

To: Interested Parties  
Date: April 7, 2022  
Re: Menthol Cigarette Ban is a Political Loser in Key Swing States

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

It's no secret that Democrats are facing strong political headwinds this year. Recent polls in three key swing states, Georgia, Nevada and North Carolina, finds that a proposal to ban menthol cigarettes is broadly unpopular with voters in these states. If the proposal moves forward, it could further hamper Democratic efforts to save their Senate majority and keep the House in 2022 due to the potentially politically damaging fight over banning menthol cigarettes.

In short, opposition to this ban centers around the fact that voters do not believe a ban would be effective, it would spawn an illicit market, and should not be a major priority given all other crises going on. With the price of gas and groceries going up by the day, voters could punish Democrats if they take their eye off the ball and don't address the cost-of-living and other more-pressing crises first.

At the very least, voters, especially those that consist of the Democratic base, want the Biden administration to take a pause and fully explore the unintended consequences with the menthol ban before moving forward.

## VOTERS AGREE: KEEP THE MENTHOL CIGARETTE LEGAL

**Q: Should the Federal government ban the sale of menthol cigarettes, or keep them legal?**

State	Keep Legal	Ban
Georgia	52%	31%
Nevada	52%	28%
North Carolina	50%	30%

### From the crosstabs

- 54% of Hispanic voters in Nevada want to keep menthol legal.
- In all three states, the majority of Independent voters and plurality of Democratic voters agree to keep menthol legal.

## VOTERS AGREE: BANNING MENTHOL SHOULD NOT BE A PRIORITY

Voters across political spectrum agree the Biden administration should pursue bigger problems before banning menthol.

**Q: Regardless of where you stand on this proposal to ban menthol cigarettes, do you think this should be a top priority for the Federal government, or are other issues more important right now?**

State	Other Issues More Important	Top Priority
Georgia	93%	6%
Nevada	93%	3%
North Carolina	94%	4%

**Q: Spikes in violent crime, the situation in Ukraine, record inflation and supply-chain problems have made returning to normal after COVID-19 even harder. At a time like this where we face so many challenges, our government has much**

**bigger problems to fix right now than to spend their time banning menthol cigarettes.”**

State	Strongly/Somewhat Agree	Strongly/Somewhat Disagree
Georgia	86%	10%
Nevada	87%	9%
North Carolina	86%	10%

**From the crosstabs**

Voters feel very strongly that the Biden administration should pursue bigger problems before banning menthol. 71% of voters in Georgia and North Carolina and 66% of voters stated they “Strongly Agree” there are more important issues than banning menthol cigarettes.

**VOTERS AGREE: MENTHOL BAN WOULD NOT WORK AT REDUCING TOBACCO USE & PROTECTING KIDS**

**Q: Proponents of a menthol ban argue that it’s necessary to protect kids from smoking or vaping and will work to reduce tobacco use. Opponents argue that it sends the wrong message that regular tobacco products are safer and people will just switch to other products. Do you think that this ban would be effective at reducing tobacco use or not?**

State	Would Not Be Effective	Would Be Effective
Georgia	67%	22%
Nevada	66%	22%
North Carolina	67%	20%

**From the crosstabs**

Female voters overwhelmingly stated that they believed menthol ban would not be effective at reducing tobacco use and protecting kids (67% in NV, 66% in NC and 60% in GA).

**VOTERS AGREE: MENTHOL BAN WOULD CREATE AN ILLICIT MARKET**

**Q: The illegal black-market sale of cigarettes is already a \$10 billion criminal enterprise in the United States. A ban on menthol cigarettes wouldn't stop the sale of this product, it would push the product out of legitimate stores and onto street corners where gangs and violent criminals sell and generate profit for organized crime.**

State	Strongly/Somewhat Agree	Strongly/Somewhat Disagree
Georgia	66%	24%
Nevada	62%	29%
North Carolina	66%	24%

**From the crosstabs**

- 77% of Hispanics in Nevada agree that a menthol cigarette ban would exacerbate an illicit market that would benefit gangs and organized crime.
- 65% of Independents and 60% of Democratic voters in Georgia agree that a menthol cigarette ban would exacerbate an illicit market that would benefit gangs and organized crime.
- 64% of Independents and 58% of Democratic voters in North Carolina agree that a menthol cigarette ban would exacerbate an illicit market that would benefit gangs and organized crime.

**VOTERS AGREE: WOULD BE LESS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATES WHO SUPPORT MENTHOL BAN**

**Q: Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate in your district who vocally supported this proposal to ban menthol cigarettes?**

State	Less Likely to Vote For Menthol Ban Supporter	More Likely to Vote For Menthol Ban Supporter
Georgia	44%	25%
Nevada	49%	21%
North Carolina	46%	23%

**From the crosstabs**

- In Nevada, 60% of Hispanic voters would be less likely to vote for a candidate who vocally supports a proposal to ban menthol cigarettes.
- In North Carolina, 52% of Independents would be less likely to vote for a candidate who vocally supports a proposal to ban menthol cigarettes.

**VOTERS AGREE: BIDEN ADMINISTRATION SHOULD TAKE PAUSE ON BAN**

**Q: There are legitimate concerns – such as unintended consequences, rise in crime and job losses – in relation to the banning of menthol cigarettes and the Biden administration should fully explore these concerns before implementing the ban.”**

State	Strongly/Somewhat Agree	Strongly/Somewhat Disagree
Georgia	62%	27%
Nevada	61%	28%
North Carolina	63%	27%

**From the crosstabs**

- 71% of Democratic voters and 72% of Hispanic voters in Nevada agree the Biden administration should take a pause.
- 60% of Democratic voters in Georgia and 61% in North Carolina agree the Biden administration should take a pause.

## POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

State	POTUS Approval Net Rating	POTUS Strongly Approve	POTUS Somewhat Approve	POTUS Somewhat Disapprove	POTUS Strongly Disapprove
Georgia – all	<b>-13</b>	19%	22%	10%	44%
Georgia – Indys	<b>-17</b>	12%	28%	21%	36%
Georgia – Dems	+67	43%	37%	7%	6%
Nevada – all	<b>-14</b>	23%	19%	7%	49%
Nevada – Indys	<b>-33</b>	16%	18%	6%	60%
Nevada – Dems	+69	50%	34%	7%	8%
N.C. – all voters	<b>-14</b>	23%	18%	8%	48%
N.C. – Indys	<b>-28</b>	14%	21%	11%	53%
N.C. – Dems	+70	53%	31%	7%	7%

State	Generic Congressional Ballot Republican Candidate	Generic Congressional Ballot Democratic Candidate
Georgia	44%	44%
Nevada	48%	40%
North Carolina	47%	42%

## METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

All surveys conducted by Echelon Insights

State	n=	Dates	Race	Gender	Party
Georgia	610	2/21-2/25/2022	61% White 31% Black 5% Hispanic	45% Male 55% Female	34% Democratic 22% Independent 39% Republican 5% Something Else
Nevada	600	3/23-28/2022	66% White 14% Black 12% Hispanic 7% Asian	49% Male 51% Female	34% Democratic 28% Independent 31% Republican 4% Something Else
North Carolina	601	3/23-25/2022	70% White 21% Black 4% Hispanic	46% Male 54% Female	33% Democratic 31% Independent 31% Republican 4% Something Else