



Minister for
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Ministre du
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MAJORITY OF CANADIANS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FREE TRADE

A public opinion poll commissioned by the Department of External Affairs shows that a majority of Canadians continue to support the idea of Canada entering into a free trade agreement with the United States.

The poll, conducted by Decima Research of Toronto between August 19 and August 30, reports that 50 per cent of Canadians believe that entering a free trade arrangement with the United States is a good or very good idea while 44 per cent believe it is a bad or very bad idea.

This represents no statistically significant change from the results of the same questions asked in a previous survey conducted between May 27 and June 7 when 50 per cent supported the idea and 43 percent opposed.

When asked to consider what was important in making up their minds about free trade 94 per cent cited Canada's ability to maintain current government programs such as unemployment insurance and health insurance. Sixty-six per cent thought these programs would be maintained under a free trade arrangement.

Ninety-four per cent considered it important that any agreement must be fair and equitable for both countries and 45 per cent believed that would be a likely outcome.

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Another important consideration, cited by 93 per cent, was that the United States will keep to the terms of an agreement with 54 per cent believing it would.

Ninety-three per cent cited increased jobs as an important consideration and 54 percent believed that overall there will be more jobs gained than lost in a free trade deal. This is unchanged from the June poll.

Generally, the August poll shows little or no change from June attitudes on such issues as foreign investment where over 70 per cent continued to believe that there should be restrictions on American investment in certain sectors of the economy.

Results of the poll are considered accurate within plus or minus 3.2 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The poll was conducted by telephone with 1,200 respondents across Canada.

For further information, contact International Trade Communications Group at 993-6463.