



Sunflower Foundation
HEALTH CARE FOR KANSANS

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Kansans support of Kansas Clean Indoor Air Act continues to grow
New poll shows strong support, especially among GOP voters

TOPEKA – Three years after the Kansas Clean Indoor Air Act became Kansas' law, a statewide public opinion poll of Kansas voters indicates three out of four continue to favor the law, which prohibits smoking in most public places, including workplaces, public buildings, offices, restaurant and bars.

Results show Republican primary voters support the law at an even higher rate than voters statewide, with more than 80 percent favoring the bill. The poll was conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, a national survey firm, and commissioned by the Topeka-based Sunflower Foundation: Health Care for Kansans.

In addition to 500 Kansas voters, the survey over-sampled 400 Republican primary voters, as they represent the majority of voters in Kansas. The margin of error for Kansas voters was +/- 4.4 percent, and among Republican voters was +/- 4.9 percent.

"For the health of Kansans, we were thrilled to see support for the law is so strong and that it cuts across party, demographic and regional lines throughout the state," said Billie Hall, President and CEO of the Sunflower Foundation. The foundation has a mandate to support activities to reduce tobacco use in the state, and this is the third poll on the Kansas Clean Indoor Air Act it has conducted in the past three years.

"The Clean Indoor Air Act is one of the most important public health measures ever implemented in the history of our state," said Dr. Roy A. Jensen, MD, Director, the University of Kansas Cancer Center. "As a physician, I am energized by the results of this poll and the growing support we have to protect people from the dangers of secondhand smoke. This law is instrumental in our efforts to reduce cancer rates, and ultimately it is critical to improving the overall health of Kansans in the 21st century."

The poll also shows that nearly 9 out of 10 voters believe the law protects customers and employees at restaurants and bars from the dangers of secondhand smoke, and that voters themselves enjoy going to restaurants and bars "without smelling like cigarette smoke" when they get home.

Natasha Baker, who works at Town and Country Restaurant in Wichita, said the law has not hurt business. In fact, it has been just the opposite at the restaurant owned by her father.

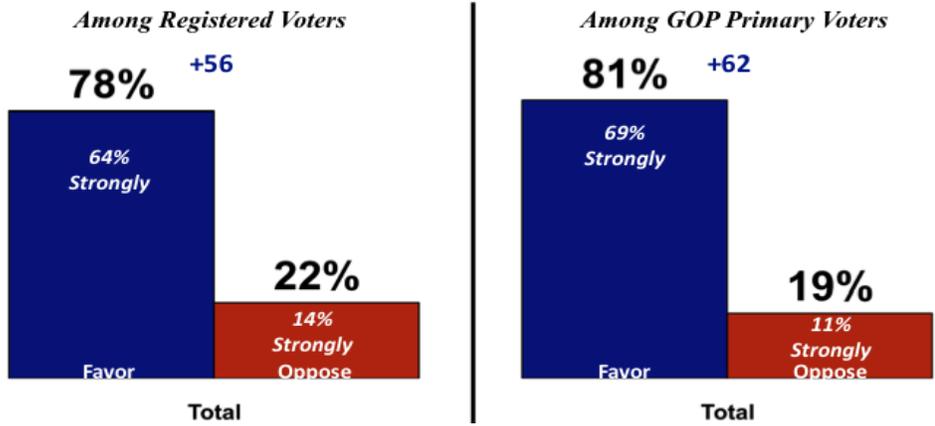
"I really think the new law generated a lot more business for us, because we got so many new customers who hadn't been coming into our restaurant because of the smoking," she said. "Today our customers are happy and it's just healthier for everyone - including our employees."

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The three primary findings are:

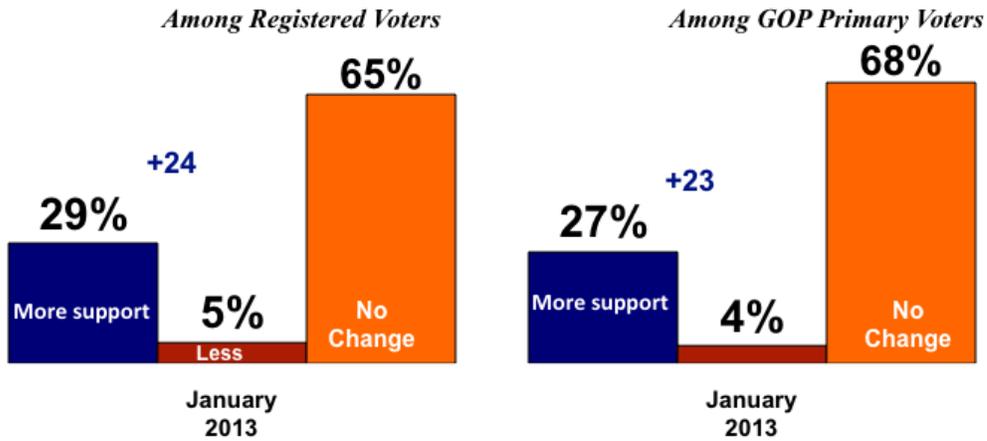
1. Overwhelming support

Voters across all political parties support the law, especially among Republican primary voters



2. Support is growing

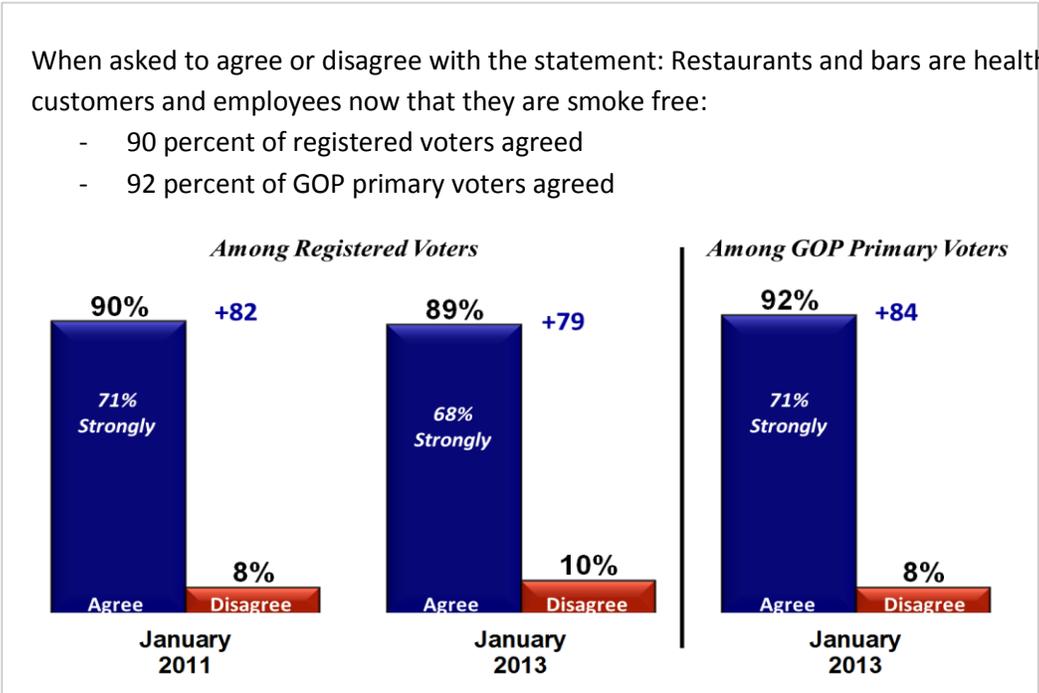
By a 6:1 margin, voters say their support is stronger today than before the law went into effect



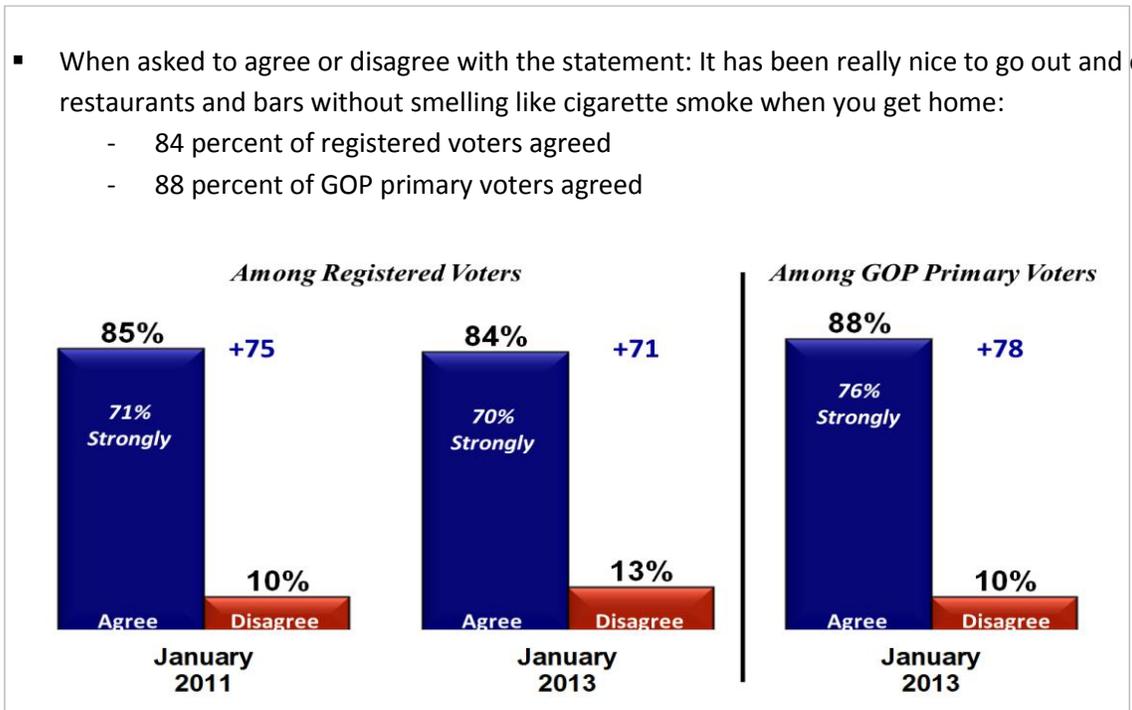
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3. Smoke-free air is important for workers, themselves

- When asked to agree or disagree with the statement: Restaurants and bars are healthier for customers and employees now that they are smoke free:
 - 90 percent of registered voters agreed
 - 92 percent of GOP primary voters agreed



- When asked to agree or disagree with the statement: It has been really nice to go out and enjoy restaurants and bars without smelling like cigarette smoke when you get home:
 - 84 percent of registered voters agreed
 - 88 percent of GOP primary voters agreed



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Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and Kansas, according to health experts. The Sunflower Foundation wants to use information from the statewide poll to raise awareness about the significance of the law and its widespread support, Hall emphasized.

“We still have a long way to go to reduce the number of people who use tobacco in our state,” she said. “The clean-air law was a significant step, and it is encouraging to know voters understand it is good public policy and support it. We will continue to monitor the issue, so that we can inform our own work and the many organizations and agencies in the state who continue to work on tobacco issues.”

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