



Voters in Washington DC Speak Out on Smoke-Free Workplaces, Restaurants, and Bars

- Results from a Poll of Likely Voters in the District of Columbia -

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network commissioned Lake Snell Perry & Associates (LSPA) to conduct a poll of likely voters¹ in Washington, DC to explore attitudes about secondhand smoke and making workplaces smoke-free. The poll looked specifically at passing a new city law that would prohibit smoking in all indoor workplaces including offices, restaurants, and bars. The survey was conducted December 15-21, 2004 among 502 likely voters in the District of Columbia. The main findings include:

- Three-fourths of likely voters in DC favor a new city law that would prohibit smoking in all indoor workplaces, including offices, restaurants and bars.
- A large majority of likely voters feels the rights of customers and employees to breathe clean air outweigh the rights of smokers to smoke inside restaurants and bars. Large majorities also feel strongly that both customers and workers in DC restaurants and bars should be protected from the health risks of secondhand smoke.
- An interesting insight from the survey is that these voters may actually dine out *more frequently* if the District's restaurants were smoke-free.

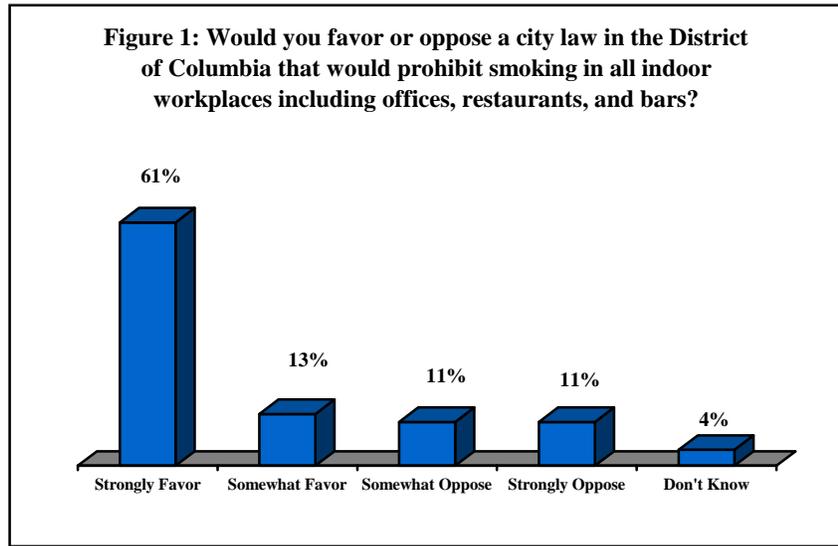
These and other survey results can be found in further detail on the following pages.

¹ See methodology for a definition of likely voters.

FINDINGS IN DETAIL

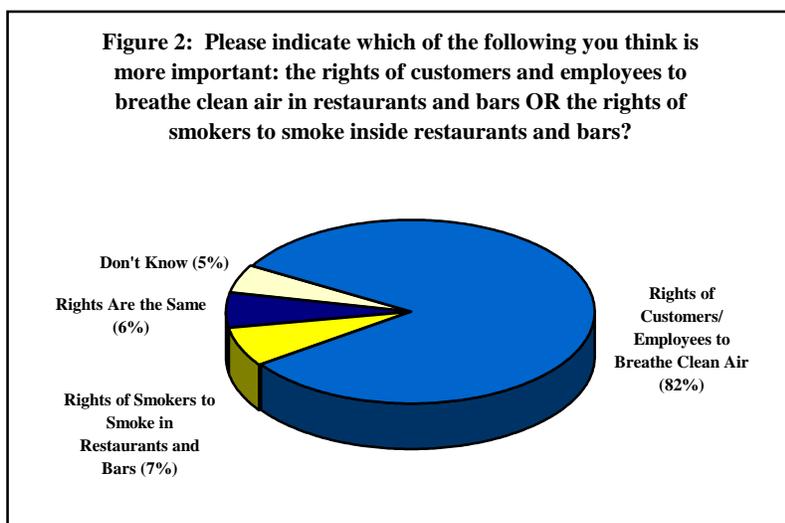
Three in four likely voters in DC favor a new city law that would prohibit smoking in indoor workplaces.

Seventy-four percent of likely DC voters say they would favor a law that would ban smoking in DC workplaces including offices, restaurants, and bars. Six in ten (61%) *strongly* favor such a law. (Figure 1)



DC voters who show the highest levels of favorability include voters who dine out about once a week (72% strongly favor), non-smokers² (67%), and those who say they will definitely vote in the upcoming Mayoral election (63%). Sixty-three percent of those who oppose using city funds to help finance a baseball stadium strongly favor a city law to prohibit smoking in all indoor workplaces.

The overwhelming majority of likely voters feel the rights of customers and employees to breathe clean air outweighs the rights of smokers to smoke inside restaurants and bars.



By an 11 to 1 margin, likely voters in DC feel that the “rights of customers and employees to breathe clean air in restaurants and bars” are more important than the “rights of smokers to smoke inside restaurants and bars” (82% to 7%). Six percent say that both groups are equally important. (Figure 2)

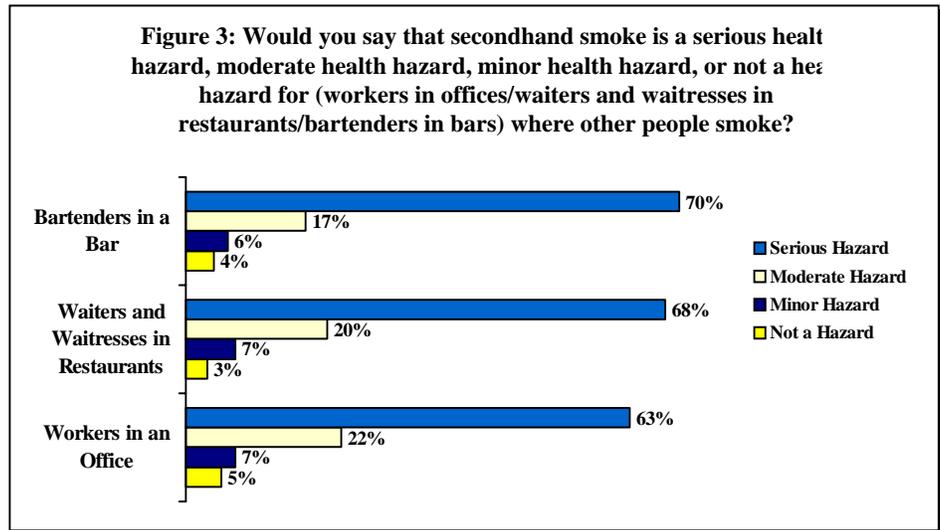
Non-smokers are particularly likely to say that customers’ and employees’ rights outweigh

² Eighty-two percent of the respondents are non-smokers.

those of smokers (87%). Even among current smokers, the majority (57%) feels the rights of customers and workers to enjoy a smoke-free atmosphere trump the rights of smokers.

Majorities of likely voters in DC perceive secondhand smoke to be a serious health hazard to bartenders, waiters and waitresses in restaurants.

DC voters in the poll were asked to assess the health hazard of secondhand smoke facing various groups of workers in DC – bartenders, waiters and waitresses, and workers in offices. The results show that majorities perceive that secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard for all three groups of workers. (Figure 3)



Non-smokers are most likely to feel secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard to bartenders (76%) and wait staff in restaurants (73%). Seventy-three percent of voters who dine out once a week feel smoke poses a serious threat to servers in restaurants.

Voters feel smoke-free bars and restaurants would be healthier for customers and workers.

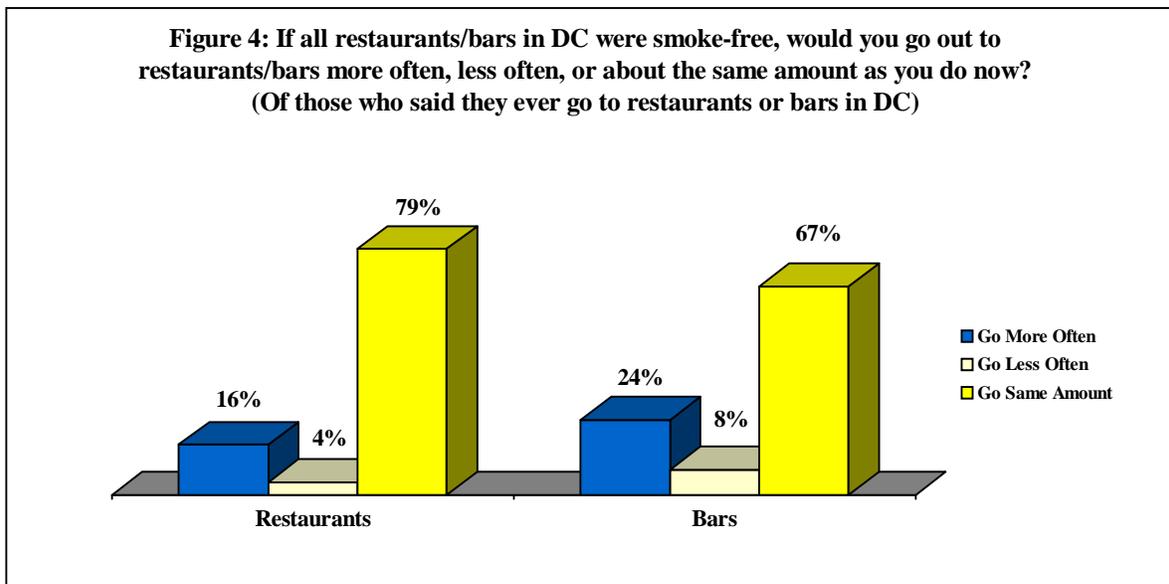
The majority of DC likely voters agrees that all workers in DC should be protected from secondhand smoke. Majorities also feel that restaurants and bars would be healthier for workers and customers alike if these environments were smoke-free. (Table 1)

Table 1

After each statement, tell me if you personally agree or disagree with the statement	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Not Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Restaurants would be healthier for families and employees if they were smoke-free.	78%	12%	3%	5%
All workers in DC should be protected from exposure to secondhand smoke in the workplace.	75%	10%	6%	5%
Bars would be healthier for employees and customers if they were smoke-free.	70%	16%	6%	7%

The survey findings suggest that making all DC restaurants and bars smoke-free could increase the number of likely voters in DC going out to the District's restaurants and bars.

In the poll, more than three-fourths (79%) of those DC voters who eat out in restaurants say that if all DC restaurants were smoke-free they would likely eat out the same amount as they currently do. In addition, 16% say they would actually dine more often in restaurants if they were smoke-free. Only four percent say they would eat out less often. In a similar question, two-thirds (67%) of those who frequent bars in DC say they would likely go out about the same amount if DC bars were smoke-free. Fully one-quarter (24%) says they would go to DC bars more often, with only eight percent saying they would visit DC bars less often. Thus, making all restaurants and bars in DC smoke-free could have a net positive effect on these voters' patronage of local restaurants (net +12%) and bars (net +16%).



Conclusions

These survey results show strong support among likely voters in Washington DC for a law prohibiting smoking in workplaces, including restaurants and bars. This support comes from many sources – their concerns about the health risks posed by secondhand smoke; the need to protect workers and customers in restaurants and bars from secondhand smoke; and their feelings that ultimately the rights of customers and workers to breathe clean air outweigh those of smokers to smoke inside of offices, restaurants, and bars. An interesting finding is that making DC restaurants and bars smoke-free could have a positive net effect on the number of DC likely voters who go to restaurants and bars. These findings make it clear that passing a city law to make all workplaces in Washington, DC smoke-free – including restaurants and bars – would have broad support among those most likely to be voting in upcoming elections.

Methodology:

Lake Snell Perry & Associates designed and administered this survey which was conducted by phone using professional interviewers. The survey was conducted December 15-21, 2004, among 502 likely voters. All respondents are currently registered to vote and have done at least one of the following: a) voted in a previous election according to voting records; b) registered in DC since 2002 according to voting records; c) reported they always or almost always vote in local elections; or d) reported they are likely to vote in the 2006 election. The sample was randomly drawn using a registered voter file. The data were weighted slightly by gender, race/ethnicity, age, education, and ward. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 5%.