

While seven-in-ten men believe that the prices of consumer goods will likely decrease under free trade, only 38% of women feel that this will likely be the case. Women are also less likely (62% vs. 73% of men) to say that Canadian businesses will be able to take advantage of any opportunities that free trade with the United States offers.

As in the past, women (36%) continue to be more likely than men (23%) to rely on the media in forming up their opinions of the FTA.

Finally, women are less likely (52%) to have heard of the government's amendments to the FTA legislation than are men (71%).

B. Age

Canadians age 65 and over continue to be less optimistic about the deal's effects on Canada and are, as such, less supportive of the deal overall. Specific differences include the following:

Current support and opposition levels for the FTA among those 65 years of age and older constitute a reversal of the overall results, with 43% supporting the deal and 51% opposing.

Not surprisingly, the concern of the elderly over the possible loss of social programs under free trade remains focal. Only 34% of those 65 years of age and over feel that it will be likely that Canada will maintain the current government social programs under free trade compared to 68% of Canadians who feel this way.

Illustrative of the hesitance of the elderly to enter into the Free Trade Agreement is that only 29% of those 65 years older over feel that the "important thing now is to start planning on how to take advantage of the new opportunities that free trade agreement can provide." Fully three-quarters of Canadians feel that this is important.

Although young respondents in the past surveys had been consistently more optimistic about the effects of the FTA, the current data show that they are currently no more optimistic than Canadians on average.