

Minnesota Wants To Double Cig Tax

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(AP) Two Republican lawmakers want Minnesota's cigarette tax to more than double as a way to deter smoking and to repay Minnesota schools for aid delays during recent state budgets. Sen. Carla Nelson and Rep. Mike Benson, both of Rochester, outlined the bill Monday that they will formally introduce later in the week. Nelson acknowledged it cuts against Republican anti-tax orthodoxy but says she hopes her party and the public will embrace it because of the intended purpose. Minnesota's current \$1.23 cent per-pack tax currently ranks among the middle of all states. The bill would boost that to \$2.52. By supporters' estimates, a higher tax would generate \$320 million in the next two years. Nelson says the bill would make it less likely that price-conscious young people would start smoking.