



Louisiana Budget Project

PROVIDING INDEPENDENT,
NONPARTISAN research and analysis
of Louisiana fiscal issues and their
impact on low and moderate
income residents.

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RAISING CIGARETTE TAXES IS A WIN, WIN, WIN
INCREASE REVENUE WHILE LOWERING HEALTH COSTS AND REDUCING
SMOKING

(Baton Rouge – March 31, 2011) A new report by the Louisiana Budget Project addresses how Louisiana’s cigarette tax directly relates to the state’s poor health record and extremely high smoking rate. The report is the third in a series of 6 whitepapers that propose narrowly drawn tax increases to provide more balanced, transparent solutions to Louisiana’s fiscal crisis.

The report exposes several shocking facts:

- Louisiana is one of the least expensive places in the country to buy cigarettes
- Louisiana has the ninth highest smoking rate in the nation
- Louisianans are some of the least healthy people in the nation

Louisiana’s poor health record is due, in part, to high rates of cancer, cardiovascular deaths, and hypertension, and to racial disparities in access to health care. Smoking is a contributing factor in each case.

Increasing taxes on cigarettes is a proven method to reduce smoking, especially in teens. The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids reports that, since 2002, “47 states, D.C., and several U.S. territories have increased their cigarette tax rates more than 100 times.”

According to the Louisiana Budget Report, it has been almost 10 years since Louisiana last increased its tax on tobacco. Cigarettes are cheaper in Louisiana than in 47 other states.

Increasing cigarette taxes by \$1 a pack would make Louisiana’s tobacco tax comparable to the rest of the nation while increasing state revenues approximately \$301 million a year. This would provide a source of revenue to fund vital state programs such as education, health care, and public safety.

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“Increasing the tax on tobacco is a prime example of a better, more responsible choice that Legislators can make for our state’s health, budget, and future,” says Edward Ashworth, Director of the Louisiana Budget Project. “The Governor’s stubborn adherence to his no-new-taxes mantra and his refusal to recognize that the state’s budget problems are caused by a lack of revenues and not out-of-control spending have done severe damage to vital Louisiana institutions and services.”

The Baton Rouge-based Louisiana Budget Project provides independent research and analysis of Louisiana fiscal issues and their impact on low and moderate income residents.

For a copy of the full report and more information on LBP, visit www.labudget.org and read [Raising Cigarette Taxes Will Increase Revenues, Lower Health Costs, and Reduce Smoking – A Win, Win, Win.](#)

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