

Excise tax will reduce youth smoking

To the editor:

Numerous studies show that increasing cigarette excise taxes is one of the most effective ways to reduce smoking among both youth and adults.

These studies show that every 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes will reduce overall cigarette consumption by 3 to 5 percent and reduce youth smoking by about 7 percent.

According to the campaign for tobacco-free kids in recent years, many states have raised cigarette tax rates, and in every case, they have reduced cigarette consumption while increasing revenues to balance budgets and fund vital programs.

These states are also reducing the millions they spend each year on tobacco-related medical costs.

One important study, released April 24, 2001, shows that cigarette tax increases are especially effective at preventing kids from becoming regular, addicted smokers. If cigarette prices were raised just 10 percent per pack nationwide, it would reduce the number of kids who become regular smokers by more than 1 million, saving them from addiction, disease and death.

Cigarette tax increases are a win-win solution for state government. It helps states balance their budgets while reducing smoking, saving lives and reducing health care costs.

Please join the L.V. Floyd Memorial Tutoring After School and Summer Program in trying to save lives and preventing kids from becoming regular, addicted smokers by writing the governor and ask him to add \$.50 per pack of cigarette excise tax.

You can write the governor at: The Honorable Mike Huckabee, Office of the Governor, State Capitol, Little Rock, Ark., 72201.

The L.V. Floyd Memorial Tutoring After-School and Summer Program is a member of the Blytheville, Armored and Gosnell Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Arkansas.

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