

Among those claiming familiarity with the contents of the agreement, slightly higher than average levels of support are evident.

Results in Table 1 also show that even among those Canadians who claim to have read or heard something about the outcome of the Canada-U.S. negotiations on free trade, there are different views as to exactly what the outcome has been. For instance, 44% say that a free trade deal was reached, but 21% indicate a view that the outcome was something other than an agreement being reached. Such a response should not necessarily be interpreted as a lack of knowledge on the part of respondents, but could also suggest or reflect an accurate perception on the part of many Canadians that the Canada-U.S. trade agreement has yet to be formally signed and ratified in both countries.

There are several distinct regional differences in attentiveness to the agreement and familiarity with it. Residents of the Prairie provinces are less attentive (45% "follow closely/very closely" versus 56% average) with residents of Alberta especially so (42%). Prairie residents are also less familiar with the contents of the free trade agreement (29% familiar versus average of 35%) and more likely not to have heard the outcome of the talks (43% not heard versus average of 34%).

Those Canadians who have been following the discussions most closely are Quebecers (62% say closely). In terms of familiarity, Torontonians are much more likely than other Canadians to claim they are familiar (51% versus 36% on average) with what is contained in the free trade agreement.

B. Support/Opposition to Free Trade Agreement

1. Overall support/opposition

Overall support for free trade with the United States remains constant, with close to half the population (48%) supporting the free trade agreement reached with the United States, 43% opposing the agreement and 9% having no opinion. This level of support is consistent with the percentage of Canadians in previous surveys conducted before the agreement was reached, who felt that it would be a good idea "for Canada to enter into a free trade agreement with the United States."