

New York Nicotine Pouch Tax Polling Memo



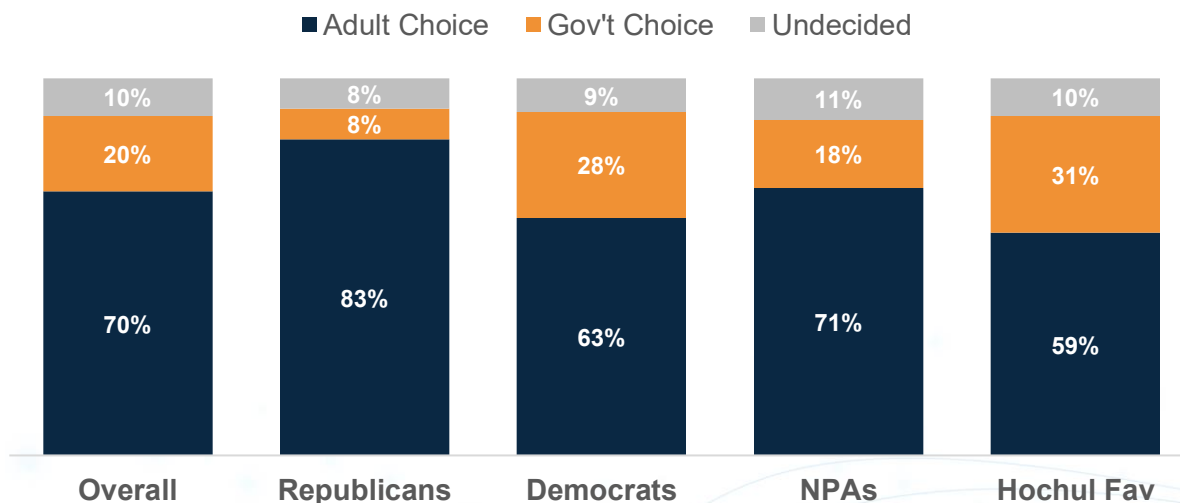
DATE: February 25, 2026
TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Chris Lane, Senior Partner & Pollster, Cygnal
RE: New York Voters Oppose Proposed 75% Tax on Nicotine Pouches

Executive Summary

A Cygnal survey of 600 likely 2026 general election voters in New York State, conducted February 16–18, 2026, finds that **voters across the political spectrum reject the proposed 75% tax on nicotine pouches**. With affordability dominating the political landscape as the state’s single most pressing issue, this tax is out of step with where New Yorkers stand. Voters believe adults should make their own choices, they worry deeply about the impact on small businesses, and – after hearing arguments from both sides – a plurality opposes the tax and support shifts -17 net. This **tax proposal is a political and policy liability**.

New Yorkers Believe Adults – Not Government – Should Make Their Own Decisions

Voters were asked whether government should regulate products for adults, or whether adults should be allowed to make their own decisions. The answer was unambiguous: **70% of New York voters say adults should make the choice themselves – only 20% say the government should decide**. This **50-point gap spans party lines**. By taxing nicotine pouches at 75%, Albany would be substituting its judgment for the judgment of the adults it represents. Voters reject that premise overwhelmingly.



Affordability Is the #1 Issue in New York – By a Mile. Now Is Not the Time to Make Life Harder.

When asked what issue matters most in the upcoming election for Governor, **nearly half of New York voters – 47% – said affordability and cost of living**. No other issue came close. Taxes and government spending was a distant second at 15%, and every other issue was in the single digits. This is not a normal polling result. When one issue commands nearly half the electorate, it is a **signal that voters are under real economic pressure and watching closely** how their elected officials respond. A 75% tax on nicotine pouches means higher prices for working-class New Yorkers who are already stretched. It means adding yet another cost burden at exactly the wrong time. Lawmakers who vote for this tax will own those higher prices.

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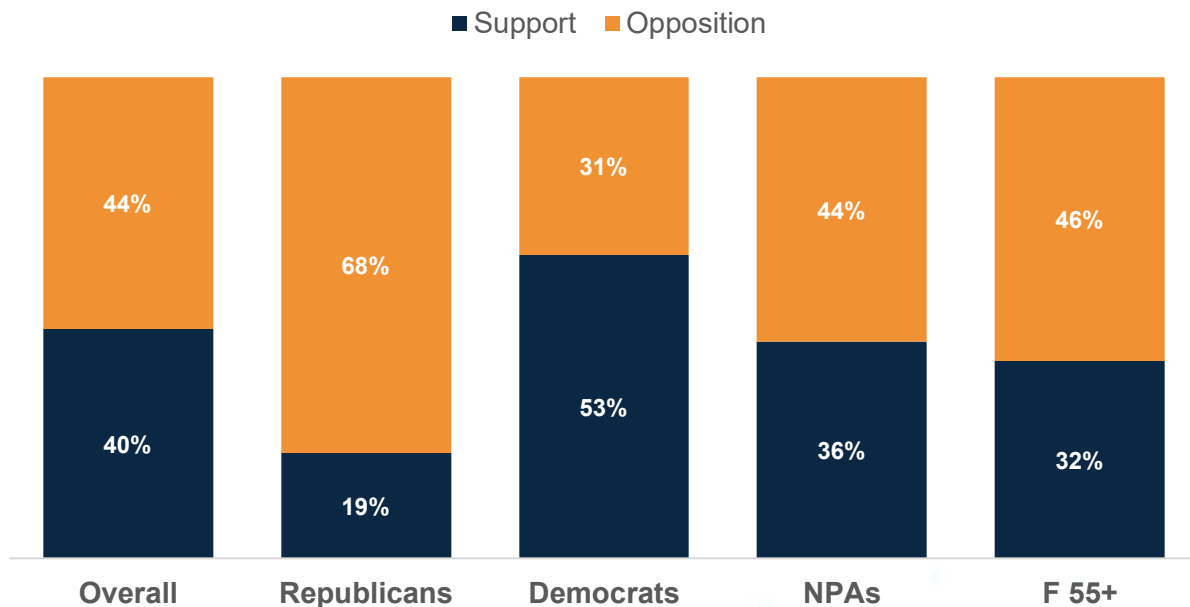


Voters Understand the Harm to Small Businesses and Reject Making Life Harder on Them

When voters were told that the proposed 75% tax on nicotine pouches would hurt neighborhood bodegas and family-owned stores, they are **2x more likely to oppose the tax than they are less likely**. The small business message resonated across regions and demographics. Bodegas and corner stores are not abstract policy concepts in New York; they are the economic lifelines of neighborhoods across the state. Voters who are already worried about the economy and affordability do not want to see Albany pile on the very small businesses that serve their communities every day. This message moved voters, and it reflects a genuine concern lawmakers should take seriously.

After Hearing Both Sides, Support Craters And Voters Reject the Tax

After hearing the full case from both sides – including the tax’s harm to small businesses, its impact on working-class New Yorkers, its contradiction with harm reduction goals, and the arguments in favor of the tax from supporters – **voters say no**.



Methodology: This probabilistic survey was conducted February 16–18, 2026, with n600 likely 2026 general election voters in New York State. It has a margin of error of $\pm 4.00\%$. Voters were interviewed via online panel and SMS. This survey was weighted to a likely 2026 general election voter universe.