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POLL: TORIES HURT BY NANNY STATE POLICIES

VOTERS DISLIKE PLAIN PACKAGING, TOBACCO INDUSTRY IN EQUAL MEASURE

London (17 July) – Conservative candidates in marginal seats, including public health minister, Jane Ellison, risk electoral defeat because of the government’s nanny state policies, according to a new survey of English voters commissioned by the Democracy Institute, a politically independent think tank.

Conducted before and after the cabinet reshuffle, the poll found tepid Tory support in much of England, especially in regions containing the most marginal seats (e.g. Ellison’s south London seat, Battersea). Conservative candidates continue to be threatened by a relatively popular UKIP, a second choice for a growing number of voters.

According to Patrick Basham, who directed the survey, “These results suggest UKIP’s outspoken opposition to many of the government’s public health proposals has the potential to shift, in small but critical ways, the electoral sands.”

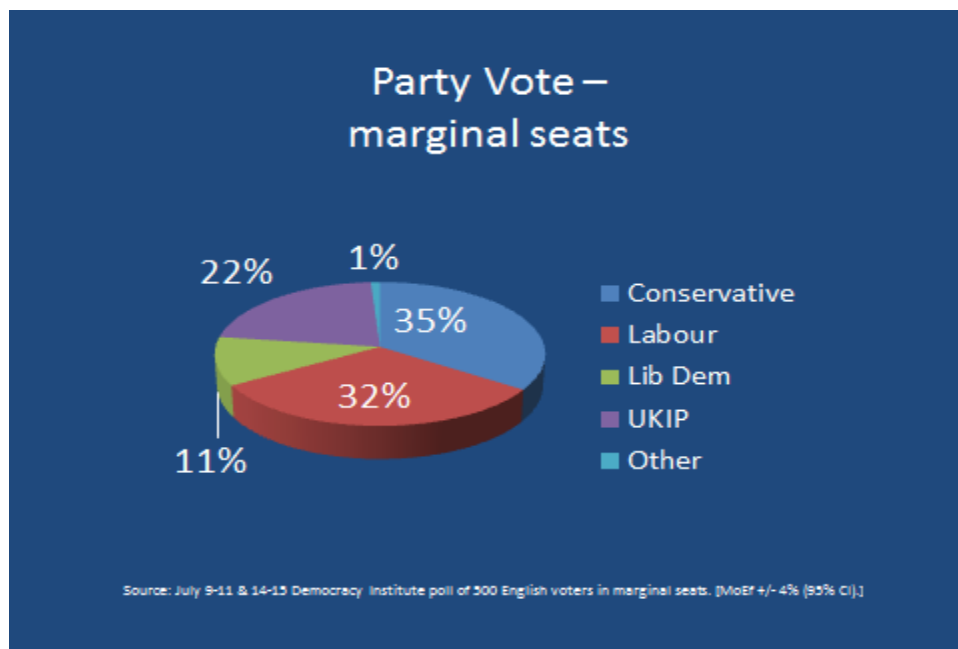
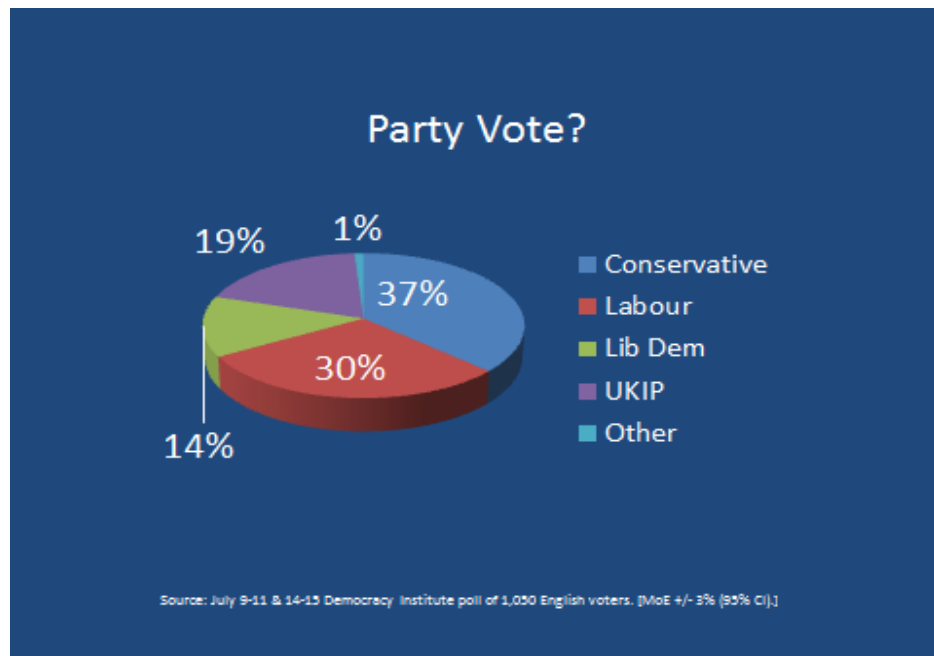
“David Cameron’s tenuous hold on the keys to No 10 is threatened, in part, by voters who tell us they’re tired of government telling them what, how, and when they should eat, drink, and smoke,” said Basham, who has conducted campaign and policy polls in the UK, East Africa, Australia, North America, and the Middle East.

The poll finds that a majority of voters – 54% to 38% – oppose the introduction of plain cigarette packaging. And, a plurality of voters (42%) is less likely to vote for a party that supports plain packaging. More than two-thirds (68%) fear that plain packaging will encourage smuggling. Revealingly, one-third (34%) of smokers admit that plain packaging would make them more likely to buy their cigarettes on the illicit market.

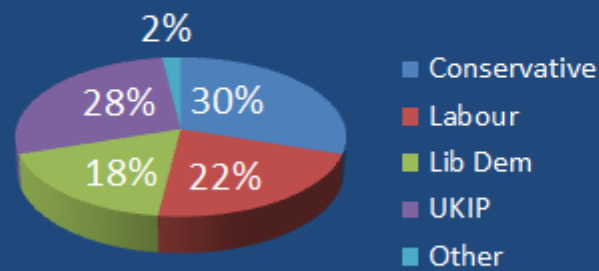
“Our poll surprisingly finds plain packaging’s as unpopular as the tobacco industry, itself,” observes Basham. A majority (51%) think the industry makes a negative contribution to the economy, while 53% say the tobacco industry also plays a negative societal role. Basham

suggests that, “While Big Tobacco remains a political pariah, plain packaging could prove an electoral albatross, in tandem with other nanny state-style initiatives, weighing down the Conservative vote.”

Some poll highlights:

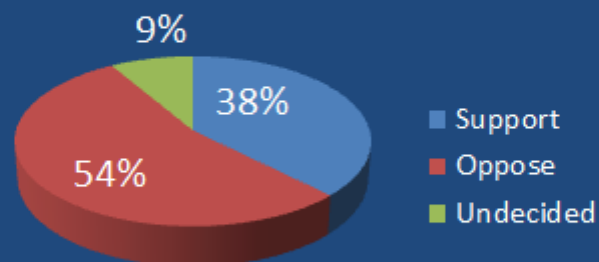


Party Vote – 2nd choice?



Source: July 10-11 & 14-15 Democracy Institute poll of 1,050 English voters. [MoE +/- 3% (95% CI).]

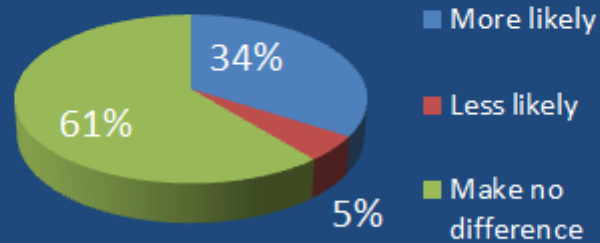
Plain Packaging



Source: July 9-11 & 14-15 Democracy Institute poll of 1,050 English voters. [MoE +/- 3% (95% CI).]

Plain Packaging

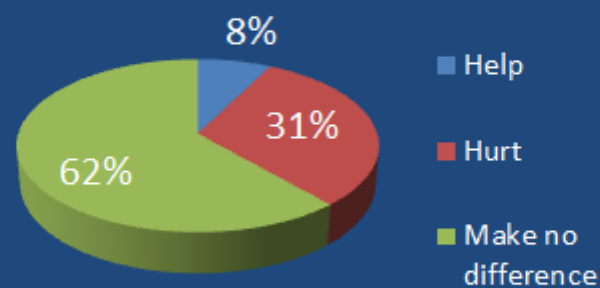
Illicit trade purchase?



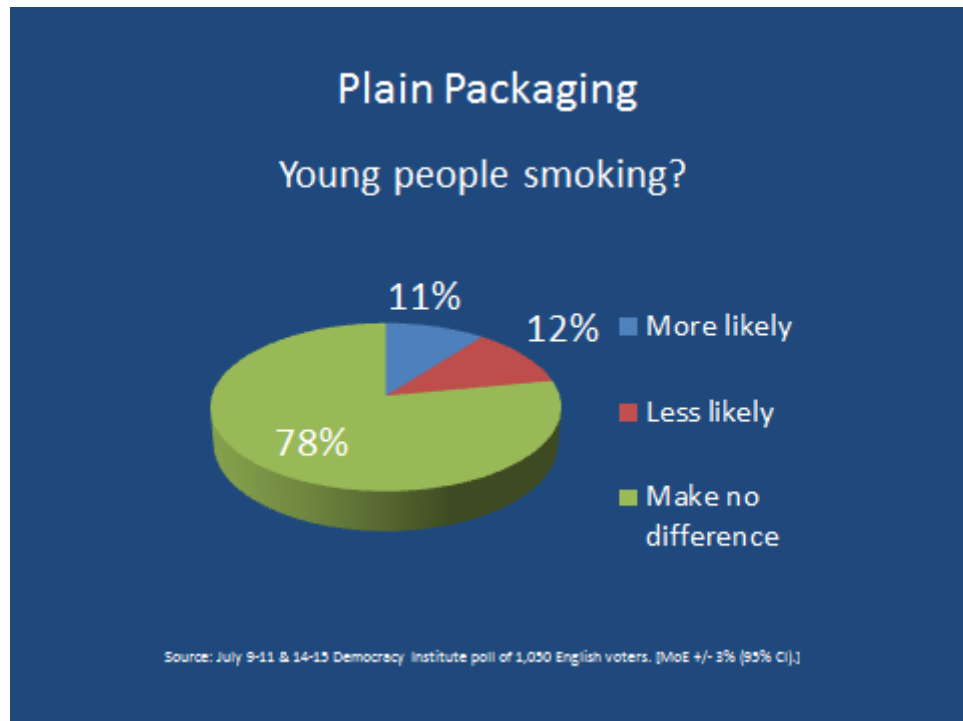
Source: July 9-11 & 14-15 Democracy Institute poll of 250 English smokers. (MoE +/- 6.5% (95% CI).)

Plain Packaging

Newsagents / corner shops?



Source: July 9-11 & 14-15 2014 Democracy Institute poll of 1,050 English voters. (MoE +/- 3% (95% CI).)



Methodology

The fieldwork for the survey of a randomly selected national telephone (landline and mobile) sample of 1,050 English voters (including 500 voters in marginal seats) was conducted by the Democracy Institute's polling unit from July 9 to 11 and July 14 to 15 2014.

The national poll has a margin of error of +/- 3% (95% confidence interval). The sub-sample of marginal seats has a margin of error of +/- 4% (95% confidence interval). The sub-sample of smokers has a margin of error of +/- 6.5% (95% confidence interval).

To ensure a representative sample, the results were weighted for key demographic variables including, but not limited to, gender, age, education, income, region, and mobile phone-only households.

Contact

Please call 0797 951 8521 to speak with Patrick Basham about the poll. You can also email Basham on pbasham@democracyinstitute.org or contact the Democracy Institute on info@democracyinstitute.org.