



Public Opinion Research Survey: August 2004

Survey of California Renters

About Smokefree Multi-Unit Housing Laws

Background

Drifting secondhand smoke in multi-unit housing from neighboring units, balconies and outdoor areas is a health hazard for many tenants. The increasing awareness of the dangers of secondhand smoke and the acceptability of smokefree environments are encouraging tenants to seek out smokefree units and property owners to declare their buildings smokefree. In addition, several cities and counties have passed ordinances restricting smoking in multi-unit housing. Since 2003, the Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing has commissioned a series of scientific public opinion research surveys to assess attitudes among tenants, voters, and apartment owners and managers about secondhand smoke exposure and what to do about it. The surveys were conducted by Goodwin Simon Victoria Research.

In August 2004, 600 California renters were surveyed to assess their views about secondhand smoke exposure in their homes, and what solutions they would support for limiting their exposure.

Summary of Key Findings

Secondhand Smoke Exposure in Multi-Unit Housing

California renters know secondhand smoke is harmful, have experienced drifting secondhand smoke and have individuals living in their apartment complexes who are significantly impacted by exposure:

- 90% believe that secondhand smoke is harmful to those who inhale it
- 59% think that secondhand smoke can drift from apartment to apartment
- 72% believe that secondhand smoke can drift from outside into an apartment unit
- 46% have experienced secondhand smoke drifting into their apartment
- 73% have children living in their apartment complex
- 66% have senior citizens living in their apartment complex
- 25% have someone with chronic heart or lung disease living in their apartment complex

Smoking Restrictions in Multi-Unit Housing

California tenants are supportive of different types of laws to protect residents in multi-unit housing from secondhand smoke exposure:

- 62% feel that there is a need for laws to limit smoking in apartments
- 67% support a law to prohibit smoking in outdoor common areas of multi-unit housing
- 69% support a law requiring apartment buildings to offer non-smoking sections of units
- 82% would prefer to live in an apartment building where smoking is not allowed anywhere or where there are separate smoking and non-smoking sections
- 61% support a law to require landlords to inform new tenants that a person who smokes lives in the unit next door to the one the new tenant is about to rent
- 70% believe that if there is a law restricting smoking in apartments, that an individual who repeatedly violates those restrictions should be evicted