

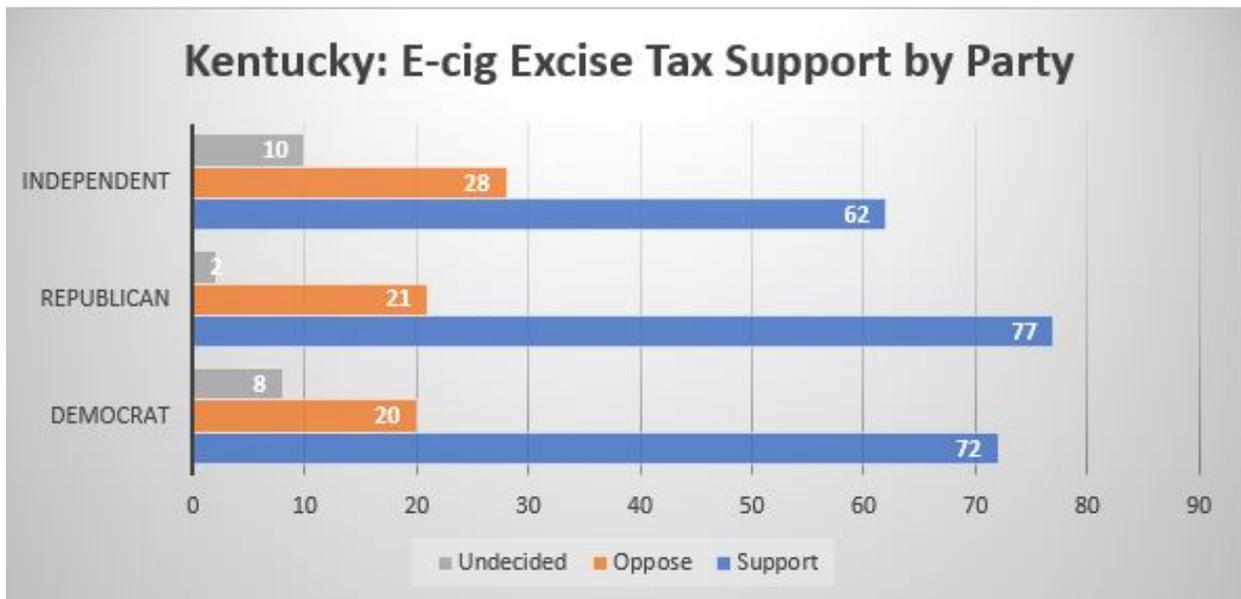
# MASON-DIXON KENTUCKY POLL: KENTUCKY VOTERS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT E-CIG TAX EQUIVALENT TO OTHER TOBACCO TAXES

NEWS RELEASE

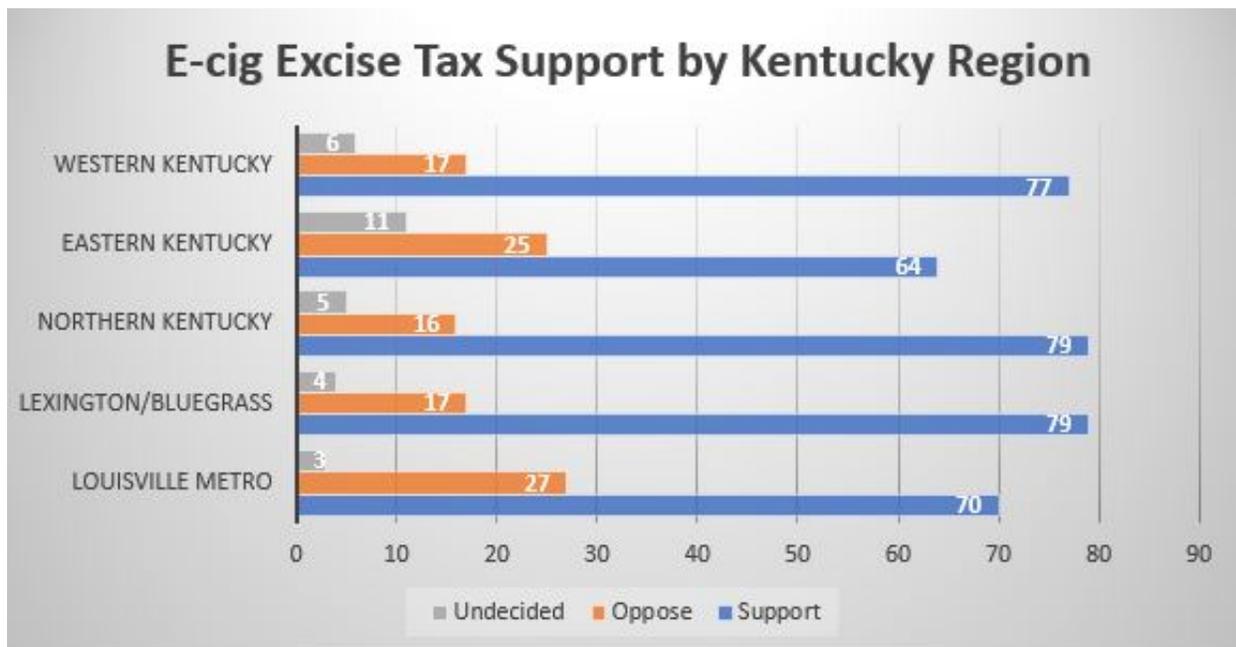
- [HOME](#)
- [NEWSROOM](#)
- [NEWS RELEASES](#)
- MASON-DIXON KENTUCKY POLL: KENTUCKY VOTERS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT E-CIG TAX EQUIVALENT TO OTHER TOBACCO TAXES

**(LOUISVILLE, Ky - JANUARY 2, 2019)** A new poll shows that the vast majority of Kentucky voters favor taxing electronic cigarettes the same as regular cigarettes. According to the poll, conducted in mid-December by Mason-Dixon Polling and Research, Inc., 73 percent of Kentuckians statewide support adding a state excise tax on e-cigarettes. Currently, e-cigarettes are subject only to sales taxes in Kentucky, while traditional cigarettes and other tobacco product purchases incur both sales and excise taxes.

"Tracking the exponential growth in sales and use of e-cigarettes is voter concern about the impact on public health, especially the impact on teens," said Larry Harris, principal with Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy. "Kentucky voters, like a majority of voters nationwide(1), support taxing e-cigarettes just as tobacco products ... voters see this as a reasonable and responsible strategy to help manage this public health threat."



The **highest level of support** for adding a state excise tax on the sale on e-cigarettes was from **Republicans** (77 percent), and from residents of the 10-county **Northern Kentucky** (79 percent) area. **Men** (76 percent) were more supportive than women (70 percent), and even 37 percent of those who had tried e-cigarettes said they would support the tax.



**Support also was strongest among voters ages 50 to 64 (79 percent)**, followed by those 65 and older (76 percent), than by voters 35 to 49 (75 percent). A majority of younger voters ages 18-34 also said they supported the excise tax, although at a lower level (56 percent) than other age groups.

"E-cigarette sales are accelerating globally, nationally, and in Kentucky, and given both our state budget situation and this overwhelming level of bipartisan support from voters, there's every fiscal and political reason to treat them the same way as other tobacco products," said Ben Chandler, president and CEO of the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky. "From a health perspective, it's imperative that we raise the cost of these products now to prevent youth as well as adults who would never have even tried traditional cigarettes from getting hooked on tobacco due to the high amounts of nicotine in e-cigs."

E-cigarette sales increased 132 percent from 2012 to 2016, and are now the most commonly used tobacco product among youth (see [Surgeon General's Advisory on E-cigarette Use Among Youth, Dec. 18, 2018](#)). In just the last year, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), e-cigarette use has ballooned 78 percent among high school students, to nearly 21 percent - or about one in five teens. Five percent - one in 20 - middle schoolers also used e-cigarettes in 2018, a jump of 48 percent since 2017. In total, 3.6 million youth in the United States smoked e-cigarettes in 2018, the [FDA says](#).

"This explosive growth is erasing years of progress in reducing tobacco use among adolescents and teens and creating a whole new generation of Kentuckians who will have to deal with the expensive, debilitating and often deadly diseases tied to tobacco consumption," Chandler said. "The research shows that one of the most effective ways of reducing tobacco use - especially among youth, pregnant women and those living on low incomes - is raising the cost of the tobacco products."

E-cigarettes purportedly were designed to help adult smokers quit. But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that nearly half of adult smokers who used e-cigs in 2017 continued to smoke traditional cigarettes - a practice known as dual use. Further, 6.1 percent of adults who had never smoked traditional cigarettes had used e-cigarettes in 2017 (see [reference](#)). While e-cigarettes are safer than cigarettes at least in the short term, they are not by any means safe, the CDC says. And it's too early to know the long-term health impacts of e-cigarettes, the agency says. Meanwhile, the federal government has not found sufficient evidence to say they are effective smoking cessation devices.

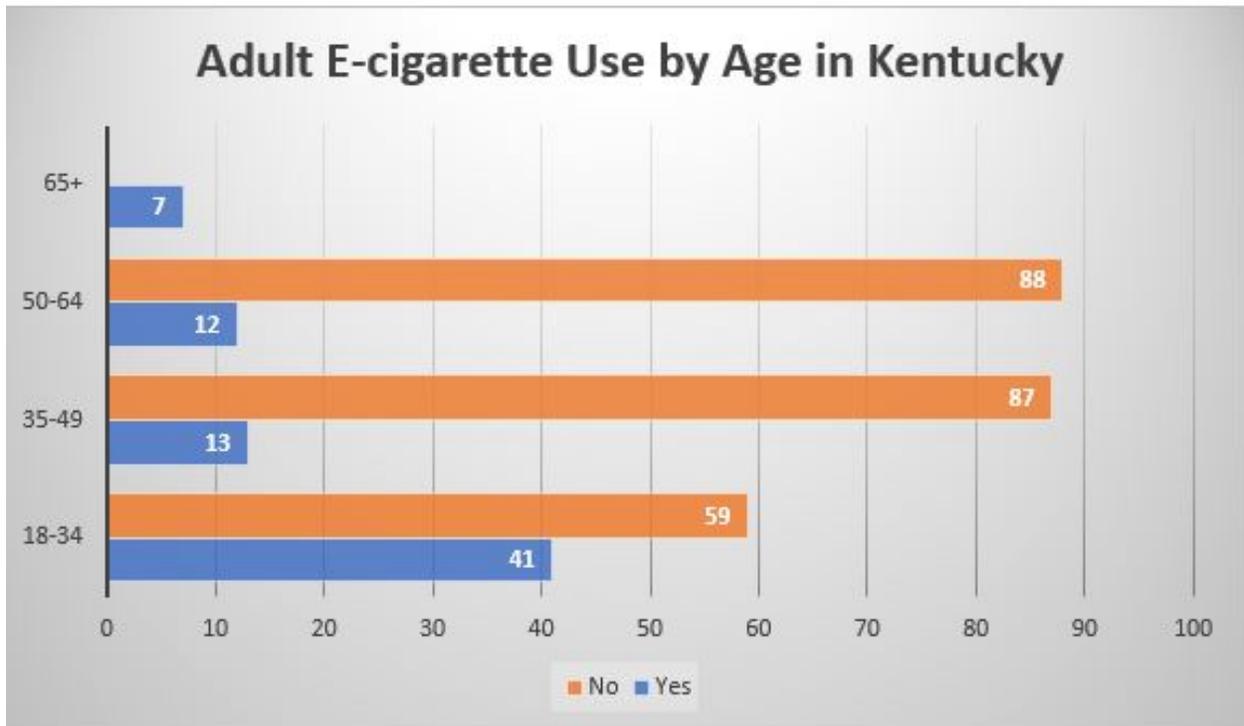
In any case, they are not safe for youth, in part because they contain such high levels of nicotine. One flavor pod for the most popular e-cigarette brand on the market, Juul, contains as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes, according the product label (see package).

In fact, more than 99 percent of e-cigarettes contain nicotine and their design allows high levels of nicotine to be inhaled "more easily and with less irritation than free base nicotine," said the CDC's Brian King in a [presentation](#) at the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky on December 10, 2018. Nicotine exposure during adolescence is harmful to brain development, and impacts learning, attention span, impulse control and memory. E-cigarettes also contain other harmful substances, including flavorings, heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deeply into the lungs.



Nine states and the District of Columbia have imposed an excise tax on e-cigarette sales. California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Maryland and the District of Columbia adopted an e-cig tax representing a percentage of the wholesale value, ranging from 30 percent to 85 percent; Kansas, Louisiana, North Carolina, West Virginia and Delaware levy a per-unit tax, ranging from \$0.075 to \$0.10 per milliliter (see [references here](#) and [here](#)). A bill that raised the cigarette tax in Kentucky by 50 cents during the last legislative session ultimately did not include a parallel tax increase on electronic cigarettes, reportedly due to last-minute lobbying by tobacco companies.

The poll also asked about e-cigarette use in Kentucky; statewide, 16 percent of Kentucky adults said they had tried e-cigarettes. The **highest use rates were among young adults ages 18-34 (41 percent) and among adults from Eastern Kentucky (21 percent).**



The poll questions were phrased as follows:

"Electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes are battery-powered devices used to inhale vaporized liquid. The vaporized liquid can contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes, and some have flavorings and other ingredients. Users of e-cigarettes sometimes refer to the activity as 'vaping' or 'juuling' as opposed to smoking. Have you ever used an electronic cigarette or e-cigarette?"

"Kentucky currently places both a sales tax and a \$1.10 per pack excise tax on the sale of cigarettes. E-cigarettes are only subject to sales taxes. Do you support or oppose placing an excise tax on the sale of e-cigarettes so that e-cigarettes are taxed at a rate similar to a pack of cigarettes?"

The telephone poll of 625 registered Kentucky voters was conducted December 12 through December 15, 2018. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points. The full poll results for these questions can be found [here](#).

###