

## The Maryland Children's Initiative: Raising Tobacco Taxes to Save Lives

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The Maryland Children's Initiative



### American Journal of Public Health

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**Elections and Public Health**

Since the late 1980s, advocates for public health have employed increasingly sophisticated tactics for advancing public policy. Whether petitioning that public health measures be made a ballot initiative<sup>1</sup> or using litigation to reform a state industry, public health leaders have been making progress on issues where legislatures have been reluctant to act. In states like Maryland, where no ballot initiative exists, voter education is a tool that can be used to make major changes in public health policy. Although the effectiveness of voter education campaigns has not been tested in most states, our experience with gun control and tobacco control shows that these campaigns can offer a powerful alternative to the status quo.

In 1997, Marylanders Against Gun Hazard Abuse (MAGA) sought a comprehensive gun control agenda, including banning assault weapons, limiting handgun sales to one per person per month, and limiting handgun purchases. Campaign workers in the state's General Assembly won that issue of their measure would pass.

MAGA published in a number of ways a list of candidates who signed the pledge. It held media events highlighting pro-gun-control candidates.<sup>2</sup> It asked for and received editorial support from major newspapers. Campaign leaders appeared on talk radio and news programs. Campaign partners distributed the list to their own members. MAGA also mailed the list to thousands of voters when it held targeted drives.

Prohibitionists grew quiet, confident that gun control had been a winning issue in the 1998 Maryland election. They gun control gubernatorial candidate Patris C. Cleburne distributed anti-gun control candidate lists to voters in a close race. A majority of those elected to both houses of the General Assembly had also signed the MAGA pledge. In at least 1 key statewide election, a pro-gun control challenger defeated an anti-gun control incumbent on the same. Two years later, in 1999, the Maryland General Assembly passed the landmark gun

### The Maryland Children's Initiative



- **1993 - Cigarette tax raised by \$0.20**
- **1996 - Smokeless tobacco tax defeated**
- **1997 - 6 tobacco tax bills defeated**
  - MGA wants to pass a \$0.05 tax to balance budget
- **1997 - Baltimore Sun Headline**
  - "Foes of tobacco lost big -- again; All-or-nothing tactics, some say, got them 'sucker-punched'"

### The Maryland Children's Initiative



- **1997-1999 - State awash in money**
  - \$600 M Surplus + booming economy
  - \$4 B Tobacco Settlement
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- **1997-1999 - State awash in money**
  - \$600 M Surplus + booming economy
  - \$4 B Tobacco Settlement
- **2002 - State passes tobacco tax**
  - \$0.34 increase in cigarette tax
  - ELECTION YEAR!

### Build Organizational Power

- Communication plan (listserv, blast fax, webpage)
- Set up organizational structure 501(h) and 501(c)4
- Raise funds!!

### Build Organizational Power


- Recruit lead organizations & launch campaign
- Outreach to community groups of all kinds, especially faith community
- Feature unique, special, or strong constituencies throughout

The Maryland Children's Initiative

3000 St. Paul St. • Baltimore, MD 21218 • (410) 275-9300 • (410) 275-9363 (fax)  
http://smokefreeand.org/initiative









Maryland's Battle for TUP

### Polling

In this year's election for General Assembly, if the choice was between a Democratic candidate who favors this cigarette tax proposal and a Republican who opposes it - for which candidate would you vote? (1500 Likely Voters, +/- 2.5% error, 6/8-6/16/98)

	Generic Ballot Test	Dem. supports tax	Diff
(D) Candidate	41%	51%	10%
(R) Candidate	32%	22%	-10%
Neither	6%	10%	4%
Don't Know	21%	17%	-4%



Maryland's Battle for TUP

### Polling

In this year's election for General Assembly, if the choice was between a Republican candidate who favors this cigarette tax proposal and a Democrat who opposes it - for which candidate would you vote? (1500 Likely Voters, +/- 2.5% error, 6/8-6/16/98)

	Generic Ballot Test	Rep. supports tax	Diff
(D) Candidate	41%	29%	-12%
(R) Candidate	32%	44%	12%
Neither	6%	10%	4%
Don't Know	21%	17%	-4%

### Across party lines, voters favor raising cigarette tax by \$1.50

**Md. support for cigarette tax hike**  
How 602 Maryland voters felt about increasing the cigarette tax by \$1.50 a pack:



**Per-pack increase would nearly double price in Maryland**

**By SCOTT SHANK**

Anti-smoking activists released a poll yesterday showing Maryland voters favor by nearly 80 percent a \$1.50 a pack increase in the state's cigarette tax and said the smoking has become so potent a political issue that it can outweigh race, class and other issues.

The poll, conducted last week, showed that the Democratic legislative candidate who favored a cigarette tax to create a \$1.50 pack increase would create a Democratic who opposed it.

"We now know clearly where the majority of Marylanders stand," said state Del. Elizabeth C. Staley, a prominent County Democrat who attended a news conference in decreasing consumption.

It's the Democratic candidate to favor the cigarette tax and the Republican opposes it. The poll showed that 78 percent supported the tax and the Democratic opposed it. The numbers dipped with 58 percent for the pro-tax Republican and 38 percent for the anti-tax Democrat.

"These numbers are startling," said Lake, a nationally prominent leader who has worked mainly for Democrats. "Being willing to raise your vote over another issue is very unusual."

Many public health experts are increasing the price of cigarettes in the market and failed to get to these smokers, particularly by youth.

"In the short run, the single most effective measure we could take is to get the price up," said Kenneth C. Warner, an economist and smoking expert at the University of Michigan. "There's more effective in decreasing consumption."

Note: Margin of error plus or minus 2 percentage points. Sample size: 602, 95% confidence interval, plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. See page 18B.

SMOKE FREE MARYLAND

More than 70% of likely Howard County voters favor a cigarette tax increase of \$1.50 per pack to reduce teen smoking and pay for alcohol, health and education programs, according to a survey conducted by the Columbia Flyer/Howard Co. Times and two other groups.

Howard County supports the tax hike — 71% of likely voters — was slightly higher than state the survey of 1,500 Maryland voters. A tax increase would be placed in over several years.

**Reaction**

The cigarette tax increase was called for a Maryland Senate committee in the General Assembly earlier this year. Congress also proposed to raise a tax on the proposal aimed at cutting teen smoking.

The survey shows that Howard County voters also are willing to watch their money dip when it comes to state's share on the tax.

Of Howard voters, 57% would choose a Republican candidate who supported the tax next a Republican candidate who opposed it. But when positions are reversed, only 20% would vote for the Republican candidate.

The margin of error was 10% for the county portion of the poll, which was conducted locally by two research firms — one that works closely with the Democratic National Committee and the other with the Republican National Committee.

"The survey shows people in Howard County may want the tax raised. They may not want the state and federal governments to raise it," said Cheryl Scriver, spokeswoman for the Columbia Flyer/Howard Co. Times. "Howard County, a candidate would have to be on the list to support it."

Senate Rep. Maryland has several Democratic legislative, including Bill on Governor Del. Elizabeth C. Staley, Republican Sen. Martin Madden, an opponent of the tax proposal.

"It's particularly good to see a majority favoring the tax hike," said Staley. "We're going to see that in Congress. We've got to get the message across that we're serious about tobacco and smoking." She said the bill will be introduced in the House of Representatives in the next few weeks.

"The concept of a

## Poll has voters saying yes to cigarette tax hike

Columbia Flyer / Howard Co. Times  
7/14/98  
p.8

## What do you want from your endorsers and key partners?

- To **educate** the leadership and their members about the issue.
- To **show them true friendship and partnership** in their groups' struggles (i.e., relationship is a two-way street).
- To eventually **get "evidence"** of their support for your issue.
- To **build a long-lasting relationship with leaders and members** to facilitate later action.

# Evidence of support?

- o **Have them sign something!**
  - Resolution or statement of support
  - Helps organization with decision-making process
  - Invites debate on level of support for initiative
- o **Opens door to a relationship**
- o **Helps you ask for help in future**

## The Maryland Children's Initiative

WHEREAS, Every year over 20,000 Maryland children become addicted to tobacco of whom more than 7,000 will die prematurely because of this addiction; and

WHEREAS, Over 20,000 Maryland children are addicted to illegal drugs and more than 100,000 children suffer because at least one of their parents is addicted to illegal drugs; and

WHEREAS, Two-thirds of Maryland's third-grade students do not meet the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) standard for reading skills and about 40% of all Maryland students are poor readers; and

WHEREAS, Jurisdictions across the State are developing community plans to improve results for children; and

WHEREAS, Increasing the State's excise tax on cigarettes by \$1.50 per pack and extending the tax to other tobacco products would, by itself, greatly decrease the number of children who become addicted to tobacco and would provide at least \$300 million per year in additional State revenues.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, That the undersigned organization endorses the Maryland Children's Initiative, which will:

- Increase the Maryland excise tax on cigarettes by \$1.50 per pack and extend the tax to other tobacco products; and
- Provide money to fund the following State-wide initiatives which support the healthy development of Maryland's children:
  - A campaign to discourage children from using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and to provide treatment for citizens already addicted;
  - A campaign to improve reading among Maryland's public school students, particularly in the elementary grades, by methods such as significantly reducing class sizes;
  - High quality and affordable child-care and after-school programs for children throughout Maryland; and
  - Community-wide plans that focus on measurable results and increased opportunity for children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the undersigned organization will:

- Inform its members and, if possible, the general public of its endorsement of this Resolution; and
- Inform the Governor, members of the General Assembly, and 1998 candidates for state and local offices of its endorsement of this Resolution, to the extent permitted by law, and urge its members to do so.

## Md. Coalition Seeks Higher Cigarette Tax

By CHARLIE BALKEMER  
Publication Staff Writer

Anti-smoking groups in Maryland launched a campaign yesterday to persuade the state to raise its cigarette tax. They say they will press popular because it would discourage teen smoking.

Armed with an abstruse poll and threats to campaign against candidates who oppose them this fall, the coalition hopes to have most Maryland legislators pledge to support a \$1.50-per-pack tax increase by the start of the General Assembly session in January.

The Maryland Children's Initiative released a poll in which 61 percent of state voters approved and they would support the \$1.50 tax increase "to reduce teen smoking." An additional 20 percent strongly approved the tax plan, and 19 percent somewhat approved it, according to the survey of 1,500 voters.

The state's current cigarette tax is \$10.60 per pack. The coalition's plan calls for phasing in a \$12.10-per-pack increase over three years, to bring the tax to \$12.60.

The group's strategy is modeled after a 1994 effort that led to higher handgun restrictions in Maryland. Then, its now-group disbanded

a poll meant to show legislative candidates that they could run and win the coalition's issue, even if it was considered more controversial.

Then, as now, the coalition's leader was Vincent DeMarco, a veteran gun-control advocate now leading the cigarette industry. DeMarco said his group will send the poll results to every candidate for the General Assembly's 1998 session that will ask each one to sign a pledge to support the tax increase. The group will "contact voters" about those who do not do it, he said.

See CIGARETTES, BY C-1

## Group Says Higher Cigarette Tax Would Discourage Teen Smoking

CIGARETTES, From B-7

"If we do our job and educate voters," DeMarco said, "they will elect a governor and legislature who support the \$1.50 tax increase to raise the cigarette tax. And we will do our job." The coalition includes more than 200 groups, including medical organizations

and neighboring states, he said, some smokers will quit because of the higher tax—and they may buy another pack and other items while they're at it.

However, Miller said, the recent congressional debate about federal cigarette taxes "has changed the thinking of the public on this issue considerably. Even in Southern Maryland, where over 1,000 families continue to grow tobacco, the mood is that tobacco could and should be kept out of the hands of teenagers at all costs."

The anti-smoking coalition said national studies have found that each 10 percent

increase in the tax on cigarettes in one state will reduce consumption in that state by 10 percent.

DeMarco said the coalition's goal is to have the tax increase by the start of the General Assembly session in January.

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## Clerics back Md. tobacco tax increase

Coalition supports \$1.50-per-pack rise aimed at teen smokers

'Nobody should smoke'

'Denormalization' decision termed 'a breakthrough'

By Jane Roberts  
Special

A coalition of religious leaders representing Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran and other faith groups, yesterday in an initiative that aims to curb teen smoking, urged the state to raise the cigarette tax by \$1.50 per pack.

"It is a groundbreaking step," said United Methodist Bishop Gene H. Robinson of Washington, D.C., who chaired a coalition at its annual meeting last week endorsing the initiative. "It shows consensus and collaboration at a level that would move the issue ahead, more so as individuals or as denominations."

He noted that Methodist leaders have first encouraged tobacco use and as early as 1911, required applicants for ministry to abstain from the use of tobacco.

The coalition, led by Bishop Gene H. Robinson, said that for denormalization to be successful, it must be supported by the entire faith community.

Robinson said that while many children, not teenagers, are addicted to tobacco, the state should

## Religious coalition backs Md. tobacco tax increase

(Photos, from Page 1)

"We were wrong"

"We're not smoking any more"

"The issue is not about making money"

"Addressing addiction"

"In general, they have not been on the front lines of youth tobacco control initiatives, with the exception of denormalization," he said.

"It is a very important message that we need to be sending to the general public, one that is not only about making money, but about protecting the health of our children."

"It comes down to the proper ownership of our bodies."

Richard DeMarco, a Boston-area pastor and chairman of the Tobacco Products Liability Project, said that he has been the target of harassment from the anti-tobacco movement. He has been threatened with violence and has received death threats.

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## Legislators, teens seek increase in cigarette tax

Bill would increase pack price by \$1

By Jane Roberts  
Special

Howard County legislators are expected to vote on a bill to raise the cigarette tax by \$1.50 per pack.

The bill would increase the tax on cigarettes from \$10.60 per pack to \$12.10 per pack.

The bill would also increase the tax on other tobacco products.

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The bill would also increase the tax on other tobacco products.

## Students not parents in tobacco fight

Students in White Lake

are leading the fight against tobacco use in their community.

The students are working with local organizations to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco.

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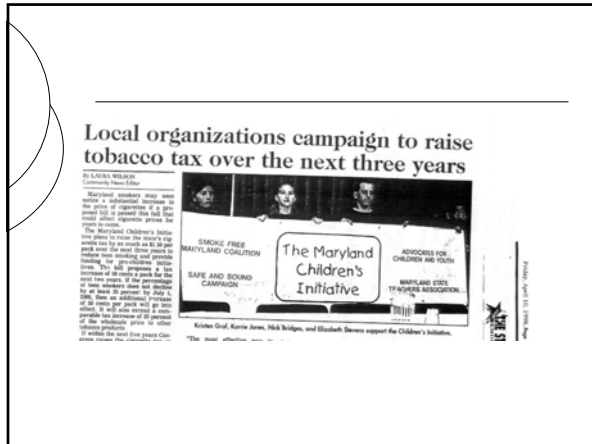
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## Build Momentum Locally

- o Pass local tobacco taxes
- o Court county executives / County Councils
- o Pass county government resolutions
- o Earn media locally -- launching local campaign, releasing poll data



- ### EDUCATING THE PUBLIC: 501(h) Activity
- Educated the public about these issues using earned media.
  - Asked coalition organizations to sign a resolution of support.
  - Conducted polling showing these issues were popular and could be key issues in the election.

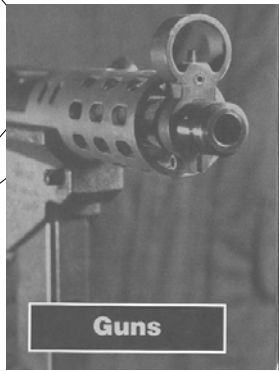
- ### EDUCATING THE PUBLIC: 501(h) Activity
- Educate organizational endorsers about key components of your plan:
    - Raising the tobacco tax by \$1.50 per pack
    - Dedicating the money to tobacco use prevention, lower class size, after-school programs, substance abuse treatment/prevention, and local children's boards.



- ### EDUCATING POLICY MAKERS: 501(h) Activity
- Sent educational materials to incumbents that were running to keep their seats.
  - Called and met with target lawmakers, etc.
  - Tried to convince them that our issues were good policy and good politics. Asked them to publicly take a stand.

- ### Trial Run
- Conduct Poll
    - test the actual program specifics (tobacco tax for prevention, reduced class size, after-school programs, etc.)
  - Introduce the bill
    - Write bill
    - Testify at hearings
    - Pay attention to opponents arguments
    - Acquire additional research
    - Hone in key messages
    - Involve your Coalition
    - Earn media



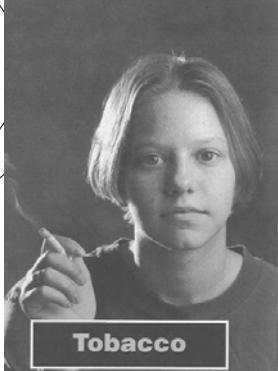


**Guns**

**The gun lobby.**

They wanted Ellen Sauerbrey to vote against every reasonable gun law, including restrictions on Saturday Night Specials and semiautomatic assault weapons.

And she did.




**Tobacco**

**The big tobacco companies**

They want Sauerbrey to oppose effective measures to curb teen smoking, such as the Maryland Children's Initiative.

And she does.




**Casinos**

**Casino gambling interests.**

They want Sauerbrey to stand aside while they fill our state with ten thousand slot machines.

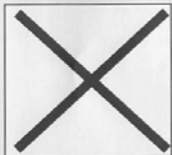
And she would.

The special interests may control  
Ellen Sauerbrey . . .



but they don't control you.

**So VOTE  
on Tuesday,  
November 3rd.**



Because Maryland is OUR state,  
not theirs.

**Voter Ed: 501(c)(4) Activity**

- o Buttman shadowed gubernatorial candidate not signing pledge
- o Candidate's use of issue

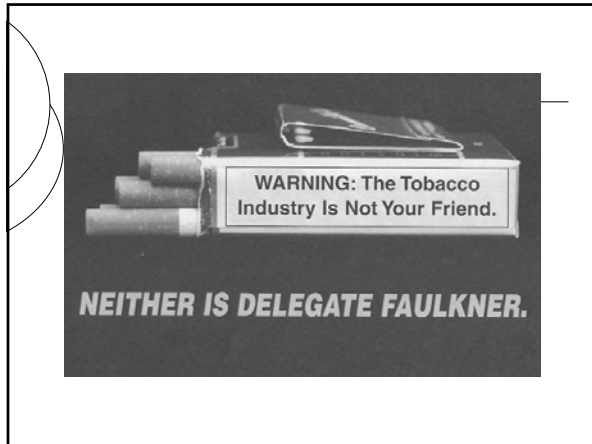
**NEWS**

**'Buttman' shadows Sauerbrey**

By [Name] in [Location]

Ellen Sauerbrey, the Republican gubernatorial nominee, and Carole Buttman, the Democratic challenger, were seen on the campaign trail in Potosi on Tuesday. Buttman, who is running for the Democratic nomination for the House of Delegates, was seen shadowing Sauerbrey. Buttman, who is running for the Democratic nomination for the House of Delegates, was seen shadowing Sauerbrey. Buttman, who is running for the Democratic nomination for the House of Delegates, was seen shadowing Sauerbrey.

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### Delegate Faulkner sides with the Tobacco Industry, against us.

The American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association had one top priority in the 1998 Maryland General Assembly: passing a bill which would strengthen the ban of Attorney General Joe Curran in his lawsuit against the seven major tobacco companies. After a fierce legislative battle between the tobacco companies and a coalition of public health groups, the bill (SB 002) was enacted into law. But your Delegate, Patricia Faulkner, voted against it.

The Maryland Children's Initiative is a program, supported by more than 120 public health, religious and civic organizations, to drastically reduce teen smoking by increasing Maryland's tax on cigarettes by \$1.20 per pack. All but a few Montgomery County lawmakers have endorsed the Maryland Children's Initiative. But your Delegate, Patricia Faulkner, opposes it.

Faulkner's challenge, Ted Stier, created SB 002 and has endorsed the Maryland Children's Initiative. So, support the candidate who stands in over the Tobacco Industry.

**"Delegate Patricia Faulkner has had two major opportunities to stand against Big Tobacco, but in both cases, she sided with the cigarette companies and against public health."**  
—Albert L. Blumberg, M.D., President, Smoke-Free Maryland

### Gazette.Net Voter's Guide

Legislative District 14A  
Representative: Montgomery County, including Olney and Burtonsville.

**Q: What are the three most important problems facing Maryland?**  
Faulkner: Education, crime and taxes.

**Q: How would you rate the job performance of the Montgomery County's legislative delegation - excellent, good, fair, poor?**  
Faulkner: Good.

**Q: How would you rate the job performance of Gov. Parris N. Glendening - excellent, good, fair or poor?**  
Faulkner: Excellent, fair or good.

**Q: The state's transportation trust fund is running low. Should the gas tax be raised, and if so, how high?**  
Faulkner: I don't know.

**Q: What are your goals and the Attorney General's goals? What do you think is most important concerning the connection?**  
Faulkner: Agreed it is all about crime and safety.

**Q: Do you favor a light rail and the Annapolis Elbow Spring and Annapolis? What do you think is most important concerning the connection?**  
Faulkner: Something needs to be built but the light rail is too expensive, and that is what I would like to build around the Annapolis area.

**Q: Do you support allowing slot machines at Maryland racetracks? Should you be supporting state money to build a new racetrack?**  
Faulkner: No, No.

**Q: Do you think Maryland's income taxes need to be cut/raised?**  
Faulkner: I think the legislature can look at that, but I am not in at this point.

**Q: Do you support the proposal to raise the state's cigarette tax by at least an \$1.00 per pack? Should you have a smaller increase in the tobacco tax?**  
Faulkner: I don't know.

**Q: What should the state do to make MDOT and other major state organizations more accountable to the general taxpayer?**  
Faulkner: Before MDOT should be held accountable if they make transportation decisions that are not in the best interest of the taxpayer. Support options like a new bond for transit and public safety.

### Voter Ed: 501(c)(4) activity

- How did we do?
  - Elected 69 Delegates (71 majority)
  - Elected 23 Senators (24 majority)
  - AND Governor Parris Glendening who partly attributed his win to this issue.
    - From the Baltimore Sun... "I ran on the **tobacco tax** to protect our children and won big," **Glendening** said."

### Take it to the Legislature...

- Hearings & earned media
- Respond to industry's PR
  - Cross border sales
  - Smuggling
  - Hurt the poor
  - Editorials

### Medical society's ads seek to build support for cigarette tax plan

Page 8 • Thursday, March 18, 1999 • The Sun

**\$300,000 campaign for radio, television paid for with AMA grant**

By C. FRANK SMITH

Maryland's 7,000-member medical society has launched a \$300,000 radio and television ad campaign to generate public support for a \$1 increase in the per-centage cost of cigarettes.

"It's time we force public de-bate on the most effective way to reduce both teen and adult smoking," said Dr. Albert Blumberg, a member of the state's medical society.

Senate proposals for the measure are, for instance, Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller has said he has no intention for a tax increase.

But Montgomery's political ally, Gov. Parris N. Glendening, has gone to great lengths this year to show he supports the increase. He has made some health care and school aid proposals contingent on his

The tax increase bill — called a public health bill by its supporters — appears likely to be approved by the House Ways and Means Committee this week. Support is considered likely on the House floor as well.

Page 106 / Tuesday, March 23, 1999 / The Sun in Howard LEGISLATURE 1999 / MARYLAND

## Schaefer to support higher tobacco tax

Computerer pledges anti-smuggling effort

By C. FRANK SMITH

Maryland Computerer William Donald Schaefer declared his support for a \$1 per cigarette increase in the tax on imported cigarettes and pledged to remain active in the fight against smuggling, which opponents of the increase say is rampant.

If the increase is approved, Maryland smokers would face a total cost of \$1.18 a pack—and have a new incentive to shop in Virginia where the price is 70 cents a pack.

Opponents have been using that argument as leverage for "nicotine terrorism," the Sun is quoted as saying. "Though it must prove difficult to have its best chance of passing, the sponsor of smuggling has indeed opposed all the tax increases or reduce their size late over time."

Schaefer's endorsement—and his promise of diligent anti-smuggling measures—could be a boost for the tax increase proposal as it heads for critical tests in the House of Delegates and the Senate.

"After careful consideration," Schaefer said in a letter to Sen. Christopher Van Hollen Jr., a Montgomery County Democrat, and a sponsor of the legislation, "I am now strongly in support of this measure."

Van Hollen and other supporters of the bill were cited as an important step.

"The Sun the computerer and support generally is arguing at this critical point in the debate will have a great impact," the senator said.

One of the most opponents of the tax increase group agreed with J. William Fisher, lobbyist for the tobacco industry, that "it's a real issue of people think a lot of Mr. Schaefer and his own influence."

The bill has passed a House of Delegates committee and will be voted on in the House later in the week. The important point is that no matter how Maryland responds to the tentative agreement reached yesterday with cigarette makers yesterday—either to sue on its own or join the settlement—efforts to increase the Maryland cigarette tax ought to proceed.

The court suits are meant to address and compensate for past damage—including money spent by the state on Medicaid and related health costs. Some opponents of a cigarette tax increase already are arguing that the tobacco settlement should eliminate the need for the higher tax. But industry lobbyists were quick to say as well as left. Yet the cigarette tax is aimed at discouraging future tobacco use, especially among teens.

The tobacco lobbyists counter that teens will find ways to pay more for cigarettes anyway if they think smoking is cool. Perhaps, but why not make it as difficult as possible—and use some of the proceeds to reinforce campaigns to reduce teen smoking? As for the argument that the increase will yield less than expected, what? Whatever extra it does yield could cover one-time budget expenses.

Some legislators have proposed that a portion of the proceeds go for programs to convert tobacco farmers to other crops. That would not be an overwhelming task in Maryland, where there already is working against success in tobacco farming. There is no future in protecting tobacco. The objective here is to protect the next generation from the ravages of smoking.

Proponents of the tax increase point to state auditors who predicted no more than 3 percent of retail sales would be lost to other states. Other studies, they say, show that smokers will experiment with cross-border commuting and their revert to their old smoking habits or quit smoking.

Sen. Frank Miller, who supports the measure, pointed to a study by the U.S. Surgeon General that showed that smokers who quit smoking by age 35 can reduce their risk of dying from heart disease by 50 percent.

"If we're not going to do, we should do it seriously," Miller said.

The bill is likely to be defeated in the Senate, where Sen. President Thomas V. Mike Miller is against it. Miller represents an area of Southern Maryland with numerous tobacco farmers.

Proponents of the increase have distributed studies from the state and foreign, most recently, showing that higher taxes reduce teen smoking by substantial amounts.

Miller and Fisher predicted that the increase would be a "win-win" for the state and the industry. Fisher said that higher taxes reduce teen smoking by substantial amounts.

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## Tax Big Tobacco

By ROBERT V. HESS

A TV commercial airing in the Baltimore area features a young father concerned that the proposed \$1 per cigarette increase in the tax on cigarettes in Maryland would cause him to lose his job. He is shown in a state of panic, looking at the camera with a desperate expression.

Though the tax increase bill is expected to be approved by the House, its future is uncertain in the Senate.

Some Maryland legislators already have been taken by Big Tobacco's advertising and lobby.

It's time for the state side to be honest. Legislators must read the research, examine new evidence unearthed by states showing that the industry tried to conceal the health benefits of smoking and look at experience from Canada in Oregon, where smoking has declined.

The argument that raising tobacco taxes will hurt the poor and their families is absurd. If we are really concerned about poor people, let's raise the child-care tax to \$1 per pack. Give the poor access to smoking cessation services and expand the mental health program that can effectively reduce poverty and promote good health. Helping smokers improve their lives and solve related problems helps all of us.

That's my conviction. Like it or not, that's the one paid for by Big Tobacco.

Robert V. Hess is president and chief executive officer of the Center for Poverty Solutions.

The Baltimore Sun  
3/26/99

A22 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1998

## The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

### Taxes: Tobacco in Maryland . . .

TIMING, POPULAR support and legislative momentum are right for enactment of a substantial increase next year in Maryland's cigarette tax. Gov. Clinton L. Pendergast has indicated he would like to see a 70-cent increase in the tax on cigarettes. At least 20 state senators and 67 delegates, including most key committee leaders, had endorsed a \$1.20 increase in the cigarette tax. Still others support the idea but say they aren't sure what specific increase they could back. The important point is that no matter how Maryland responds to the tentative agreement reached yesterday with cigarette makers yesterday—either to sue on its own or join the settlement—efforts to increase the Maryland cigarette tax ought to proceed.

The court suits are meant to address and compensate for past damage—including money spent by the state on Medicaid and related health costs. Some opponents of a cigarette tax increase already are arguing that the tobacco settlement should eliminate the need for the higher tax. But industry lobbyists were quick to say as well as left. Yet the cigarette tax is aimed at discouraging future tobacco use, especially among teens.

The tobacco lobbyists counter that teens will find ways to pay more for cigarettes anyway if they think smoking is cool. Perhaps, but why not make it as difficult as possible—and use some of the proceeds to reinforce campaigns to reduce teen smoking? As for the argument that the increase will yield less than expected, what? Whatever extra it does yield could cover one-time budget expenses.

Some legislators have proposed that a portion of the proceeds go for programs to convert tobacco farmers to other crops. That would not be an overwhelming task in Maryland, where there already is working against success in tobacco farming. There is no future in protecting tobacco. The objective here is to protect the next generation from the ravages of smoking.

## Use the Pledge from Voter Ed...

- When we found resistance among pledge signers, we faxed the lawmakers signed pledge to the media.
- Media framed issue as a matter of honesty, keeping their word, following through with their promises, etc.

... making it a "Good Friday" gift. Please see GABRIEL A7

## Senators now wavering on tobacco tax

By BRETT COUGHLIN

Some Maryland legislators are wavering on their support of a \$1 per cigarette increase in the tax on imported cigarettes and pledged to remain active in the fight against smuggling, which opponents of the increase say is rampant.

If the increase is approved, Maryland smokers would face a total cost of \$1.18 a pack—and have a new incentive to shop in Virginia where the price is 70 cents a pack.

Opponents have been using that argument as leverage for "nicotine terrorism," the Sun is quoted as saying. "Though it must prove difficult to have its best chance of passing, the sponsor of smuggling has indeed opposed all the tax increases or reduce their size late over time."

Schaefer's endorsement—and his promise of diligent anti-smuggling measures—could be a boost for the tax increase proposal as it heads for critical tests in the House of Delegates and the Senate.

"After careful consideration," Schaefer said in a letter to Sen. Christopher Van Hollen Jr., a Montgomery County Democrat, and a sponsor of the legislation, "I am now strongly in support of this measure."

Van Hollen and other supporters of the bill were cited as an important step.

"The Sun the computerer and support generally is arguing at this critical point in the debate will have a great impact," the senator said.

One of the most opponents of the tax increase group agreed with J. William Fisher, lobbyist for the tobacco industry, that "it's a real issue of people think a lot of Mr. Schaefer and his own influence."

The bill has passed a House of Delegates committee and will be voted on in the House later in the week. The important point is that no matter how Maryland responds to the tentative agreement reached yesterday with cigarette makers yesterday—either to sue on its own or join the settlement—efforts to increase the Maryland cigarette tax ought to proceed.

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## The results...

- A \$0.30 increase in the cigarette tax
- A new tax on other tobacco products
- Bill language that requires the Governor to budget at least \$21 M for tobacco prevention each year
- In 2002 (an election year), the General Assembly passed another \$0.34 cigarette tax increase for education



- ### Lessons Learned
- Use science and polling data to develop your "program" and buttress your arguments.
  - Build your organization and power potential early before you attempt anything legislatively
  - Recruit and showcase unique, diverse, and committed partners (especially religious groups)
  - Communicate regularly with your coalition
  - Take it for a test run - learn the arguments, hone your message, build momentum

- ### Lessons Learned
- Build momentum by organizing key local communities
  - Earn media statewide and use letters-to-the-editor throughout the campaign
  - Take it to the voters - Get Political
  - Recruit people to fund raise and electioneer for candidates
  - Elect some lawmakers to demonstrate your power
  - Pay particular attention to electing the right candidate for Governor

- ### Lessons Learned
- Take it to the lawmakers
    - Answer the industry's PR
    - Concentrate on swing votes
    - Use paid media to put you over the top

