

Resolve & apprehension: 76% say Canada was right to ditch trade talks, but two-in-five have fear for their jobs

Two-thirds say despite the turbulence ahead, nation will ultimately emerge “stronger”

August 23, 2026 – Three-in-four Canadians are endorsing the Carney government's decision to walk away from trade negotiations with the United States late Friday night, confirming that long-expressed national resolve and desire to see Canadian negotiators take a “[hard line](#)” with [Washington](#) was more than theoretical.

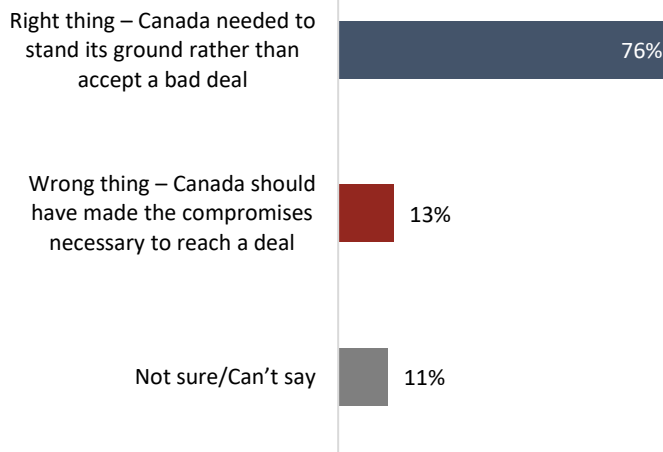
New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds that support for Ottawa's stance is at majority levels in every province in the country, bottoming out at 65 per cent in Saskatchewan and 67 per cent in Alberta.

There is also more agreement than one typically finds across the political spectrum. Half (53%) of those who voted Conservative in the 2025 federal election say it was “right” to walk away rather than accept a bad deal.

There is also strong backing for the dollar-for-dollar retaliatory tariffs that have been threatened against the U.S. but not yet implemented pending a Sept. 8 deadline, with three-in-five (62%) calling Canada's counter-tariffs “about right under the circumstances”.

But serious worries about job loss temper the defiance. One-in-eight (13%) Canadian workers say they are “very” concerned about losing their own job, with a further 25 per cent expressing some level of anxiety. This, as industry experts predict a no-deal situation for Canada will cost [the economy 0.4 per cent of GDP](#) and as many as [90,000 jobs](#).

Overall, based on what you have seen, read or heard so far, do you think Canada did the right thing or the wrong thing by refusing the terms being offered and ending negotiations without a trade agreement?
(All respondents, n=1,468)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Aug. 22-23, 2026, among a randomized sample of 1,468 Canadian adults. Respondents are drawn from the [Angus Reid Forum](#), a large-scale online panel developed to include Canadian residents in each of the 343 federal ridings in Canada and representative of the Canadian population by age, gender, family income, ethnic status and education. The sample was weighted to be representative of adults nationwide according to region, gender, age, household income, and education, based on the Canadian census. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

For more information on our polling methods, [click here](#).

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org
Jon Roe, Senior Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

That said, most (64%) do believe the country will emerge from this challenging time stronger as Canada reduces its dependence on the United States. One-quarter (26%) disagree and worry it will be difficult to overcome the damage to the relationship with Canada's most important trading partner.

More Key Findings:

- Three-in-five (59%) say Canada had little (47%) or no (12%) control over “whether an acceptable trade agreement was reached with the United States”.
- Seven-in-ten (69%), including nearly all 2025 Liberal voters (95%), most NDP voters (76%) and two-in-five (43%) CPC voters, say Carney showed “strength by refusing to accept terms he believed were not in Canada's interests”. One-in-five Canadians (19%), and two-in-five (43%) past CPC voters, say instead he showed “poor judgement” in not getting a deal done with further compromises.
- Nine-in-ten (89%) are “very concerned” (41%) or concerned (48%) that the escalating trade dispute will have an impact on the cost of goods and services in Canada. A similar number (88%) worry over the impact on Canada's economy as a whole.

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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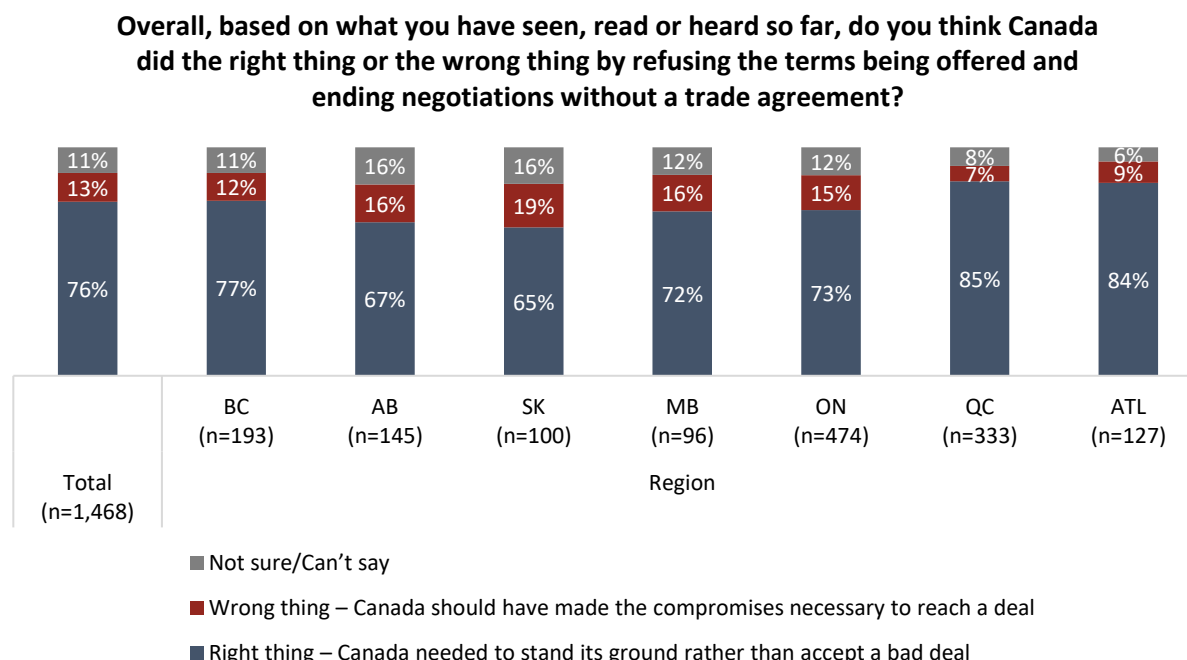
Part One: Resolve and steadfastness

Three-quarters say it was 'right' to end negotiations

Trade talks between Canada and the United States collapsed on Friday night prior to a deadline set by U.S. President Donald Trump. Prime Minister Mark Carney said afterward that the U.S. had tried to impose last-minute changes he believed were unfair and uneconomic, including issues over auto tariffs, restrictions demanded by the U.S. on future Canada trade deals, and "efforts to restrict our protections of our language, our culture and in effect our sovereignty".

Canada is now subject to the so-called section 338 tariffs threatened by Trump; Carney has said Canada will respond with "dollar-for-dollar" tariffs of its own.

Canadians by a five-to-one ratio believe it was the right move (76%) for Canada to walk away from trade negotiations with the United States rather than the wrong one (13%). And at least two-thirds in every province in the country believe that to be the case:



Majority say outcome was out of Canada's control

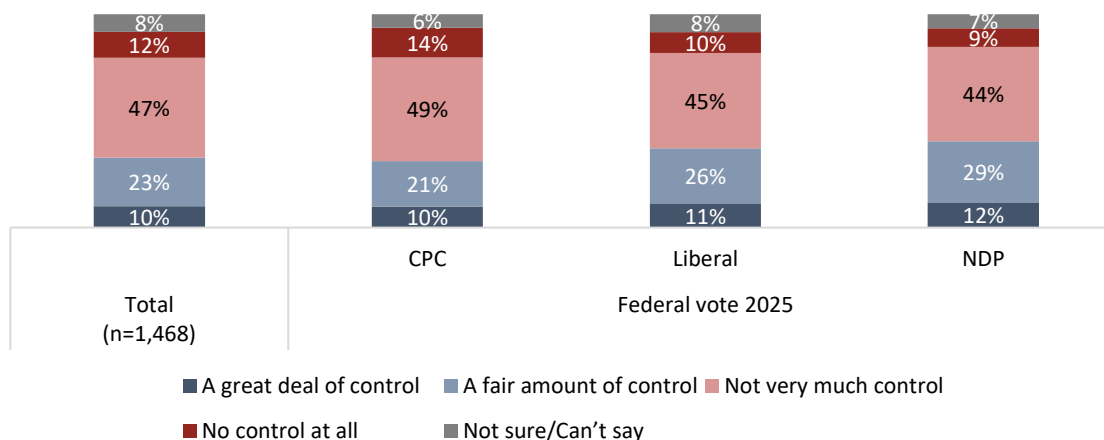
There is also widespread belief that whether or not a deal will be reached is more up to the United States than Canada. Three-in-five (59%) say Canada had "not very much" or "no control at all" on whether an acceptable agreement would be reached with the United States. And this belief is held at equal levels across the political spectrum.

Note Bloc Québécois voters are not included in the graph due to a small sample size.

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How much control do you think Canada really had over whether an acceptable trade agreement was reached with the United States?



Seven-in-10 say Carney showed 'strength' in ending negotiations

Consistently, data from the Angus Reid Institute has shown that Canadians wanted their country to stand firm in negotiations with the United States rather than offering concessions to get a deal done. In July, when Trump first threatened the section 338 tariffs, a majority (62%) of Canadians wanted Canada to respond with counter-tariffs of its own. And throughout the past 20 months of U.S.-Canada trade turmoil, more than three-in-five wanted Canada to take a "hard" approach to trade negotiations, refusing difficult concessions.

Related:

- [Liberals ascend to 13-point lead in vote intention as Canadians continue to demand hard line on U.S. trade](#)
- [Canadian resolve unshaken in face of trade threats; majority have confidence in negotiators to deliver deal](#)
- [As most Canadians rebuke Trump tariff threat and call for retaliation, confidence in PM to get a good deal declines](#)

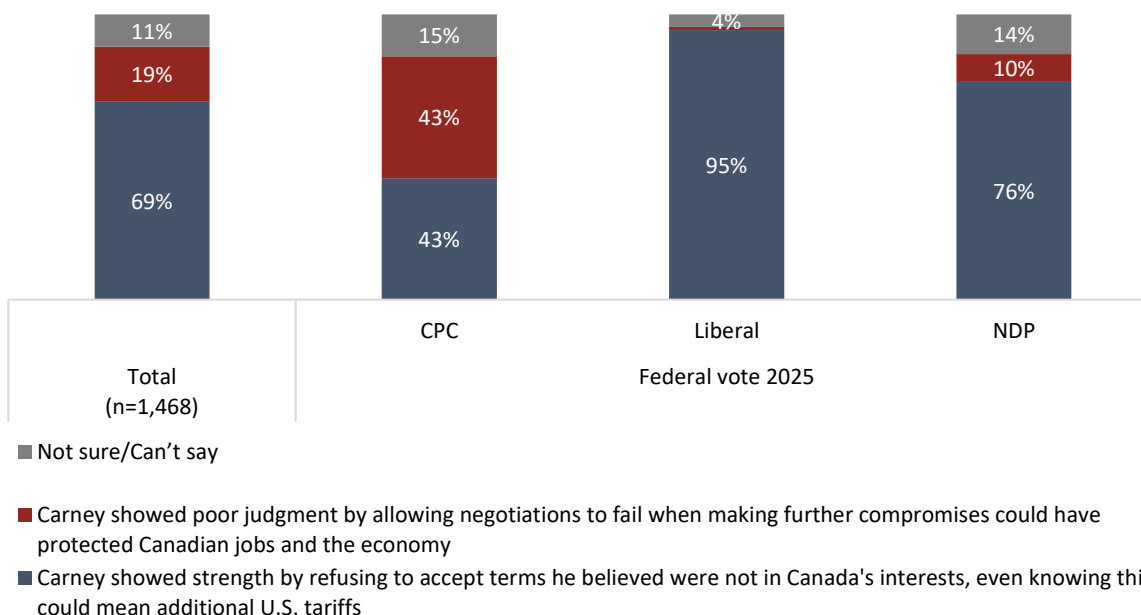
It is perhaps no surprise, then, that as the latest round of trade negotiations end with escalation rather than amelioration that Canadians are praising Carney rather than criticizing him for failing to secure a deal. Seven-in-ten (69%) say the Prime Minister showed "strength by refusing to accept terms he believed were not in Canada's interests". One-in-five disagree (19%), believing instead Carney showed "poor judgement".

Although those who voted Conservative in the 2025 federal election are more likely than others to criticize Carney, they are overall split as to whether it was strength (43%) rather than poor judgement (43%). Almost no past Liberal (1%) and few past NDP (10%) voters believe Carney should have made further compromises instead of allowing negotiations to fail:

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Which of the following comes closer to your view of Carney's approach?



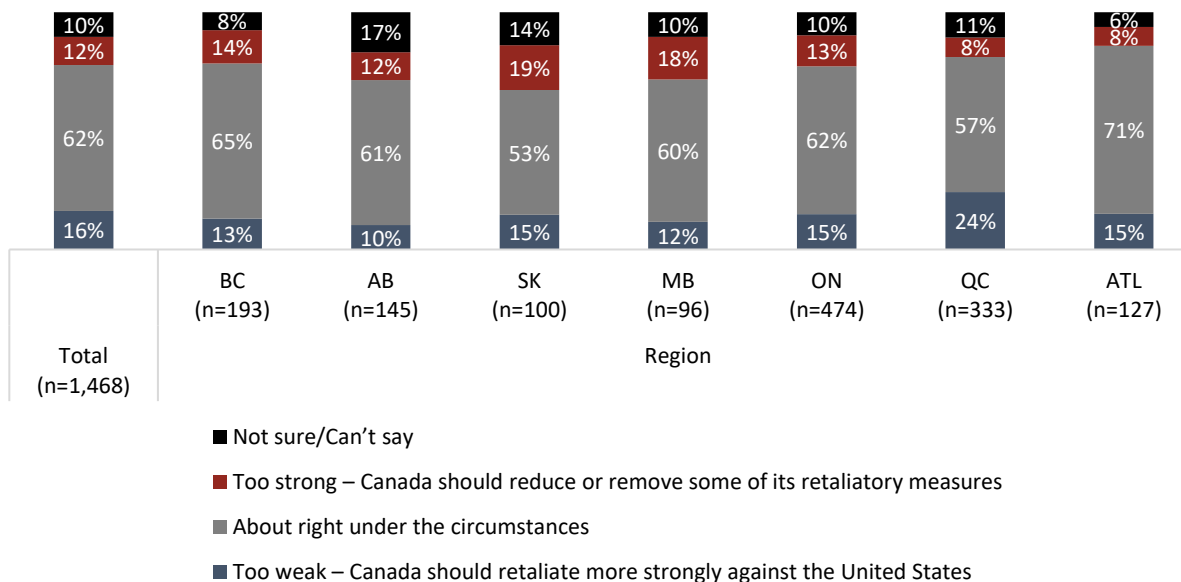
Dollar-for-dollar counter-tariffs appropriate, say three-in-five

The Tuesday after labour day, Canada will slap dollar-for-dollar counter tariffs on the United States focusing on [steel, dairy, appliances, agricultural equipment, pulp, paper and electronics](#). A majority believe Canada's response is "right under the circumstances" rather than too strong (12%) or too weak (16%). There is at least half in every province in the country who believe Carney has made the right move by responding with these new tariffs:

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Canada has announced it will respond with dollar-for-dollar tariffs on U.S. goods. Thinking about the circumstances, would you say Canada's response is...



Part Two: Anxiety and Fear

Two-in-five Canadian workers worry about losing their job

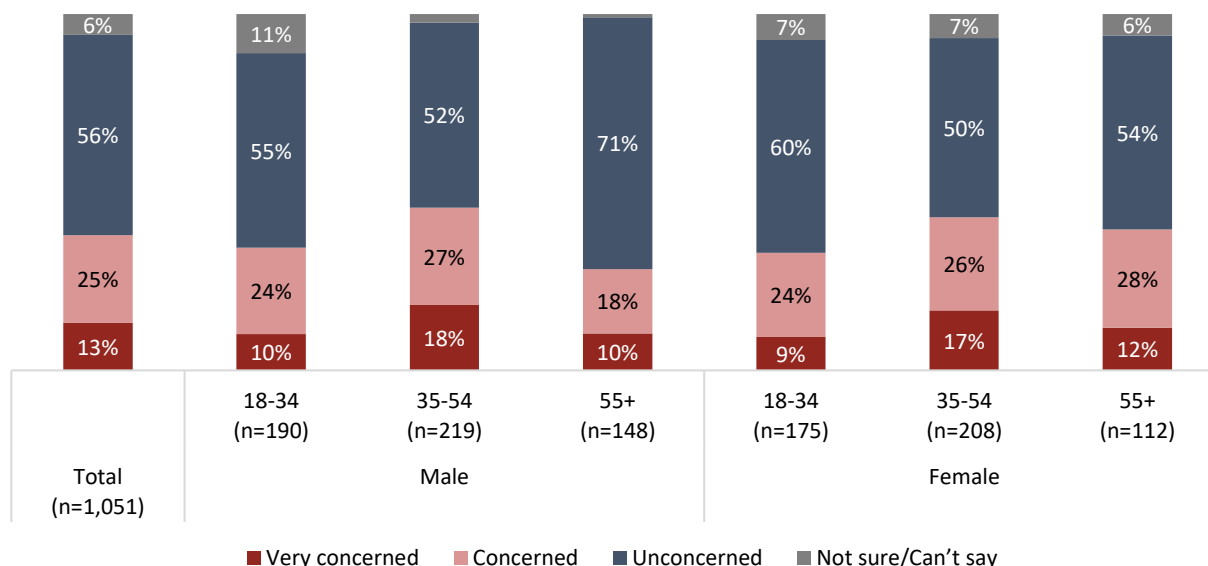
Carney promised \$25 billion in federal government funding “[to protect Canadian workers and businesses hurt by American tariffs](#)”, an acknowledgement that the escalation of the trade dispute with the United States would likely come with an economic cost to Canadians.

Approaching two-in-five (38%) Canadians in the labour force say they are worried the trade dispute will affect their own job, including one-in-eight (13%) who say they are “very concerned”:

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**How concerned are you, if at all, about the impact of the Canada-U.S. trade dispute on your own job security?
(Among Canadian workers)**



Concern high on potential impact on inflation, Canada's economy

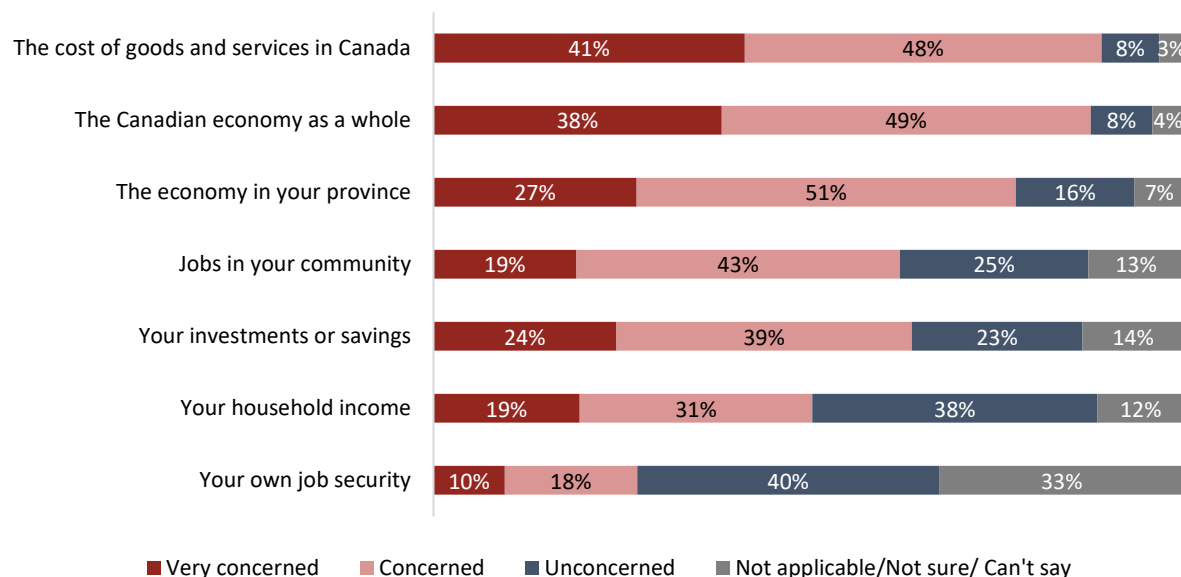
And as the cost of living continues to rank as Canadians' top issue, there is also approaching nine-in-ten (89%) who say they worry that this will cause inflation. Carney, when announcing that Canada would match U.S. tariffs dollar-for-dollar, said he was doing so "reluctantly, because we recognise that some of these measures will raise costs and reduce choice for Canadians."

Two-in-five (38%) are also very concerned the trade war escalation will impact the Canadian economy. There is less, but still elevated concern from Canadians about the potential impact on their province's economy. One-quarter (24%) worry over how the continuing trade dispute will impact their savings:

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**How concerned are you, if at all, about the impact of the Canada-U.S. trade dispute on each of the following?
(All respondents, n=1,468)**



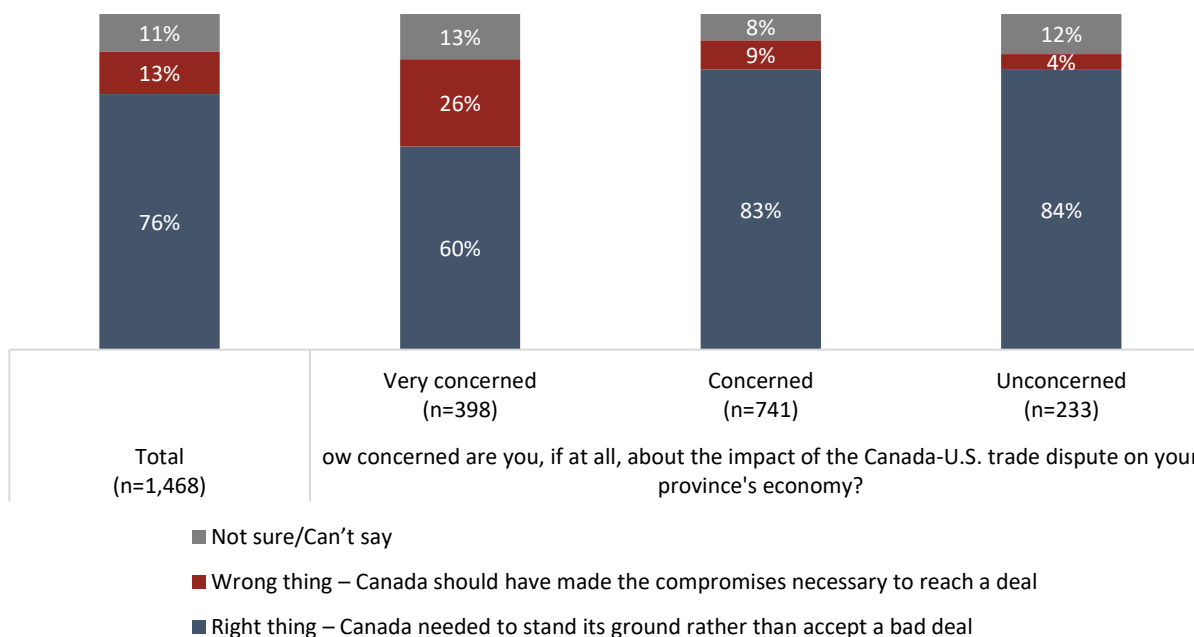
Those concerned about provincial economy more likely to say it was 'wrong' to walk away

There appears to be some correlation between wanting to make concessions to get a deal done and worry over the dispute's effect on provincial economies. Canadians who say they are "very concerned" with how the U.S.-Canada trade war will affect their province are twice as likely as others to say it was the "wrong" decision to stop negotiations. But a majority (60%) do believe it was the right move currently even if they are "very" concerned about how it will impact their province:

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Overall, based on what you have seen, read or heard so far, do you think Canada did the right thing or the wrong thing by refusing the terms being offered and ending negotiations without a trade agreement?



Part Three: Looking Ahead

Canadians could be forgiven for their pessimism at this point in the trade saga. After failing to honour the terms of the agreement he signed in his first term, President Trump has overseen 18 months of largely fruitless talks with his nation's largest trading partner.

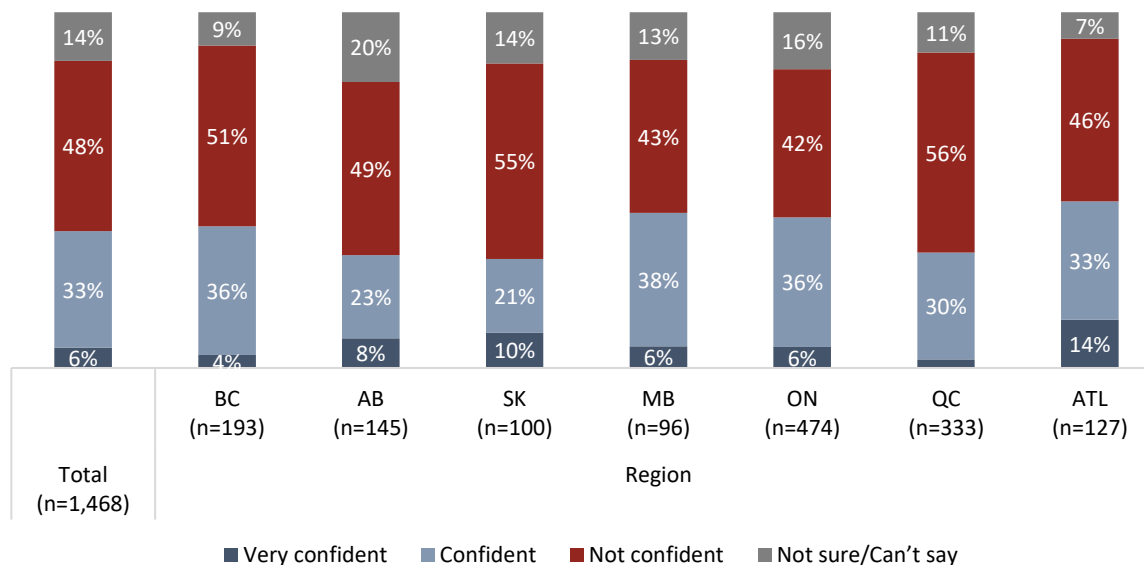
Half aren't confident there will be a deal

If and when talks to resume, Canadians lack confidence that a deal will be produced with Trump in office. Half say they're not confident outright, while 14 per cent are unsure. Six per cent are very confident that this is just a bump on the road to a deal, while one-in-three are confident (33%):

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How confident are you that Canada and the United States will eventually be able to reach a new trade agreement?



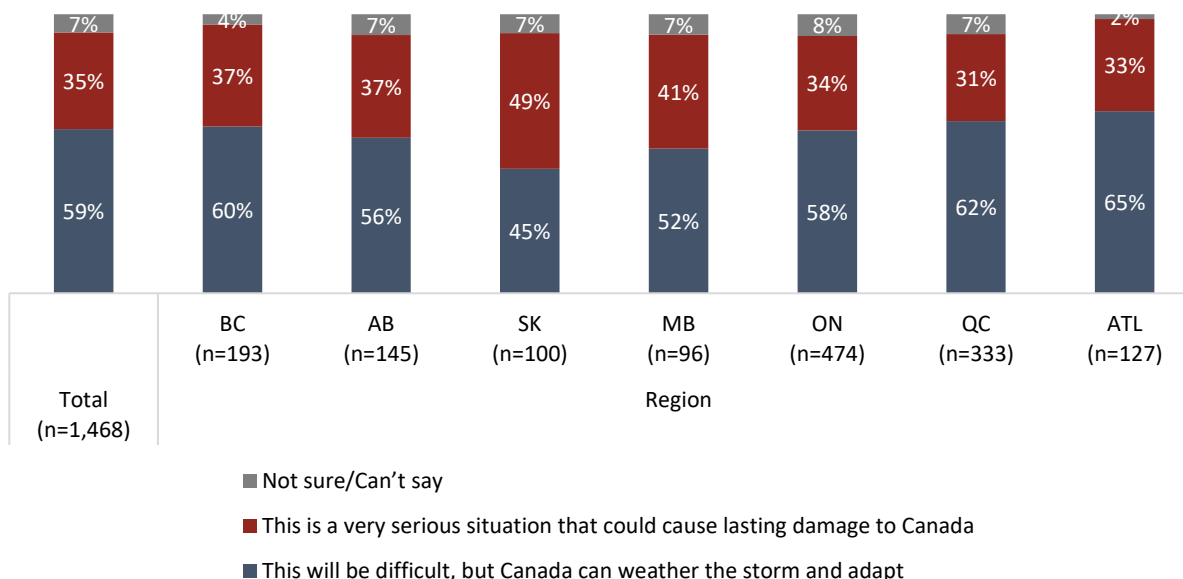
Three-in-five believe Canada can 'weather the storm'

The economic impacts of this trade war will be forthcoming, if no deal is signed in the near term. Billions in tariffs and counter-tariffs are certain to raise prices and test an already precarious job market in this country. Still, for most Canadians, resolve is the word of the day. Three-in-five (59%) say that Canada can weather the storm and adapt, while fewer, but still one-in-three (35%) say this is going to do lasting damage. Excepting Saskatchewan, Canadians in every province across the country are more likely than to believe Canada can weather the storm rather than experience lasting harm from the trade dispute:

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Which of these better describes how you feel about Canada facing a prolonged trade conflict with the United States?



Two-thirds say Canada will emerge from dispute 'stronger'

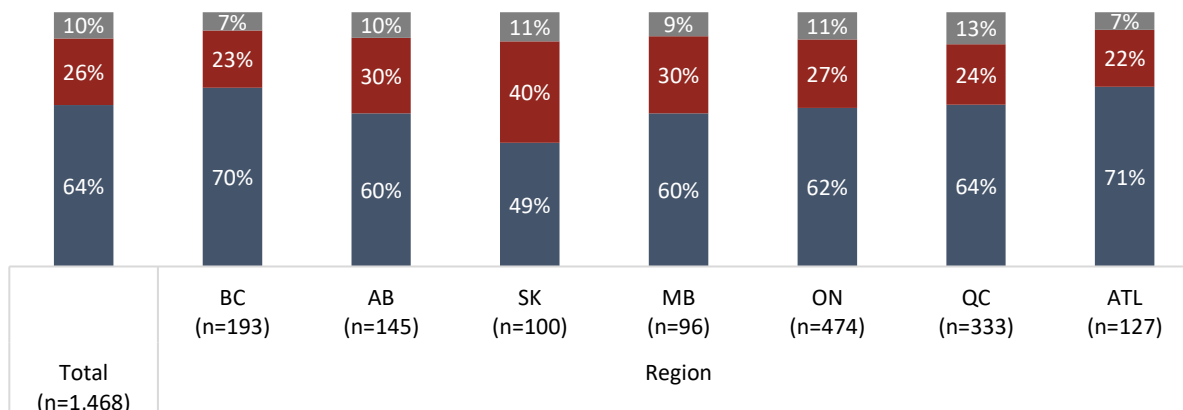
Reducing dependence on the United States has been a major factor in policy and communication from the Carney government since its election in 2025. The government claims to have "[signed more than 20 trade and security deals across five continents](#)" over the last year.

Evidently, most Canadians feel this groundwork will make Canada stronger in the long term. Two-thirds (64%), including at least half in every province in the country, say that this country will emerge better off by becoming less dependent on the U.S., while one-quarter (26%) say this is going to leave Canada weaker:

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Thinking about the longer term, which of the following comes closer to your own view?



■ Not sure/Can't say

■ This trade crisis will leave Canada weaker, because the economic and diplomatic damage to its relationship with its most important trading partner will be difficult to overcome

■ This trade crisis will ultimately make Canada stronger, by forcing the country to become less dependent on the United States and develop new economic partnerships

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

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