

Canada in NAFTA

Support for North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Still Strong With 64% Support

Support Dips From October 1999 High of 70%, But Well Ahead Of Initial Support Of Only 46% In February 1991

Plurality (40%) Say Canada has Benefited Since Being Part of NAFTA



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Toronto, Ontario—As the Prime Minister visits Washington today to meet with newly elected President George W. Bush, a new poll shows that two-thirds (64%) of Canadians support Canada being in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Mexico. This is down from its highest level of support (70%) in October 1999 but well ahead of an Ipsos-Reid poll of February 1991 that showed only 46 percent in favour of the initiative.

Further, 40 percent of Canadians believe that the country has benefited since being part of NAFTA. The accord has been in place since 1994. In contrast, 32 percent believe that NAFTA has hurt the country and 23 percent believe it has had "no impact". These findings are virtually identical to those obtained in October 1999 when Canadians were posed the same question.

The survey results also come as the Federal Liberals' Throne Speech indicates that to ensure Canada's economic growth, the government will play a leading role in negotiating a

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comprehensive free trade agreement that will include the three Americas by 2004. Prime Minister Chrétien will host the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April where the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas will dominate the agenda.

- The survey shows that the largest slip in support is in British Columbia. Support for NAFTA has dropped 11 points (from 59% support) since October 1999. British Columbians are now evenly split on the issue — 48 percent support versus 47 percent oppose. The other two provinces where support has slipped are Atlantic Canada (down 6 points to 61% support) and Alberta (down 5 points to 63% support).
- Men (71%) are more likely than women (59%) to say they support NAFTA.
- In terms of those provinces indicating that the country has benefited from NAFTA, Quebec (53%) scores the highest with Atlantic Canada (39%) and Ontario (38%) ahead of the rest.
- Those provinces most likely to indicate that the country has been hurt by the agreement are BC (46%) and Alberta (44%).
- Men (49%) are more likely to indicate the country has benefited from NAFTA, while women (38%) are more likely to say that it has “hurt” the country.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll conducted between January 22nd and 25th, 2001. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.



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For more information on this news release, please contact:

***Darrell Bricker
President and COO
Public Affairs
Ipsos-Reid
(416) 324-2900***

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