



MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: PATRICK LANNE / PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
NATHAN HENRY / THE MELLMAN GROUP

RE: RECENT SURVEY RESULTS

DATE: FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Public Opinion Strategies and The Mellman Group recently completed a survey of 500 registered voters in Indiana on behalf of the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The survey was conducted January 27-28, 2009 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.38 percent.

KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ ***Support for a smokefree law continues to grow.***
Hoosiers continue to show strong support for a smokefree law. We asked voters, “Would you favor or oppose a law in Indiana that would prohibit smoking in indoor public places, including workplaces, public buildings, offices, casinos, restaurants and bars?” Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Indiana voters support a law to make indoor public places smokefree. This represents a five-point increase from 59% favoring the law in a coalition poll we completed in January 2008. Not only is support for the law wide, but it is also deep with a near majority (49%) “strongly” favoring its passage.

As we have seen in past research in the state, support for the smokefree law cuts across every major sub-group in the poll – aside from smokers. Significantly, Republicans (66%) and Democrats (65%) endorse the measure in even numbers. Moreover, it receives support from a majority of voters in each region of the state – South (68%), Central (67%), East (64%) and Northwest (57%).

- ✓ ***Secondhand smoke is seen as serious health hazard.***
The overwhelming support for a smokefree law is not surprising given the public’s awareness of the dangers of secondhand smoke. Fully 82% of Hoosiers believe secondhand smoke is a health hazard – with 55% saying secondhand

smoke is a “serious” health hazard. Recognition of the hazards of secondhand smoke crosses each demographic group – including 63% of smokers.

- ✓ ***The rights of customers and employees trump the rights of smokers.***
We asked voters the following question, “*Please indicate which ONE of the following you think is more important: the rights of employees and customers to breathe clean air in casinos, restaurants and bars ...or...the rights of smokers to smoke and owners to allow smoking inside casinos, restaurants and bars.*”

By a better than two-to-one margin (67%-27%), voters believe it is more important to protect the rights of customers and employees. Nearly every demographic group in the poll echoes this sentiment – with even 40% of smokers believing it is important to protect customers and employees.

The Bottom Line

As we have seen in our previous polling, there is wide bi-partisan support for the passage of the smokefree law. Hoosiers support a smokefree law because they understand the serious health impact of secondhand smoke and see a need to protect the rights of employees and customers to breathe clean air. Given these results, it is not surprising that nearly three-quarters (73%) of Hoosiers agree that it is time for Indiana to join other states and go smokefree.