

**To:** Vincent DeMarco, President  
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative

**From:** Steve Raabe, OpinionWorks

**Date:** January 4, 2011

**Subject:** Maryland Polling Shows Support for Proposed Alcohol Tax

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## Overview

Our most recent Maryland statewide voter poll, conducted December 20-28, 2010 among 663 likely voters statewide, has found overwhelming support for an increased tax of 10 cents per alcoholic drink tied to funding health-related priorities. Two-thirds of likely voters support the proposed alcohol tax increase.

If dedicated to deficit reduction, support for the alcohol tax increase remains strong, with a solid majority supporting an alcohol tax increase. At a time of continuing economic stress for average households and little appetite for new taxes, there are strong indications that Maryland voters believe the State's leaders should make an exception to pass an increased alcohol tax

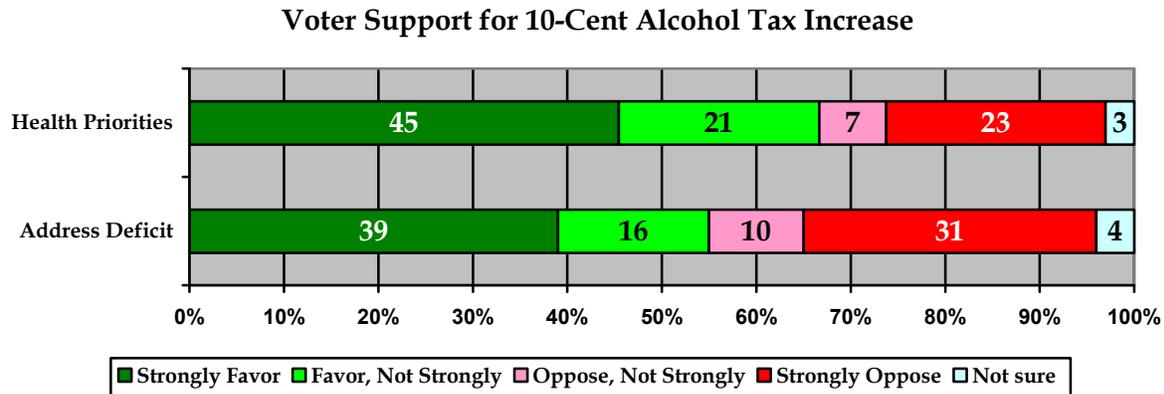
## Detail

### **Strong Support for an Alcohol Tax Increase**

Two-thirds of the electorate (66%) favor an increased tax of 10 cents per alcoholic drink if the revenue is dedicated to health-related priorities such as alcohol and drug treatment and prevention, health care for the uninsured, training for health care workers, and programs for people with developmental disabilities and mental health needs. A near-majority of 45% of Maryland voters say they "feel that way strongly" about their support. Less than one-third of voters (31%) oppose the alcohol tax increase.

A majority of 55% of Maryland likely voters support an increased alcohol tax tied to deficit reduction, with nearly four voters in ten (39%) saying they feel that way strongly.

*(See table, next page.)*



*“Would you favor or oppose an increased tax of 10 cents per alcoholic drink if the money was dedicated specifically to alcohol and drug treatment and prevention, health care for the uninsured, training for health care workers, and programs for people with developmental disabilities and mental health needs?” (If favor/oppose): “Do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?”*

*“Would you favor or oppose an increased tax of 10 cents per alcoholic drink to help address the state’s budget deficit?” (If favor/oppose): “Do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?”*

In focus groups and survey work on various questions throughout 2010, Maryland voters have clearly told us they want to see public funding tied more closely to practical programs that will lead to positive outcomes for people. The proposed alcohol tax increase meets that test for voters, particularly when tied to specific health-related priorities.

### **How This Survey Was Conducted**

OpinionWorks interviewed 663 randomly-selected registered voters across Maryland who said they had voted in the 2010 Maryland general election. Interviews were conducted by telephone December 20–28, 2010. The poll has a potential sampling error of no more than  $\pm 3.8\%$  at a 95% confidence level, meaning the survey results would differ by no more than that margin at least 95% of the time if every likely voter in Maryland had been interviewed.

Interviewees were drawn randomly from the adult population of Maryland, balanced regionally, and screened for voting behavior to ensure that only active voters were interviewed. Weights were applied to bring the voter sample into strict compliance with the partisan and demographic breakdown of the voters who turned out in the 2010 General Election.

### **Brief Background on OpinionWorks**

OpinionWorks conducts frequent opinion studies in Maryland and the surrounding states. We are the polling organization for *The Baltimore Sun*, having accurately forecast the 14-point gubernatorial margin in 2010, and have polled for numerous other media throughout the region. We work for state and local agencies throughout the Mid-Atlantic, and for a variety of non-profit and for-profit entities within the region and nationally.