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Missouri Cigarette Tax Discussed

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) _ Senate Appropriations Chairman Kurt Schaefer says he supports increasing Missouri's cigarette tax.

The Columbia Republican says he backs a higher tax on cigarettes to get more Missourians to stop smoking. Schaefer says reducing the number of smokers would help state government save money by cutting some costs through the Medicaid health care program. He says a higher tax also would generate a little additional revenue.

Missouri's cigarette tax of 17 cents per pack has remained unchanged while most states have increased taxes on tobacco over the past decade. Nationwide, the average tax now is \$1.46 per pack.

Schaefer was asked about Missouri's cigarette tax on Thursday by members of The Associated Press and the Missouri Press Association during their annual Capitol media event.

Associated Press