

Canada-U.S. trade: Fewer say talks should resume quickly, amidst division over Canada's negotiating strength

PM Carney gets a "Trump Bump" with approval rising 11 points to 62%

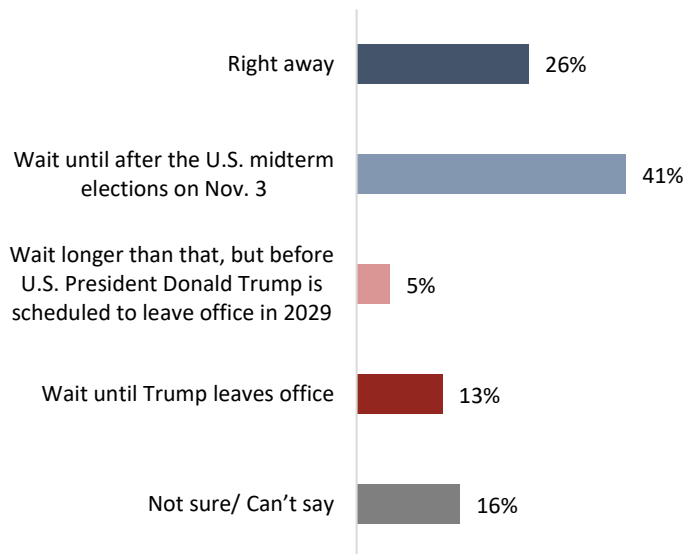
September 8, 2026 – Canada's latest rupture with the United States appears to have delivered Prime Minister Mark Carney another political boost, even as Canadians remain deeply uncertain about the country's leverage in its escalating trade fight with Washington.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds three-in-five Canadians (62%) now approve of Carney's performance, up 11 points from August and approaching his previous high-water mark. The rise comes after [three-quarters of Canadians said last month](#) that Carney was right to walk away from negotiations in the face of new U.S. demands. Despite this renewed support for the prime minister, Canadians are divided over Canada's bargaining power. Three-in-10 (31%) say the country is in a strong negotiating position, while 34 per cent say it is weak one. One-in-five (22%) see the two countries as evenly matched.

Uncertainty over Canada's position, however, has done little to soften public appetite for a harder line. Nearly three-quarters (73%) say Canada should refuse difficult concessions even if it means worsening trade relations with the United States – the highest level measured by ARI since the dispute began. Majorities also oppose further concessions on U.S. dairy access, while more Canadians say Ottawa should insist on the complete removal of tariffs on Canadian vehicles than would accept a deal that merely reduces them.

That resolve persists even when Canadians are asked to contemplate the economic consequences of a prolonged fight. Three-in-five say Canada should stay the course even if household costs rise by 10 or 20 per cent, while half would hold the line through a recession or the closure of local small businesses. And

In your opinion, when should Canada return to the trade negotiating table with the United States?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from September 3 - 4, 2026, among a randomized sample of 1,498 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.](#)

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with the U.S. midterm elections now looming, relatively few are in a hurry to restart negotiations, feeling that Canada may have a stronger position if Trump is weakened by the results. One-quarter (26%) say Canada should return to the table right away, while a plurality (41%) would wait until after Americans vote in November. One-in-eight (13%) would wait until Trump is (presumably) gone after the 2028 election.

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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Carney sees significant approval boost

After trade negotiations fell apart in August, it appears Canada and the U.S. are locked into a climbing elevator of a trade conflict. The first stop on the ascent: [Sept. 8](#), when Canada will impose a series of retaliatory tariffs matching the value of the goods tariffed by U.S. President Donald Trump on Aug. 22. The next floor will be reached [on Jan. 1](#), when Trump's threatened 50 per cent tariffs on Canadian vehicles are scheduled to take effect.

In rapid reaction data released by the Angus Reid Institute after talks fell apart, three-quarters of Canadians said Prime Minister Mark Carney's decision to walk away from talks due to last minute U.S. demands was the right call.

Related:

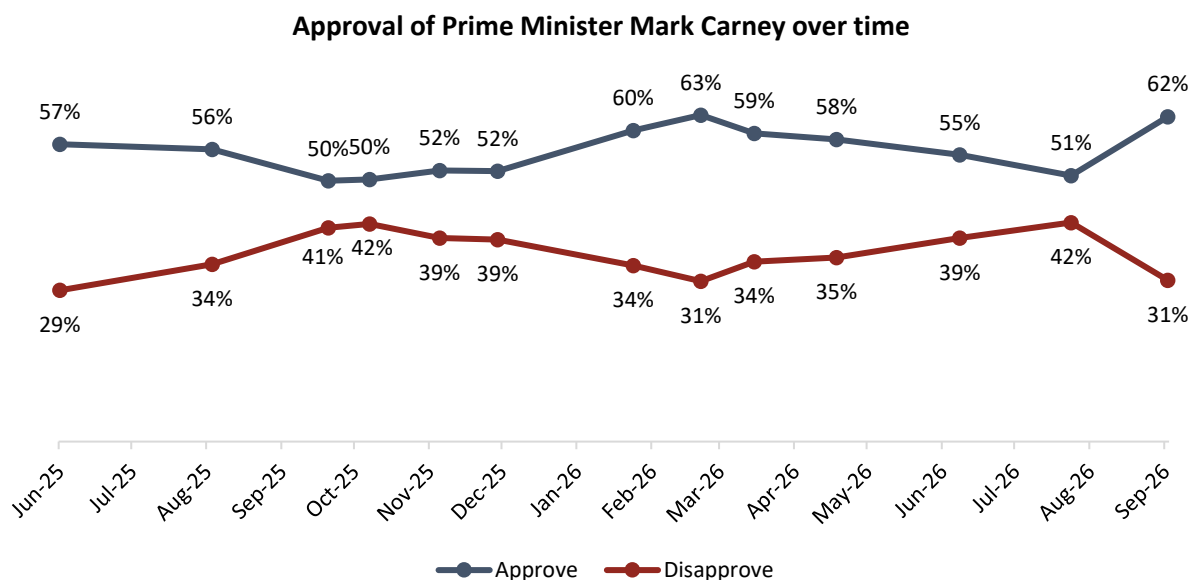
- [**Resolve & apprehension: 76% say Canada was right to ditch trade talks**](#)
- [**Canadians describe their feelings about the latest wave of the tariff storm**](#)

New data from ARI shows that Carney's refusal to kowtow to the U.S. in the previous round of negotiations has improved his standing among Canadians. Three-in-five (62%) say they approve of the prime minister's performance, a figure which approaches Carney's record high of 63 per cent, seen earlier this year in the wake of his widely well-received speech in Davos.

Carney enjoys majority approval in every province in the country except Saskatchewan ([see detailed tables](#)).

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However, Canadians do not see their negotiating position as very strong

Still, there is much apprehension among Canadians in the latest chapter in the trade war with the United States. Equal sized groups of Canadians believe the country's negotiating position is strong (31%) as weak (34%). One-in-five (22%) say the U.S. and Canada are on even footing.

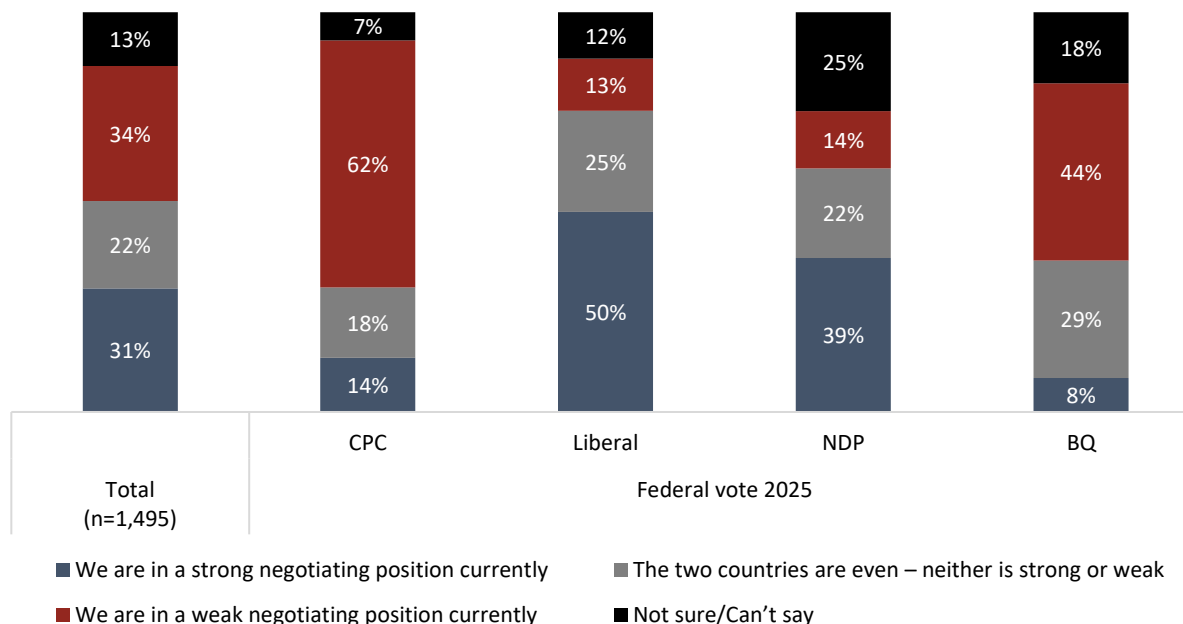
Politics is a strong delineator when it comes to assessments of the standing of the trade war. Three-in-five of those who voted CPC in 2025 say the U.S. has the upper hand; half of past Liberal voters (50%) disagree.

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Based on what you have read, seen, or heard, do you think Canada has a strong or a weak negotiating position relative to the United States?



But a hard approach is still vastly preferred to concessions

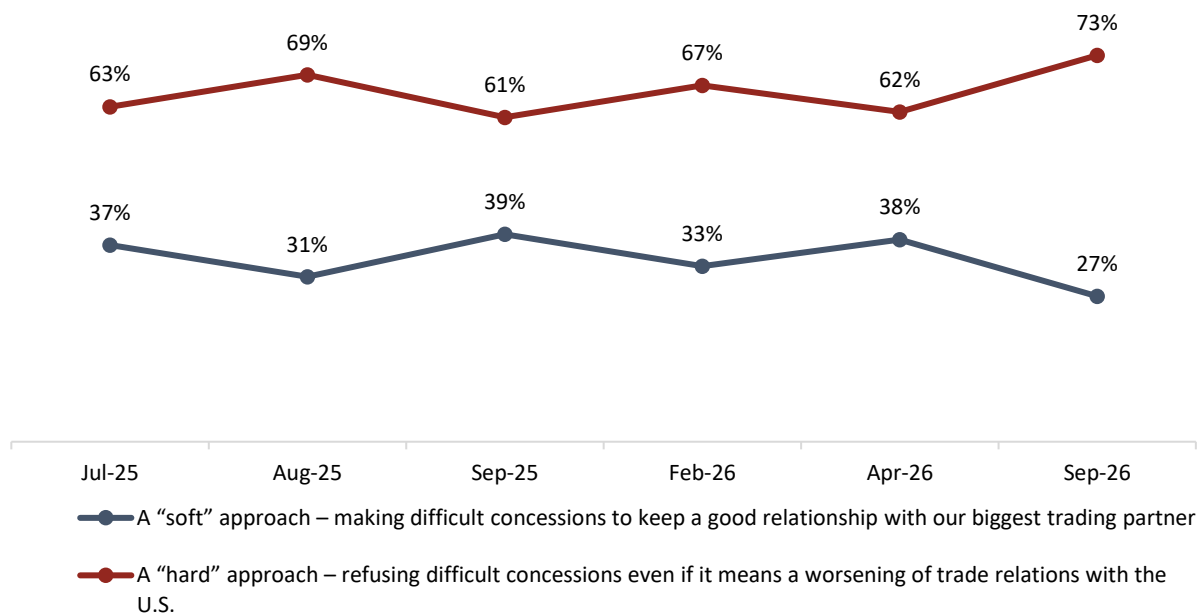
Regardless of relative strength, there is a growing appetite among Canadians for their country to dig in. Three-quarters (73%) say Canada should refuse difficult concessions even if it means a further deterioration in the country's relationship with the United States; one-quarter (27%) prefer Canada to soften its stance to ameliorate Trump and the U.S.

This is the largest proportion of Canadians who have wanted a "hard" approach since the trade war began:

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Which of these overall approaches would you say Canada should take to negotiations going forward?



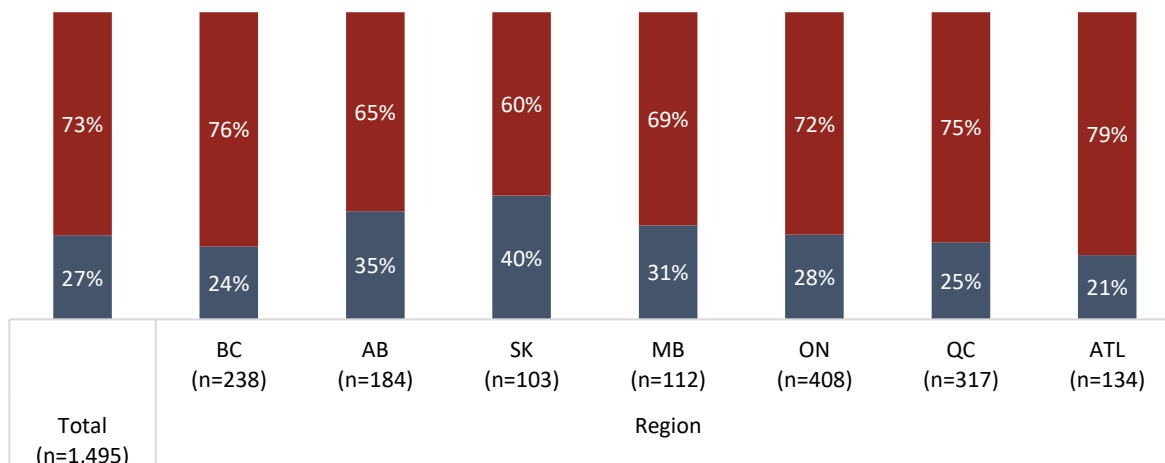
There are a majority in every province in the country who want Canada to stand strong and refuse concessions in the trade war.

While there is regional majorities, there are political disagreements. Past Conservative voters are evenly divided between preferring a soft (49%) and hard (51%) approach. There is little appetite for concessions among past Liberal (8%), NDP (12%) or Bloc Québécois (18%) voters ([see detailed tables](#)).

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Which of these overall approaches would you say Canada should take to negotiations going forward?



- A “hard” approach – refusing difficult concessions even if it means a worsening of trade relations with the U.S.
- A “soft” approach – making difficult concessions to keep a good relationship with our biggest trading partner

Alcohol

The desire for Canada to hold its ground on U.S. trade demands extends to key industries under discussion over the past few months.

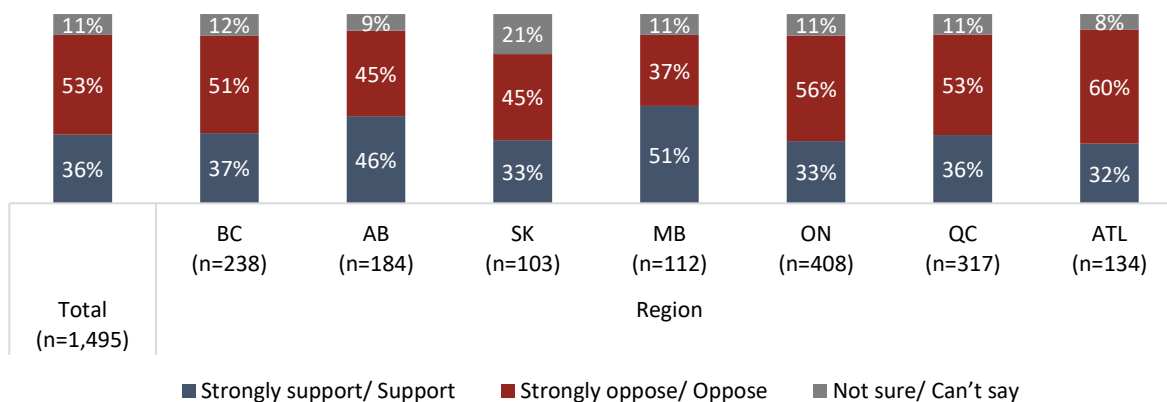
The ban of U.S. alcohol sales in some provinces has remained an irritant for American trade negotiators and might have been a concession made by Canada if not for the dissolution of negotiations. Carney reportedly told the country’s premiers to put American alcohol back on the shelves when he briefed them in the midst of negotiations.

The move would have been an unpopular one among Canadians. One-third (36%) say they support their province selling U.S. alcohol. In July, three-in-five (59%) Canadians told ARI they “probably” or “definitely” wouldn’t buy American wine, beer or spirits even if it was available to them.

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Suppose the U.S. asked that its alcohol be returned to the shelves across Canada as a condition of returning to the negotiating table, would you support or oppose your province selling U.S. alcohol?



Cars

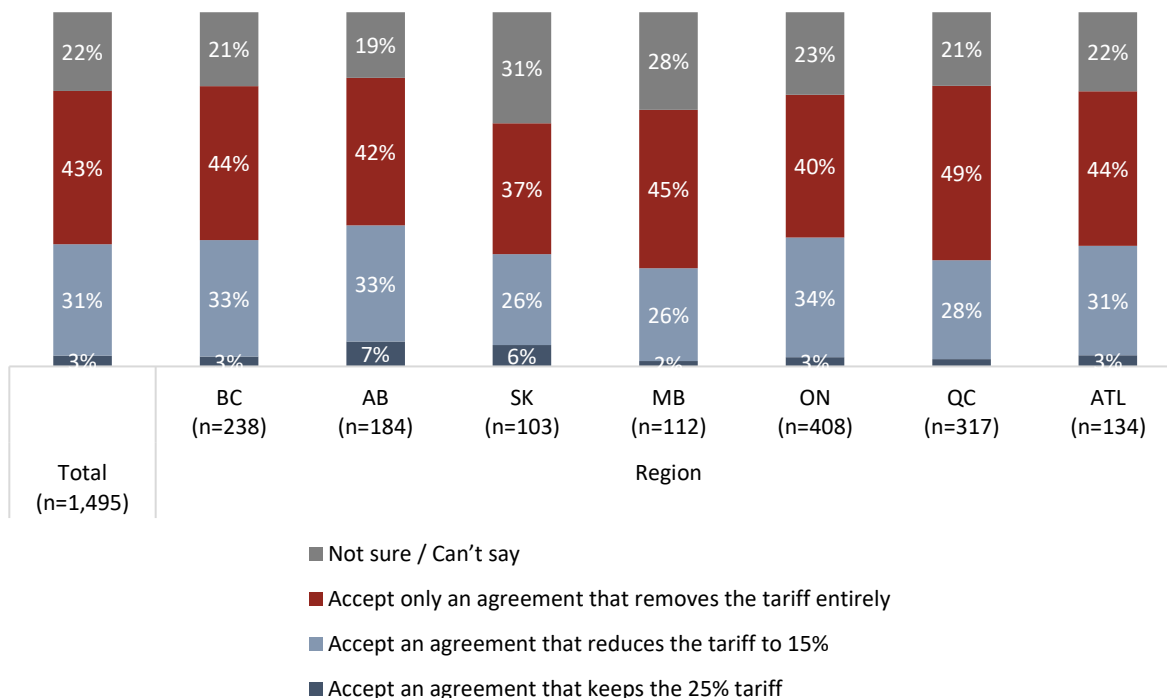
In the previous round of negotiations, tariffs on Canadian vehicles were set to fall to 15 per cent, although which categories of autos that would get relief was apparently a point of contention. A plurality (43%) of Canadians say Canada should only accept a trade agreement which entirely removes tariffs on Canadian cars, outnumbering those who believe a deal would be acceptable even if it only reduced them (31%):

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If it were up to you, which of the following options should Canada accept as part of a trade agreement with the United States?



Dairy

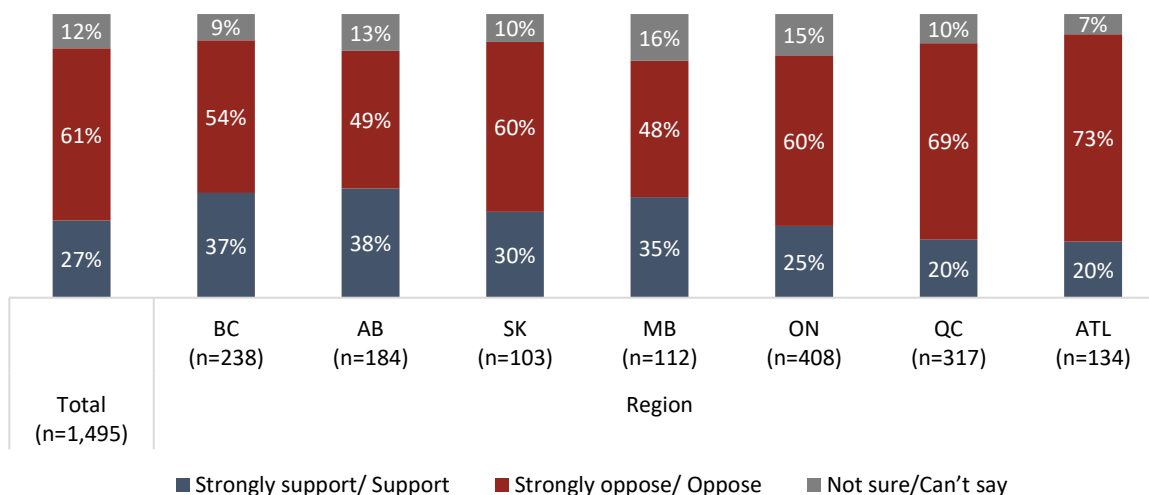
When Trump claimed his country had a deal with Canada prior to negotiations breaking down, he said tariffs on American farm goods are “[going to be eviscerated down to zero](#)”. Canada’s supply management system has long been a source of ire for Trump. Canada sets import quotas on American dairy products which are subject to tariffs if they surpass the quota. Those quotas have never been met, [according to the U.S.-based International Dairy Foods Association](#).

Canadians oppose softening the rules on American dairy any further by a two-to-one margin:

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Would you support or oppose making Canada changing its rules to make it easier for U.S. dairy producers to sell milk, cheese and other dairy products in Canada as a part of a future trade deal?



Canadian's appetite for economic pain

The sizable desire among Canadians for Canada to go to the trenches in the trade war with the U.S. is matched by a willingness to endure some amount of personal economic pain.

Three-in-five (60%) say they are willing to stay the course on Canada's current negotiating strategy even if it means their household expenses increase by 10 or 20 per cent.

Half say Canada should hold the line even if the country enters a recession (52%) or small businesses in their communities close (50%).

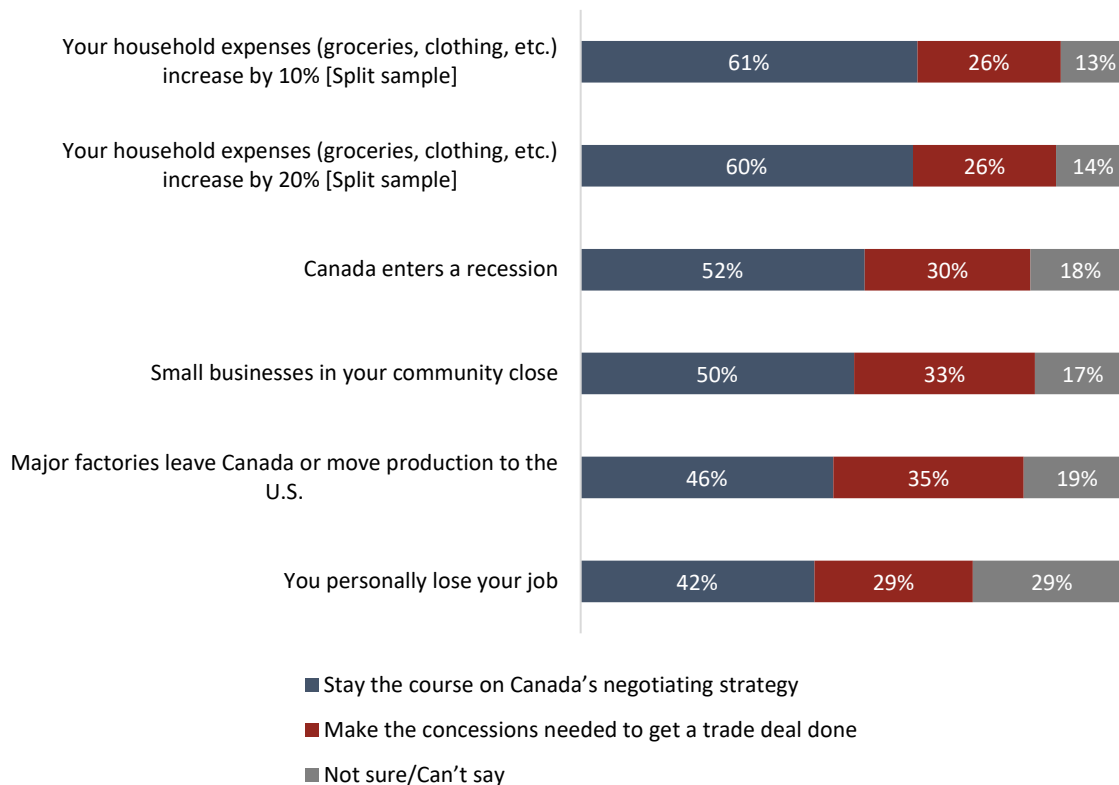
The desire to keep fighting shrinks, but is still at a plurality level, even if major factories leave the country (46%) or Canadians personally lose their job (42%):

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**If any of the following hypothetical situations happened as a result of this trade dispute, would you want Canada to stay the course in its negotiating strategy, or make the concessions needed to get a trade deal done?
(All respondents, n=1,495)**



Men aged 35- to 54-years-old are more likely than others to say they would prefer Canada make concessions if it meant a significant rise in household expenses, a recession, or the loss of major factories. Older men and women express more willingness for Canada to hold the line across all the hypothetical scenarios ARI presented them with:

Percentage who say they would want Canada to 'make concessions needed to get a trade deal done' if the following hypothetical scenarios happened							
	Total (n=1,495)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=209)	35-54 (n=249)	55+ (n=279)	18-34 (n=203)	35-54 (n=253)	55+ (n=302)
Your household expenses (groceries, clothing, etc.) increase by 10% [Split sample]	26%	29%	30%	18%	46%	30%	11%
Your household expenses (groceries, clothing, etc.) increase by 20% [Split sample]	26%	24%	42%	24%	37%	20%	15%

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Canada enters a recession	30%	27%	39%	24%	42%	36%	18%
Small businesses in your community close	33%	29%	41%	29%	39%	38%	25%
Major factories leave Canada or move production to the U.S.	35%	32%	46%	34%	36%	34%	27%
You personally lose your job	29%	29%	38%	20%	39%	36%	16%

Most wouldn't go back to the table until at least post-midterms

Carney said Canada is ready to sit down to continue negotiations “[when the Americans are ready](#)”. However, there is a coming political inflexion point which may improve Canada's position: the U.S. midterm elections. The American electorate's disquiet with Trump may work against the Republicans in congress and the senate, changing the make-up of both houses and putting pressure on the president.

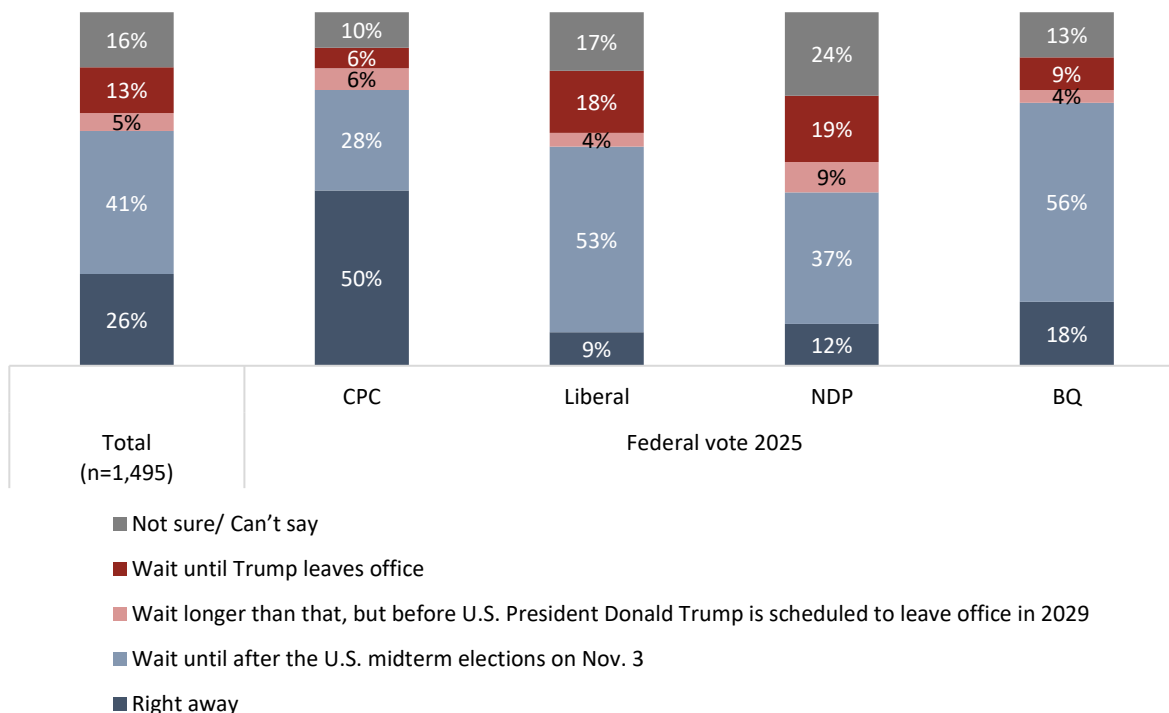
Related: [Congressional generic ballot: Democrats lead 53-43](#)

A plurality of Canadians say their country should wait until after the midterms to resume negotiations with the U.S. One-quarter (26%), including half of past Conservative voters, would prefer talks restarted right away. Fewer than one-in-five (18%) Canadians would wait much longer than November to return to the negotiating tables, including a group of one-in-eight (13%) who believe Canada should wait until after Trump is scheduled to leave office in 2029:

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In your opinion, when should Canada return to the trade negotiating table with the United States?



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

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