



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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SUPPORT FOR FREE TRADE RECOVERS DESPITE RECESSION

Despite the economic recession, public support for free trade agreements has recovered after declining a year ago. Currently, 44% say that free trade agreements like NAFTA and the policies of the World Trade Organization are good for the country, up from 35% a year ago. Slightly more than a third (35%) say that such agreements and policies are bad for the country, down from 48% in April 2008.

The current balance of opinion is more in line with long-term trends when compared with the April 2008 measure. Last year marked the first time in a measure dating to 1997 that a plurality viewed

<i>Impact of free trade agreements on the country...</i>	Sept 1997	Sept 2001	Dec 2003	July 2004	Oct 2005	Dec 2006	Nov 2007	April 2008	April 2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Good thing	47	49	34	47	44	44	40	35	44
Bad thing	30	29	33	34	34	35	40	48	35
Don't know	<u>23</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>21</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

In general, do you think that free trade agreements like NAFTA, and the policies of the World Trade Organization, have been a good thing or a bad thing for the United States?

free trade agreements and policies negatively. The current measure is identical to December 2006 and comparable with opinions in 2005 and 2004. Support for NAFTA and other free trade agreements in policies peaked at 49% in early September 2001; at that time, 29% said they were bad for the country.

Other recent national surveys also have found increases in support for foreign trade over the past year. In a survey conducted April 3-5 by CNN/Opinion Research Corp., 56% said they viewed foreign trade “more as an opportunity for economic growth through increased U.S. exports,” while 40% said they viewed foreign trade as “a threat to the economy from foreign imports.” In June 2008, a narrow majority (51%) said that foreign trade represented more of a threat rather than an opportunity for the U.S. economy.

In an April 1-5 survey by CBS News/New York Times, 66% said “that trade with other countries – both buying and selling products” is good for the U.S. economy. Fewer (58%) expressed that view in March 2008.

Other Measures of Increased Support for Foreign Trade			
<i>CNN/ Opinion Research</i>			
<i>See foreign trade more as an opportunity for econ growth through increased US exports or a threat to economy from imports?</i>			
	Oct <u>2007</u>	June <u>2008</u>	April <u>2009</u>
	%	%	%
Opportunity	46	41	56
Threat	45	51	40
Both/neither (Vol)	7	6	4
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	*
	100	100	100
<i>CBS News/ New York Times</i>			
<i>Trade w/ other countries - both buying and selling products - is...</i>			
	March <u>2008</u>	April <u>2009</u>	
	%	%	
Good for US economy	58	66	
Bad for US economy	32	23	
Other/Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	
	100	100	

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted March 31-April 21 among 3,013 adults interviewed on cell phones and landlines, finds people with low family incomes and Democrats are much more supportive of free trade agreements than they were a year ago.

Nearly half of Democrats (47%) now say that NAFTA and other free trade agreements, and the policies of the World Trade Organization are a good thing for the United States compared with 30% who view these agreements and policies negatively. In April 2008, only about a third of Democrats (34%) viewed free trade agreements positively while 50% expressed a negative opinion. More independents also express a positive opinion of free trade agreements (up eight points since last year), while opinion among Republicans has remained more stable; currently, 41% of Republicans see free trade agreements as a good thing while 38% view them as a bad thing.

Shifting Public Views of Free Trade Agreements							
<i>Impact of free trade agreements on the country</i>	<i>Nov 2007</i>		<i>April 2008</i>		<i>April 2009</i>		<i>08-09 change in "good"</i>
	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	40	40	35	48	44	35	+9
White	38	42	35	47	42	37	+7
Black	48	33	30	58	47	31	+17
18-29	63	22	55	28	62	19	+7
30-49	39	39	37	47	47	35	+10
50-64	31	51	26	59	32	47	+6
65+	27	49	26	54	29	41	+3
College grad	43	40	38	48	48	34	+10
Some college	40	44	37	47	43	40	+6
HS or less	38	39	33	48	42	34	+9
\$100k or more	39	48	43	45	49	32	+6
\$75k-99,999	37	44	38	46	41	45	+3
\$50k-74,999	39	41	36	54	46	44	+10
\$30k-49,999	43	42	33	48	42	36	+9
Less than \$30,000	41	34	33	48	46	31	+13
Republican	40	43	42	43	41	38	-1
Democrat	41	37	34	50	47	30	+13
Independent	39	43	35	52	43	40	+8
East	37	39	36	44	46	34	+10
Midwest	35	44	36	51	38	39	+2
South	43	35	34	48	44	38	+10
West	42	46	37	48	47	30	+10

Global Trade a Low Priority

The issue of trade has never rated very high on Pew Research's annual list of the public's policy priorities. But in January, amid rising public concern over the economy, 31% said that dealing with global trade should be a top priority for the president and Congress, down from 37% a year earlier. Among 20 issues, dealing with global trade ranked near the bottom; just 30% cited dealing with global warming as a top priority.

Only about a third of Democrats (33%) and independents (32%), and 28% of Republicans viewed dealing with global trade as a top priority for the president and Congress. (*For more from this survey, see "Economy, Jobs Trump All Other Priorities in 2009," Jan. 22, 2009.*)

General Support for 'Free Trade'

The public expresses more support for unspecified free trade agreements with other countries than it does for free trade agreements “like NAFTA and the policies of the World Trade Organization.” While most respondents were asked a question that mentioned these specific agreements and policies, a smaller group was asked their opinion of “free trade agreements between the U.S. and other countries;” 52% say such agreements are a good thing for the United States while 14% say they are a bad thing; 14% offer no opinion.

Republicans are far more supportive of free trade agreements generally (59%) than when NAFTA and the policies of the World Trade Organization are mentioned (41%). More independents also express support for free trade agreements generally than when specific trade measures are mentioned (51% vs. 43%). The difference is smaller among Democrats.

More Favor Free Trade When NAFTA and World Trade Organization Are Not Mentioned				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
<i>Free trade agreements between US & other countries</i>				
Good for country	52	59	51	51
Bad for country	34	29	34	36
Don't know	14	12	15	13
	100	100	100	100
<i>Free trade agreements/policies like NAFTA & WTO</i>				
Good for country	44	41	47	43
Bad for country	35	38	30	40
Don't know	21	21	23	17
	100	100	100	100
<i>Diff in "good"</i>	+8	+18	+4	+8

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 3,013 adults, 18 years of age or older, from March 31 – April 21, 2009 (2260 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 753 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 271 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2008 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2007 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the sample.

The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Q.16	2,031	2.5 percentage points
Q.A17	982	3.5 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
2009 VALUES SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE**

Survey A: March 31-April 6, 2009 N=1,506

Survey B: April 14-21, 2009 N=1,507

Combined: N=3,013

ASK ALL SURVEY B (ASK SURVEY A FORM B APRIL 2-6) [N=2,031]:

Q.16 In general, do you think that free trade agreements like NAFTA, and the policies of the World Trade Organization, have been a good thing or a bad thing for the United States? **[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT ASKS WHAT NAFTA IS, "The North American Free Trade Agreement"]**

		Late				Early						
		April	Nov	Dec	Oct	Dec	July	March	Dec	Sept	Nov	Sept
		<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006¹</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1997</u>
44	Good thing	35	40	44	44	47	47	44	34	49	45	47
35	Bad thing	48	40	35	34	34	34	37	33	29	34	30
<u>21</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>17</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>23</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

ASK SURVEY A FORM A (AND FORM B MARCH 31-APRIL 1) [N=982]:

Q.A17 In general, do you think that free trade agreements, between the U.S. and other countries, have been a good thing or a bad thing for the United States?

52	Good thing
34	Bad thing
<u>14</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

¹ In December 2006, December 2004, July 2004 and March 2004, the question wording asked about: "free trade agreements like NAFTA and the World Trade Organization," and did not mention "policies of" the World Trade Organization. In October 2005 the question asked: "So far, do you think that NAFTA has been a good thing or a bad thing from a U.S. point of view?" In December 2003 the question wording asked about "free trade agreements like NAFTA and the WTO;" full names of the organizations were read out only if the respondent was uncertain. In Early September 2001 and earlier the question was worded: "NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement..."