

Non-Smokers (86%) and Smokers (66%) in Ontario Support Legislation Banning Smoking in Cars with Children Age 16 and Under

*Those With (82%) and Without (78%) Kids Support Legislation;
Only Four in ten (40%) Say Decision Should be Made by Parents*

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Only Four in ten (40%) Say Decision Should be Made by Parents

Toronto, ON – A new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network finds that eight in ten (80%) Ontarians support ‘legislation that would ban smoking in cars and other private vehicles where a child or adolescent under 16 years of age is present’. Moreover, a majority of non-smokers (86%) and smokers (66%) would support this legislation, and the same can be said about individuals with (82%) and without (78%) children.

In terms of what kind of penalty would be most appropriate for individuals who break this type of law, four in ten (40%) suggest that a simple monetary fine would be most appropriate, while one third (34%) believes that a monetary fine should be accompanied by demerit points, and one in ten (7%) believes that a licence suspension would be the most appropriate penalty. Two in ten (19%), though, think that there should be no penalty for an infraction of this nature.

Despite support for this type of legislation, only a slim majority (55%) disagrees that ‘this type of legislation cannot be enforced and so we shouldn’t try’. On the other hand, less than one half (45%) of Ontarians agree that ‘this type of law cannot be enforced and so we shouldn’t try’.

Two thirds (66%) of Ontarians believe that ‘there is a serious problem that the government needs to address’, likely stemming from the fact that most (91%) Ontarians think that ‘small children need to be protected from second-hand smoke when riding in cars and other private vehicles’. In fact, eight in ten (83%) say that ‘children of all ages need to be protected from second-hand smoke’ and ‘the exact age of the child does not matter.’

More specifically, four in ten (38%) indicate that ‘the age of 16 is the best age under which children should be protected from second-hand smoke in cars and other private vehicles’. However, roughly the same proportion (37%) says that there should be ‘no age limit’, while one quarter (25%) would choose a different age.

Among those who would choose a different age, one third (31%) say that this legislation should protect individuals 18 years of age and younger, while some (15%) believe that this legislation should protect individuals over the age of 18. Other ages that were mentioned often were fourteen (11%), twelve (15%) and ten (7%).

Thinking about whether or not the government should be involved in prohibiting such activities, only four in ten (40%) believe that ‘the decision of whether or not to smoke in a car while children are present is a decision that is best left up to parents to make’. Furthermore, a majority (63%) disagrees that ‘people have the right to decide what to do in their own cars, and that includes the right to smoke even if there are children in the car.’

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network from Nov 26 to Nov 30, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1314 Ontarians was interviewed online. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 2.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of Ontarians been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other

sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Ontario population according to Census data.

Smokers Less Likely to Support Legislation; Want to Make Decisions for Themselves...

Not surprisingly, smokers are less likely to support this type of legislation:

- Two thirds (66%) of smokers support legislation banning smoking in cars where kids under the age of 16 are present, compared to nine in ten (86%) individuals who do not smoke.
- Smokers are more likely (34%) to believe that there should be no penalty for smoking in a car with kids present, compared to non-smokers (12%) who believe that there should be no penalty for this infraction.
- While most (94%) non-smokers believe that small children need to be protected from second-hand smoke when riding in cars and other private vehicles', fewer smokers (84%) say that this should be the case.
- Nine in ten (88%) non-smokers think that 'children of all ages need to be protected from second-hand smoke when riding in cars', while fewer than three quarters (72%) of smokers think this.
- Six in ten (59%) smokers say that 'people should have the right to decide what to do in their own cars, and that includes the right to smoke even if there are children in the car'. Just three in ten (27%) non-smokers say that people should have this right.

- Six in ten (58%) smokers indicate that ‘this type of legislation cannot be enforced’, while four in ten (39%) non-smokers suggest that this type of law will be unenforceable.
- A minority (45%) of smokers agree that ‘this is a serious problem that the government needs to address’, compare to three quarters (75%) of non-smokers who believe that a problem exists.
- Six in ten (61%) smokers are of the opinion that ‘the decision of whether or not to smoke in a car while children are present is a decision that is best left up to parents to make’, while just one third (31%) of non-smokers agree with this position.

Parents Only Slightly More Likely than Non-Parents to Support this Legislation...

Interestingly, Ontarians with children are only slightly more inclined (82%) to support this type of legislation than those without kids (78%). Below are the data where individuals with children differ from those without children:

- Almost all (94%) of those with kids say that ‘small children need to be protected from smoke in cars and other private vehicles’, compared to nine in ten (89%) individuals without kids.
- Nine in ten (87%) Ontarians with kids say that ‘children of all ages need to be protected’, compared to eight in ten (82%) individuals without kids.



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- Four in ten (39%) individuals with kids say that 'this type of legislation cannot be enforced', while nearly one half of Ontarians without kids (48%) agree with this sentiment.

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