

## **Over Half of Americans Opposed to Taxing Soft Drinks and Fast Food**

*Three in ten would support "obesity tax" going into effect*

**New York, N.Y. – June 2, 2010** – Around the country, cities and states have been considering placing taxes on both soft drinks and fast food as a way to deter obesity. However, while certain groups may be in favor of imposing this "obesity tax," consumers, in general, are not. Over half of Americans (56%) are opposed to this tax going into effect with two in five (42%) being strongly opposed. Three in ten (31%) support this tax being imposed.

These are some of the findings of a new **Adweek Media/Harris Poll**, survey of 2,140 U.S. adults surveyed online between April 23 and 27, 2010 by **Harris Interactive**.

### **Age and Location Matter**

Location and age make a difference in attitudes on the "obesity tax." Those who live in the East are the most supportive of the tax on soft drinks and fast food with 42% supporting it and just half opposing it, followed by those in the West where 35% support it and 53% oppose the "obesity tax." However, just one-quarter of those who live in the South (25%) support the tax while three in five (61%) oppose it. Midwesterners are not that different from those in the South, as 28% of them support the "obesity tax" and 57% oppose it.

The youngest U.S. adults are those most likely to support the tax on soft drinks and fast food. Two in five of those aged 18-34 (41%) support this tax and 42% oppose it, but there is also uncertainty as 17% are not at all sure. Baby Boomers are most opposed as two-thirds of those aged 45-54 (68%) oppose this tax while only 24% support it.

### **Income and Education Differences**

There are also differing opinions by education and income. Just one-quarter of those with a household income between \$35,000 and \$49,999 (25%) and under \$35,000 (27%) support this tax compared to two in five of those with a household income of \$75,000 a year or more (39%). Also, those who are more educated are more likely to support a tax on fast food and soft drinks. One-quarter of those with a high school education or less (24%) support the "obesity tax" compared to 34% of those who have attended some college and 41% of those with at least a college degree.

### **So What?**

The issue of childhood obesity is not new, but it has become much more high profile with the White House and First Lady Michelle Obama's focus on healthy eating. These taxes are being hard fought and it is not just those in the industry who are against them. At the moment, supporters of the taxes on fast foods and soft drinks need to convince the American public that they are both necessary and that they will help curb this problem.

**TABLE 1**  
**SOFT DRINK/FAST FOOD TAX – BY REGION AND AGE**

“There have been discussions in certain areas of the country regarding taxing soft drinks and fast food as a way to deter obesity. How much would you support or oppose this tax going into effect?”

Base: All adults

	Total	Region				Age			
		East	Midwest	South	West	18-34	35-44	45-54	55+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Support (NET)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>
Strongly Support	13	14	10	11	17	15	10	11	13
Somewhat Support	19	28	18	14	18	26	16	13	17
<b>Oppose (NET)</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>60</b>
Somewhat Oppose	14	12	14	14	16	14	13	16	13
Strongly Oppose	42	38	43	47	36	28	45	52	47
Not at all sure	13	9	15	14	13	17	16	8	10

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 2**  
**SOFT DRINK/FAST FOOD TAX – BY INCOME AND EDUCATION**

“There have been discussions in certain areas of the country regarding taxing soft drinks and fast food as a way to deter obesity. How much would you support or oppose this tax going into effect?”

Base: All adults

	Total	HH Income				Education		
		Less than \$35k	\$35k-\$49.9k	\$50k-\$74.9k	\$75k+	H.S. or less	Some college	College Grad. +
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Support (NET)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>41</b>
Strongly Support	13	13	8	11	16	9	15	17
Somewhat Support	19	14	17	18	22	15	19	24
<b>Oppose (NET)</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>48</b>
Somewhat Oppose	14	10	18	19	13	15	14	13
Strongly Oppose	42	45	49	43	39	45	42	36
Not at all sure	13	18	8	8	9	15	10	11

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**Methodology**

This **Adweek Media/Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between April 23 and 27, 2010 among 2,140 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Where appropriate, this data were also weighted to reflect the composition of the adult online population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure,

unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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***The Harris Poll® #73 June 2, 2010***

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