Cities and states across the United States have raised or are considering raising the age of purchase for tobacco to 21.

**Public Support among MS Adults {for Raising Age of Purchase to 21}**

- Overall: 79.3%
- 18-20 Year Olds: 62.3%
- Current Smoker: 71.2%
- Former Smoker: 74.8%
- Never Smoker: 83.6%
- Independent: 77.3%
- Democrat: 86.6%
- Republican: 76.1%

This study demonstrates broad public support for raising the sales age of tobacco to 21 among Mississippi adults.

Raising the age of purchase is effective because it puts legal purchasers outside high school students’ social networks.
Almost all adult tobacco users started before the age of 21 and the majority of those began during the high school years. 
- Initiating cigarette smoking during adolescence rather than in early adulthood is more likely to lead to addiction and daily smoking.
- Most adults who purchase cigarettes for distribution to minors are under 21.
  - High school students are less likely to have 21 year-olds than 18 year-olds in their social circles, suggesting reduced opportunities to access tobacco from older buyers.
- Raising the age of sale for tobacco has the potential to break this distribution cycle by reducing minors’ ability to buy from other high school students.
- Although this approach may reduce tobacco sales in the long-term, raising the age of sale would have a minimal initial impact on sales and overall tobacco tax revenue.
- A very small percentage of total tobacco sales, perhaps as little as 2% are attributed to the 18-20 year old age group.
- The states of Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington; and at least 530 localities have raised the age of purchase of tobacco to 21.
- A 2015 study of Needham, MA – the first place to raise the age of purchase – found that raising the minimum sales age to 21 for tobacco contributed to a greater decline in youth smoking relative to communities that did not pass this ordinance.
  - From 2006 to 2010, the decrease in 30-day smoking in Needham (from 13% to 7%) was significantly greater than in the comparison communities (from 15% to 12%).
  - Our recent study found that 70.5% of U.S. adults support raising the age to buy tobacco to 21. Moreover, the majority of smokers supported this policy.
- We provide research on public support for this policy in Mississippi.