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Fewer See Benefits from Free Trade Agreements

Public Support for Increased Trade, Except With South Korea and China

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Fewer See Benefits from Free Trade Agreements

Public Support for Increased Trade, Except With South Korea and China

The public is of two minds when it comes to trade with other countries. Most Americans say that increased trade with Canada, Japan and European Union countries – as well as India, Brazil and Mexico – would be good for the United States. But reactions are mixed to increased trade with South Korea and China.

More generally, there is increased skepticism about the impact of trade agreements such as NAFTA and the policies of the World Trade Organization.
Roughly a third (35%) say that free trade agreements have been good for the United States, while 44% say they have been bad for the U.S.

Support for free trade agreements is now at one of its lowest points in 13 years of Pew Research Center surveys. In 2008, an identical percentage (35%) said free trade agreements were good for the U.S. Support for free trade agreements had increased last year, to 44% in April and 43% in November, despite the struggling economy.

Support for Increased Trade…

Increased trade with __ would be …	**Good for U.S.**	**Bad for U.S.**	**DK**
	%	%	%
Canada	76	14	9=100
Japan	60	30	10=100
EU countries	58	28	14=100
India	55	32	12=100
Brazil	53	31	17=100
Mexico	52	37	11=100
South Korea	45	41	14=100
China	45	46	9=100

Skepticism about Impact of Free Trade Agreements

Free trade agreements like NAFTA, policies of WTO…	**Good for U.S.**	**Bad for U.S.**	**DK**
	%	%	%
October 2010	35	44	21=100
November 2009	43	32	25=100
April 2009	44	35	21=100
April 2008	35	48	17=100
November 2007	40	40	20=100
December 2006	44	35	21=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov. 4-7, 2010 Omnibus survey; Nov. 4-7, 2010 Post-Election survey.

As in past surveys on trade, many more Americans say free trade agreements have a negative rather than a positive impact on jobs in the U.S., wages for U.S. workers, and economic growth in this country. And more say their personal finances have been hurt (46%) rather than helped (26%) by free trade agreements.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Nov. 4-7 among 1,255 adults, finds that just 28% of Republicans say that free trade agreements are good for the United States, down from 43% last November. Opinions among Democrats and independents have changed little over the past year.

Tea Party Republicans More Critical of Free Trade Agreements

Free trade agreements like NAFTA, policies of WTO…	Nov 2009		Oct 2010		Change in "good"
	Good for US	*Bad for US*	*Good for US*	*Bad for US*	
	%	%	%	%	
Total	43	32	35	44	-8
Republican	43	36	28	54	-15
Democrat	47	27	40	35	-7
Independent	41	36	37	46	-4
Among Reps, Rep leaners…					
Agree w/ Tea Party (51%)	--	--	24	63	
Disagree w/ Tea Party/ No opinion (48%)	--	--	42	42	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov. 4-7, 2010 Post-Election survey. Q 61.

Republicans and Republican-leaning independents who agree with the Tea Party have a particularly negative view of the impact of free trade agreements. Only about a quarter of Republicans who agree with the Tea Party (24%) say that free trade agreements like NAFTA and the policies of the WTO have been a good thing for the United States, while 63% say they have been a bad thing.

Among Republicans who have no opinion of the Tea Party or disagree with the Tea Party movement, opinions are evenly split (42% good thing, 42% bad thing). Overall, about half (51%) of all Republican and Republican leaners say they agree with the Tea Party while 42% have no opinion; very few (5%) disagree with the Tea Party.

There are smaller partisan differences in opinions about increased trade with Canada, Japan, China or other countries. This question was included in a separate nationwide survey of 996 adults, which also was conducted Nov. 4-7.

For instance, while Republicans and Democrats have about the same view of increased trade with China, there are wide age and educational differences. By 56% to 37%, those under 30 say that more trade with China is good for the U.S. Those 30- 49 and 50- 64 are divided, but more of those 65 and older see increased trade with China as bad for the country rather than good (52% to 37%).

Roughly half of college graduates (50%) and those with some college experience (51%) say increased trade with China would be good for the United States. That compares with 39% of those with no more than a high school education.

Views of Increased Trade with China

	Good for U.S.	Bad for U.S.
	%	%
Total	45	46
Republican	42	52
Democrat	49	44
Independent	47	45
18-29	56	37
30-49	43	49
50-64	47	45
65+	37	52
College grad+	50	40
Some college	51	44
HS or less	39	52

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov. 4-7, 2010 Omnibus survey. PEW.6c.

Impact of Free Trade Agreements

The public continues to be skeptical about the benefits of free trade agreements to the United States, especially when it comes to jobs, wages and economic growth. Opinions about the impact of free trade agreements have changed little since last year, although they are somewhat less negative than in April 2008.

Most Say Trade Agreements Lead to Job Losses

Impact of free trade agreements on…	**Total** %	**Rep** %	**Dem** %	**Ind** %
Jobs in U.S.				
Create jobs	8	5	12	6
Lead to job losses	55	58	47	63
No difference	24	24	27	22
Wages in U.S.				
Make wages higher	8	5	11	8
Make wages lower	45	45	42	49
No difference	34	37	33	35
Nation's economy				
Lead to growth	19	17	22	18
Slow economy	43	48	34	49
No difference	24	22	26	26
Prices in U.S.				
Make prices higher	31	31	28	33
Make prices lower	31	30	31	32
No difference	25	26	23	26
People of developing counties				
Good	54	55	51	57
Bad	9	7	10	11
No difference	23	23	24	21

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov 4-7, 2010. Q63a-e.

More than half (55%) say that free trade agreements lead to job losses in the United States, compared with just 8% who say these agreements create jobs; 24% say they make no difference. And while 45% say free trade agreements make wages lower, far fewer (8%) say they make wages higher. Similarly, the public does not see much benefit from free trade agreements for the overall economy – 43% say they slow the economy down while fewer than half as many (19%) say they make the economy grow.

Opinions are less negative about the impact of trade agreements on prices in the U.S.; as many say they make prices lower as higher (31% each). People in developing countries are widely perceived as benefitting from trade agreements: 54% say they are good for people in developing countries while just 9% say they are bad.

Roughly six-in-ten independents (63%) and Republicans (58%) say that free trade agreements lead to job losses in the United States; fewer Democrats (47%) agree. Independents (49%) and Republicans (48%) are more likely than Democrats (34%) to say that trade agreements slow the U.S. economy. There are only slight partisan differences in views of the other effects of free trade agreements, including their impact on wages in the United States.

There also are differences *among* Republicans over the impact of free trade agreements on economic growth, and wages and jobs in the U.S. Fully 62% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents who agree with the Tea Party say free trade agreements lead to slower growth in the U.S. That compares with 40% of Republicans and Republican leaners who either have no opinion of the Tea Party or disagree with the Tea Party.

More than half (54%) of Republicans who agree with the Tea Party say free trade agreements make wages lower, compared with 38% who have no opinion of the Tea Party or disagree with the movement. The differences among Republicans and Republican leaners are nearly as large about whether free trade agreements lead to job losses in the U.S. (67% of Tea Party vs. 55% of non-Tea Party).

Gaps Within GOP over Impact of Free Trade Agreements

	Among Reps, Rep-leaners	
Impact of free trade agreements on…	**Agree w/ Tea Party**	**Disagree/ No opinion**
Nation's economy	%	%
Lead to growth	13	22
Slow economy	62	40
No difference	14	28
Wages in U.S.		
Make wages higher	8	6
Make wages lower	54	39
No difference	26	47
Jobs in the U.S.		
Create jobs	5	8
Lead to job losses	67	55
No difference	17	26

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov 4-7, 2010. Q63b-d.

Personal Impact of Trade Pacts

Nearly half (46%) of the public says they think free trade agreements have had a negative effect on their personal finances, 26% say they have helped, while 28% volunteer that they have neither hurt nor helped, they are not affected, or say they do not know. These views have changed little since 2008, but in December 2006, somewhat more (35%) said that free trade agreements helped their personal finances.

Impact of Free Trade Agreements on Personal Finances

	Dec 2006	April 2008	Nov 2009	Nov 2010
	%	%	%	%
Helped	35	27	33	26
Hurt	36	48	40	46
DK/Neither	29	25	28	28
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov 4-7, 2010. Q62.

Young people, college graduates and affluent Americans are more likely than others to say their personal finances have been helped by free trade agreements. But even among these groups, roughly as many say they have been hurt as helped by trade agreements.

Among those with family incomes of $100,000 or more, for example, 33% say their personal financial situations have been helped by free trade agreements; 30% say they have been hurt; and 37% say they have been neither helped nor hurt, offer another response or say they do not know. Among those in lower income groups, about half or more say their financial situations have been hurt by free trade agreements.

Few Say They Have Been Helped Financially by Trade Agreements

Impact of free trade agreements on personal finances	Helped	Hurt	Other/DK
	%	%	%
Total	26	46	28=100
18-29	38	41	22=100
30-49	30	41	29=100
50-64	18	59	24=100
65+	18	47	35=100
College grad+	30	35	34=100
Some college	27	49	24=100
HS or less	23	52	25=100
Family income			
$100,000 or more	33	30	37=100
$75,000-$99,9999	23	48	29=100
$30,000-74,999	23	51	27=100
Less than $30,000	27	54	19=100
Republican	25	46	29=100
Democrat	28	43	30=100
Independent	26	51	23=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov. 4-7, 2010. Q62.

On this question, partisans and independents have similar views: 51% of independents, 46% of Republicans and 43% of Democrats say their personal financial situations have been hurt by free trade agreements.

About the Surveys

Most of the analysis in this release is based on telephone interviews conducted November 4-7, 2010 among a national sample of 1,255 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States as part of the Pew Research Center's biennial post-election survey (828 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 427 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 189 who had no landline telephone). Interviewing was conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. 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 2009 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample also is 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 2009 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 combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. 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 ...
Total sample	1255	3.5 percentage points
Republican	360	6.5 percentage points
Democratic	389	6.0 percentage points
Independent	435	6.0 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.

Along with the main survey described above, this report is supplemented with a weekly omnibus poll. Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a national sample of 996 adults living in the continental United States, 18 years of age or older, from November 4-November 7, 2010 (666 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 330 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 160 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2009 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2009 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 combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. 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 ...**
Total sample	996	4.0 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 Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

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:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
NOVEMBER 2010 POST-ELECTION SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
NOVEMBER 4-7, 2010
N=1255

QUESTIONS 1-60 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:
On another subject…
Q.61 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"]**

	Good thing	Bad thing	**(VOL.)** DK/Ref
Nov 4-7, 2010	35	44	21
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	43	32	25
Mar 31-Apr 21, 2009	44	35	21
April, 2008	35	48	17
November, 2007	40	40	20
December, 2006[1]	44	35	21
Late October, 2005	44	34	22
December, 2004	47	34	19
July, 2004	47	34	19
March, 2004	44	37	19
December, 2003	34	33	33
Early September, 2001	49	29	22
November, 1997	45	34	21
September, 1997	47	30	23

ASK ALL:
Q.62 Thinking about the financial situation of you and your family… Do you think these free trade agreements have definitely helped, probably helped, probably hurt, or definitely hurt the financial situation of you and your family?

Nov 4-7 2010		Oct 28-Nov 8 2009	April 2008	Dec 2006	July 2004	Dec 2003
3	Definitely helped	4	3	3	3	2
23	Probably helped	29	24	32	31	25
27	Probably hurt	26	32	24	25	24
19	Definitely hurt	14	16	12	16	14
16	Neither/Doesn't affect me/Hasn't helped orhurt (**VOL.**)	11	13	11	12	15
12	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	17	12	18	13	20

[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 asked about: "…NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement..."

ASK ALL:
Q.63 As I read some statements about free trade agreements, tell me what your impression is. First **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**?

a. Do free trade agreements make the price of products sold in the U.S. higher, lower or not make a difference?

Nov 4-7 2010		Oct 28-Nov 8 2009	April 2008	Dec 2006
31	Higher	33	39	30
31	Lower	32	29	32
25	Not make a difference	20	18	23
1	Mixed/Depends **(VOL.)**	1	1	1
12	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	14	13	14

b. Do free trade agreements make the wages of American workers higher, lower, or not make a difference?

Nov 4-7 2010		Oct 28-Nov 8 2009	April 2008	Dec 2006
8	Higher	11	8	11
45	Lower	49	56	44
34	Not make a difference	24	22	30
1	Mixed/Depends **(VOL.)**	2	2	1
12	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	15	12	14

c. Do free trade agreements create jobs in the U.S., lead to job losses, or not make a difference?

Nov 4-7 2010		Oct 28-Nov 8 2009	April 2008	Dec 2006
8	Create jobs	13	9	12
55	Lead to job losses	53	61	48
24	Not make a difference	19	18	25
1	Mixed/Depends **(VOL.)**	1	2	2
12	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	14	10	13

d. Do free trade agreements make the American economy grow, slow the economy down, or not make a difference?

Nov 4-7 2010		Oct 28-Nov 8 2009	April 2008	Dec 2006
19	Make the economy grow	25	19	28
43	Slow the economy down	42	50	34
24	Not make a difference	18	17	21
1	Mixed/Depends **(VOL.)**	1	2	2
13	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	14	12	15

e. Are free trade agreements good for the people of developing countries, bad for the people of developing countries, or don't they make a difference?

Nov 4-7 2010		Oct 28-Nov 8 2009	April 2008	Dec 2006
54	Good	54	58	57
9	Bad	8	12	9
23	Don't make a difference	20	19	19
2	Mixed/Depends **(VOL.)**	2	0	1
11	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	15	11	14

QUESTIONS 64-73 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 74-75

ASK ALL:
Q.76 From what you know, do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

Nov 4-7 2010		(**RVs**) Oct 27-30 2010[2]	(**RVs**) Oct 13-18 2010	(**RVs**) Aug 25-Sep 6 2010	Jul 21-Aug 5 2010	Jun 16-20 2010	May 20-23 2010	Mar 11-21 2010
8	Strongly agree	12	9	11	8	9	10	9
19	Agree	17	19	18	14	15	15	15
11	Disagree	11	11	12	9	10	8	7
11	Strongly disagree	14	13	14	9	8	10	7
49	No opinion either way	32	30	32	37	30	31	29
1	Haven't heard of **(VOL.)**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1	Refused **(VOL.)**	1	1	1	1	*	1	1
--	*Not heard of Tea Party/Don't know*	*13*	*16*	*13*	*21*	*27*	*25*	*31*

NO QUESTION 77

QUESTIONS 78-84 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:
PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?
ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):
PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	**(VOL.)** No preference	**(VOL.)** Other party	**(VOL.)** DK/Ref	*Lean Rep*	*Lean Dem*
Nov 4-7, 2010	26	30	37	4	*	2	*17*	*13*
Oct 27-30, 2010	25	34	31	6	1	4	*13*	*11*
Oct 13-18, 2010	25	31	36	4	*	3	16	13
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	24	32	39	2	*	2	15	17
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	26	33	34	4	*	3	14	14
Jun 16-20, 2010	27	34	34	3	1	2	15	15
Apr 21-26, 2010	26	33	36	3	1	3	16	13
Mar 11-21, 2010	28	34	32	3	*	3	13	12
Mar 10-14, 2010	22	33	37	6	*	3	14	13
Feb 3-9, 2010	26	31	37	3	*	3	14	17
Jan 6-10, 2010	22	33	42	2	1	2	17	16
Yearly Totals								
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6

[2] In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May through October, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March it was described as "the Tea Party Protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	**(VOL.)** No preference	**(VOL.)** Other party	**(VOL.)** DK/Ref	*Lean Rep*	*Lean Dem*
2001 Post-Sept 11	*30.9*	*31.8*	*27.9*	*5.2*	*.6*	*3.6*	*11.7*	*9.4*
2001 Pre-Sept 11	*27.3*	*34.4*	*30.9*	*5.1*	*.6*	*1.7*	*12.1*	*13.5*
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

QUESTIONS 85-86 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX
NOVEMBER 4-7, 2010 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=996

PEW.1-PEW.5 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:
On a different subject…
PEW.6 Thinking about US trade policy with other countries. Do you think increased trade with **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]** would be good for the United States, or not? How about increased trade with **[NEXT ITEM]**?

		Good for the U.S.	Bad for the U.S.	**(VOL.)** DK/Ref
a.	Brazil			
	Nov 4-7, 2010	53	31	17
b.	Canada			
	Nov 4-7, 2010	76	14	9
c.	China			
	Nov 4-7, 2010	45	46	9
d.	Mexico			
	Nov 4-7, 2010	52	37	11
e.	South Korea			
	Nov 4-7, 2010	45	41	14
f.	Japan			
	Nov 4-7, 2010	60	30	10
g.	The countries of the European Union			
	Nov 4-7, 2010	58	28	14
h.	India[3]			
	Nov 4-7, 2010	55	32	12

PEW.7 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

[3] Asked November 5-7 [N=696].