state's Medicaid program.
- Every household in Missouri pays \$565 per year in their state and federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures.
- \$2.51 billion in smoking-caused lost productivity

The Solution

Increasing tobacco excise taxes on cigarettes is one of the most cost-effective strategies to reduce tobacco use among adults and to prevent youth from starting. Tobacco use is the most preventable cause of premature illness and death in the United States and Missouri. In addition to saving lives and reducing current and future health care costs due to smoking, the tobacco measure would help Missouri's workforce infrastructure by enhancing education funding for tomorrow's workers.

The proposed tax increase will raise at least \$279 million per year, according to the Campaign For Tobacco-Free Kids. Revenue from this tax increase would go towards tobacco use prevention and quit assistance programs (20 percent of funds), local public K-12 schools (50 percent of funds), and public colleges and universities statewide (30 percent of funds). It is widely known that elementary & secondary education and higher education in this state are facing significant financial challenges and this ballot measure will help alleviate those challenges. Additionally, it would help strengthen these public institutions and make sure that they are financially accessible to as many Missourians as possible.

For more information contact:

Misty Snodgrass, Legislative/Government Relations Director, American Cancer Society,
misty.snodgrass@cancer.org