

The above data contain both positive and disconcerting news for the proponents of free trade and the federal government in particular. On the positive side:

- o Close to two-thirds of the population regard the trade deal as in some sense "part of a general effort to improve Canada's trade situation around the world" and therefore is not necessarily regarded as an isolated or exclusively continental focus in Canadian trade policy. Quebecers are more likely (70%) than average to hold this view, whereas Ontarians (59%) and people 65 years of age and older (56%) are less likely to see the trade deal in this light; and
- o Opinion is split as to whether people think the federal government has a good idea of how to deal with the changes a free trade agreement will bring in Canada. More likely to think that it does are Quebecers (64%), non-working men (56%) and Canadians with lower levels of education. Residents of Ontario (47%) and British Columbia (45%), as well as university educated Canadians (47%) are less likely to agree that the government has a good idea of how to deal with these changes.

Less encouraging for the proponents of free trade are the following results:

- o Only about one-quarter (26%) agree that the federal government has provided enough information about the free trade agreement to Canadians, a perception which could conceivably change once the final text of the agreement is agreed upon and made public;
- o More than six-in-ten (61%) -- especially Ontario residents (65%) and women -- think Canada gave away too much to the Americans in the free trade agreement, whereas high-income Canadians are less likely to hold this view (54%);
- o Canadians in most groups and regions disagree with the statement that "free trade won't make any difference to the average Canadian worker." Even stronger levels of disagreement are evident among higher socio-economic status individuals and residents of the Prairies and Ontario.