



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND



Globalization and Trade

A STUDY OF AMERICAN ATTITUDES

**Conducted by the Program for Public Consultation,
School of Public Policy, University of Maryland**

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, to the extent that international trade and globalization has been a partisan issue, Democratic leaders have taken the lead in criticizing its negative effects on US workers. Republicans have been relatively protective of the growth of trade, even joining with Democratic presidents to pass free trade legislation such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

In the 2016 presidential campaign the subject of trade and globalization loomed remarkably large and in an unusual way. While some Democratic candidates were critical of US trade policy, Republican candidate Donald Trump launched an intense attack on US trade policy, largely in the name of American workers (see below).

Earlier polling has shown that despite elite polarization, among the American public, views have not been highly polarized. The aim of this study is to determine public attitudes on trade and globalization, including partisan alignments, in the wake of the 2016 election, both immediately after the election and ten months later.

Design of the Study

To determine the effect of the 2016 election trend line questions were drawn from polls conducted by the Program for Public Consultation in 1999 and 2004 (then called the Program on International Policy Attitudes). The poll was fielded in two waves, one shortly after the election, and the other ten months later.

	Wave 1	Wave 2
Fielding Dates:	Dec. 6 - 21, 2016	Aug. 28 - Sept. 7, 2017
Sample Size:	1633 Americans	2745 Americans
Margin of error:	+/- 2.4%*	+/-1.9%*
*A small number of questions were half sampled, so the MoE was of 3.4% in December and 2.6% in August.		

The survey was fielded online to a probability-based sample provided by Nielsen-Scarborough drawn from its panel recruited by phone and mail from a random sample of households.

Weighting: Responses were weighted by age, income, gender, education, race, partisan affiliation and geographic region. Benchmarks were obtained from US Census' Current Population Survey.

FROM THE 2016 CAMPAIGN SPEECHES OF DONALD TRUMP

"I'm asking for the votes of ... all Americans who are tired of a government that works for Wall Street but not THE PEOPLE."

"I'm going to renegotiate our disastrous trade deals, especially NAFTA – and we will only make great trade deals that put the American worker first."

"When you see the kind of deals made in our country, a lot of those deals are made because the politicians aren't so stupid. They're making them for their benefit."

"It is no great secret that many of the special interests funding my opponent's campaign are the same people profiting from these terrible trade deals."

"The verdict is in. All of the special interests that the media race to for comment have been proven wrong about every single deal they've promoted – every lie and every prediction has crashed upon the rocks of reality."

"Too many of our leaders have forgotten that it's their duty to protect the jobs, wages and well-being of American workers before any other consideration."

"The most important difference between our plan and that of our opponents, is that our plan will put America First. Americanism, not globalism, will be our credo."

"A Trump Administration will end this war on the American worker."



KEY FINDINGS

Views of Trade and Globalization in Principle

In principle, large bipartisan majorities approve of the US reciprocally lowering trade barriers with other countries. Views of the growth of international trade and globalization are mildly positive. While Republican views of trade dipped in 2016 they have since recovered, though Democratic views are more positive.

Assessment of US Trade Policymakers

Majorities of Americans voters say that US trade policymakers give too little consideration to the concerns of the Americans people and American workers, and to what is good for the American economy. However, they are perceived as fully taking into account the interests of multinational corporations. Among Trump voters these views reached overwhelming levels in the December 2016 wave and have only partially moderated since.

Negative Consequences of Trade Policies

Presumably due to the perceived inadequacies in US trade policy, majorities perceive that trade has increased the gap between rich and poor, has been negative for jobs and American workers, and has benefitted other countries more than the US.

Should Trade Be Slowed?

The majority of Americans overall, and a large majority of Democrats, favor allowing trade to

continue to grow and lowering trade barriers. Half of Republicans favor slowing the growth of trade and keeping up barriers.

NAFTA

The sharpest divergence between the parties is on the question of NAFTA. Large majorities of Republicans now say that NAFTA has been bad for the US while large majorities of Democrats say it has been good.

Trade Adjustment Assistance

A large majority favors coupling free trade with programs to help workers who lose their jobs. Large bipartisan majorities complain that such government programs are inadequate. But Republicans show mixed feelings about such programs.

Labor Standards in International Trade Agreements

An overwhelming bipartisan majority favors having labor standards in trade agreements as a way of ensuring that countries do not get unfair advantages from low standards and for moral reason.

International Environmental Standards

A large bipartisan majority supports making more international agreements on environmental issues.





Views of Trade and Globalization in Principle

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Support for reciprocal lowering of trade barriers

In a variety of ways Americans express robust support for the principle of expanding trade. Robust bipartisan majorities of Americans express support for the maxim that if other countries are willing to lower their trade barriers that the US should be willing as well. The fact that this response is more positive than in response to the one about the growth of trade per se (see below), suggests that a substantial number of Americans assume that trade agreement are not in fact fully reciprocal.

Mildly positive views of international trade and globalization in principle

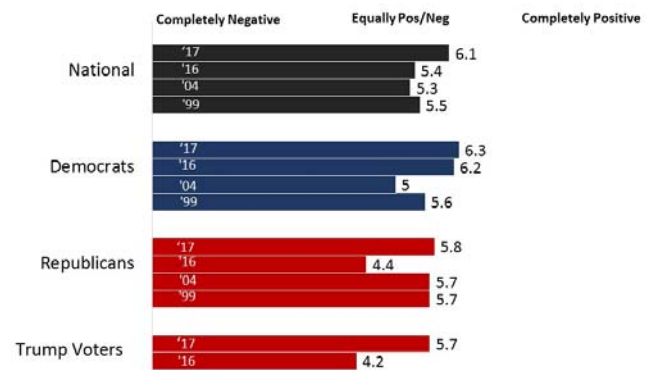
Views of international trade have gone through some dramatic swings driven by shifts in Republican views. While in 2000 and 2004 Republicans were clearly on the positive side, in 2016 they swung to the negative, but then reverted to their traditional positive view in 2017. Trump voters were especially negative, but also reverted to the positive. Democrats have been consistently positive recently—a bit more so than in the past. Nationally views have leaned positive, but became more positive in 2017 as Republicans shifted.

Views of globalization were similar with a mean rating of 6.0, 6.9 among Democrats and 5.4 among Republicans. Trump voters were as low as 4.7 in 2016, but went up to 5.1 in 2017.

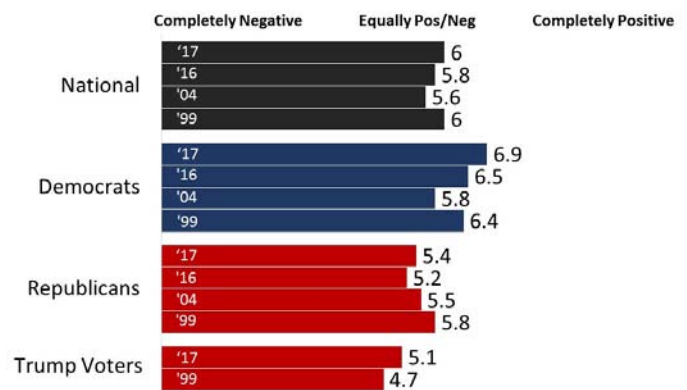
In general, if another country is willing to lower its barriers to products from the US if we will lower our barriers to their products, should the US agree or not agree to this?



How positive do you think the growth of international trade is, overall?



Evaluation of Globalization - Overall





Assessment of US Trade Policymakers

Majorities of Americans voters say that US trade policymakers give too little consideration to the concerns of the Americans people and American workers, and to what is good for the American economy. However, they are perceived as fully taking into account the interests of multinational corporations. Among Trump voters these views reached overwhelming levels in the December 2016 wave and have only partially moderated since.

Seven in ten voters consistently say that US official making international trade policy give too little consideration to the concerns of the American public. There has been virtually no change in this perception over the last two decades.

Among Trump voters in 2016 this perception reached eight in 10. In 2017 it dropped 10-11 points among Trump voters and Republicans, presumably in response to the fact that there is now a Republican administration. Democrats holding this perception rose nine points.

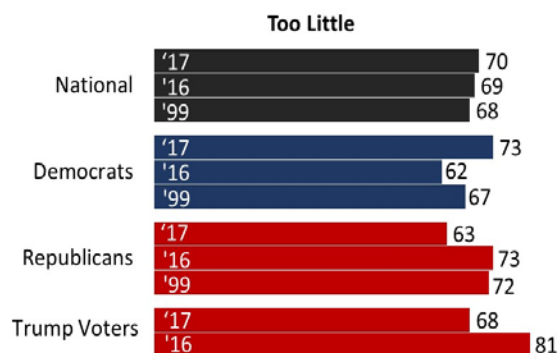
Even larger majorities say that US policymakers do not give enough attention to the concerns of “working Americans” (reaching 86% among Trump voters in 2016) and “people like you.”

Consideration of US Economy and Business

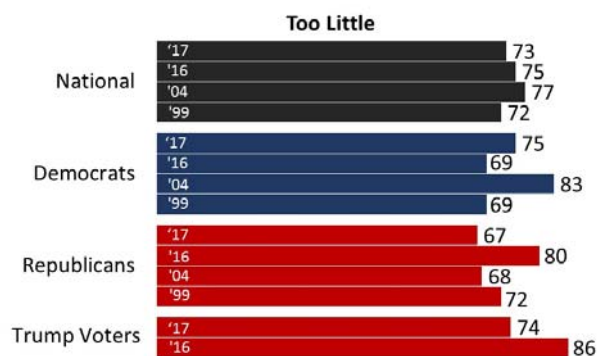
A clear majority also perceives that US trade policymakers do not give enough consideration to the overall American economy. In 2016 this perception reached nearly eight in 10 among Trump voters and seven in 10 among Republicans. Here again the size of this majority dropped in 2017, but is still a substantial majority. Here too Democrats showed a surge in their lack of confidence in 2017.

Perhaps in conjunction with this surge in 2016 Republicans perceptions of the effect of trade on American business on a 0-10 scale dropped from 6.1 in 2004 to 4.9. In 2017 it recovered to 5.8.

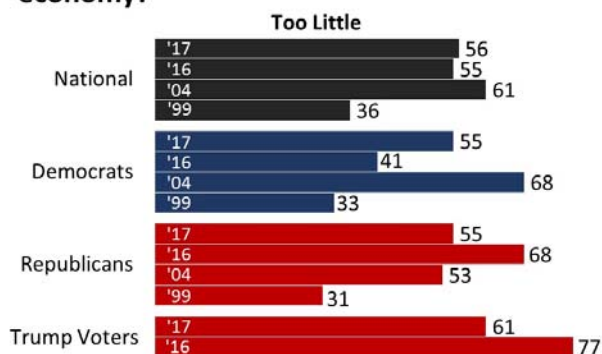
How much do US officials making international trade policy consider **the concerns of the general American public?**



How much do US officials making international trade policy consider **the concerns of working Americans?**



How much do US officials making international trade policy consider **the overall American economy?**

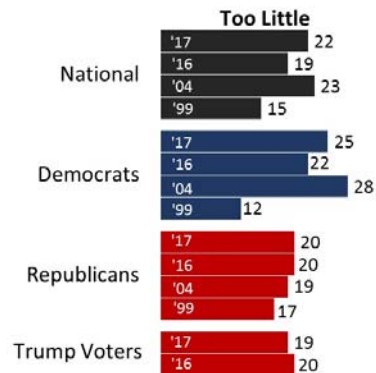




Multinational corporations seen as being well served

So, what do Americans think gets consideration by US trade policymakers? In 2016, eight in ten thought the concerns of multinational corporations got too much (49%) or the right amount (32%) of consideration, little changed from earlier years and with little change in 2017. There was also little difference between the parties. Only small minorities, overall and in both parties, think the concerns of multinational corporations get too little consideration.

How much do US officials making international trade policy consider the concerns of multinational corporations?

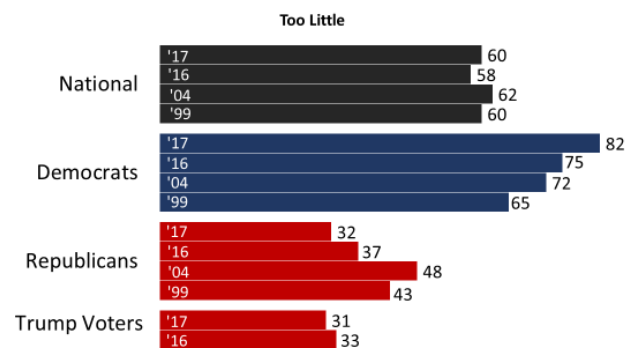


Democrats Perceive Environment Getting Short Shift

A large and growing majority of Democrats believe that US trade policymakers are not adequately considering the impact of trade on the environment.

Democrats' perception that US trade officials give too little attention to the impact on the environment over the last two decades has grown from two thirds to more than eight in ten. Republicans' concerns have drifted downward to one in three.

Evaluation of US officials making international trade policy... how much do you think that they consider the impact on the environment?





Negative Consequences of Trade Policies

Presumably due to the perceived inadequacies in US trade policy, majorities perceive that trade has increased the gap between rich and poor, has been negative for jobs and American workers, and has benefitted other countries more than the US.

Growth of trade seen as worsening inequality

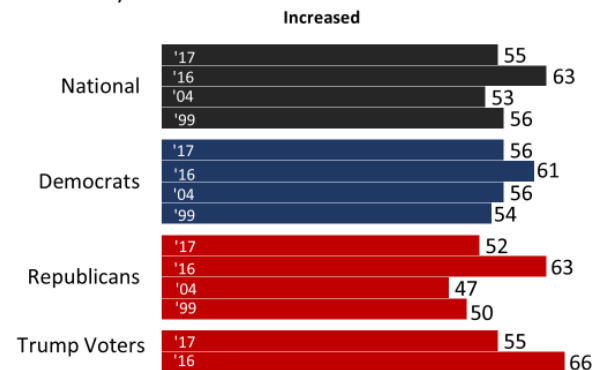
Consistent with the view that US trade policy does not serve the interests of the American public and Americans workers, but rather multinational corporations, solid bipartisan majority perceive that the trade has increase the gap between rich and poor in the United States. In 2016 this perception was especially widespread, reaching two thirds among Trump voters, nearly as much among Republicans and six in ten among Democrats. In 2017 this view moderated, especially among Republicans, but is still held by a majority overall and in both parties.

Trade Seen as Negative for Jobs and American Workers

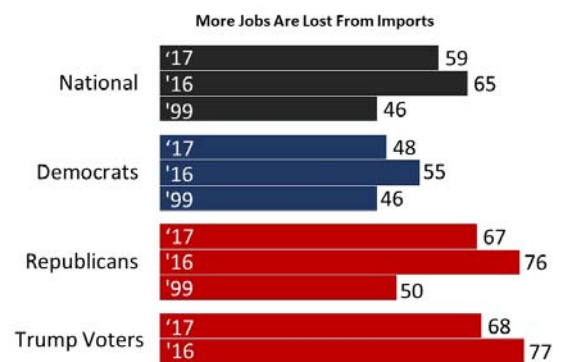
In late 2016 there was an extraordinary increase in the view that more jobs are lost from imports than are gained from exports. While in 2000 views were divided on this question in both parties, in late 2016 three quarters of Republicans and Trump voters asserted that more jobs are lost. Even Democrats had an increase in this view. In 2017 this view diminished, but still two thirds of Republicans and Trump supporters said more jobs are lost. Democrats went back to being divided.

Asked to characterize how many jobs are lost as a result of the import of foreign products among Republicans in 2016, there was a sharp jump with two thirds saying that many jobs are lost. Among Trump voters three quarter held this position. In 2017 these moderated a bit. Among Democrats, though, less than four in ten now hold this view.

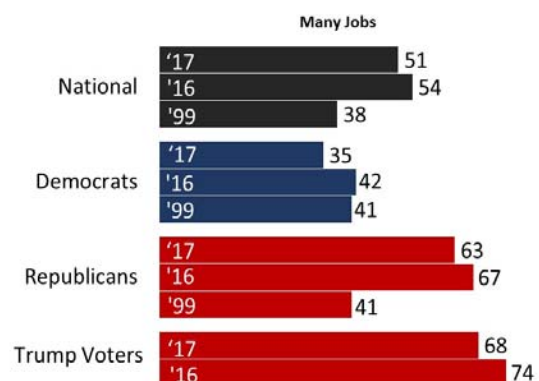
Do you think that the growth of international trade has increased or decreased the gap between rich and poor in this country?



On balance, do you think that more jobs are lost from imports or more jobs are gained from exports?



Do you think that importing foreign products means the loss of: many jobs in the country, only a few jobs, no jobs?





In 2016, Republican views of the effect of trade on American workers turned sharply more negative, reaching 3.2 on a 0-10 scale, with Trump voters being even more negative at 2.9. However, in 2017 their views recovered to a more modestly negative rating of 4.5, perhaps in anticipation of efforts by the Trump administration. Democratic views have become increasingly positive, reaching 5.3 in 2017.

Should Trade Be Slowed?

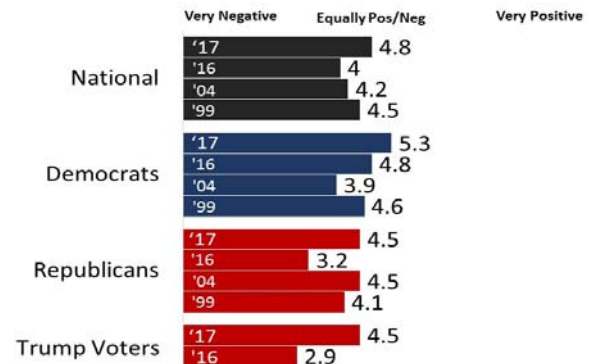
The majority of Americans overall, and a large majority of Democrats, favor allowing trade to continue to grow and lowering trade barriers. Half of Republicans favor slowing the growth of trade and keeping up barriers.

Six in ten overall and seven in ten among Democrats say the US should allow trade to continue to grow or should actively promote it. Less than half favor slowing or reversing it.

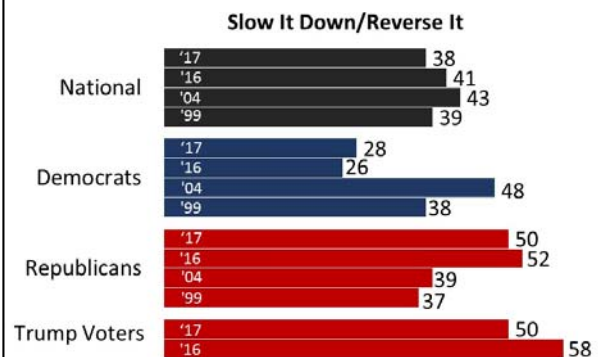
In 2016, for the first time, a slight majority of Republicans and nearly six in ten Trump supporters called for the US government to slow down or even reverse the growth of international trade. This dropped in 2017, but is still endorsed by half.

In 2017, when presented three positions on lowering trade barriers, among Americans overall, six in ten said that trade barriers should be lowered gradually “so American workers have time to adjust to the changes,” (39%) or removing trade barriers now to further trade as much as possible (23%). Democrats were even more positive. But approximately half of Republicans (52%) and a modest majority of Trump voters (55%), took the position that “We should keep up barriers against international trade because importing cheap products from other countries threatens American jobs.”

Evaluation of international trade for American workers.



Overall, with regard to international trade, what do you think should be a goal of the US?

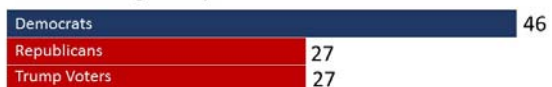


General Approach to Trade

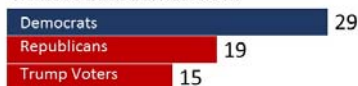
Keep up trade barriers.



Lower barriers gradually.



Remove trade barriers now.



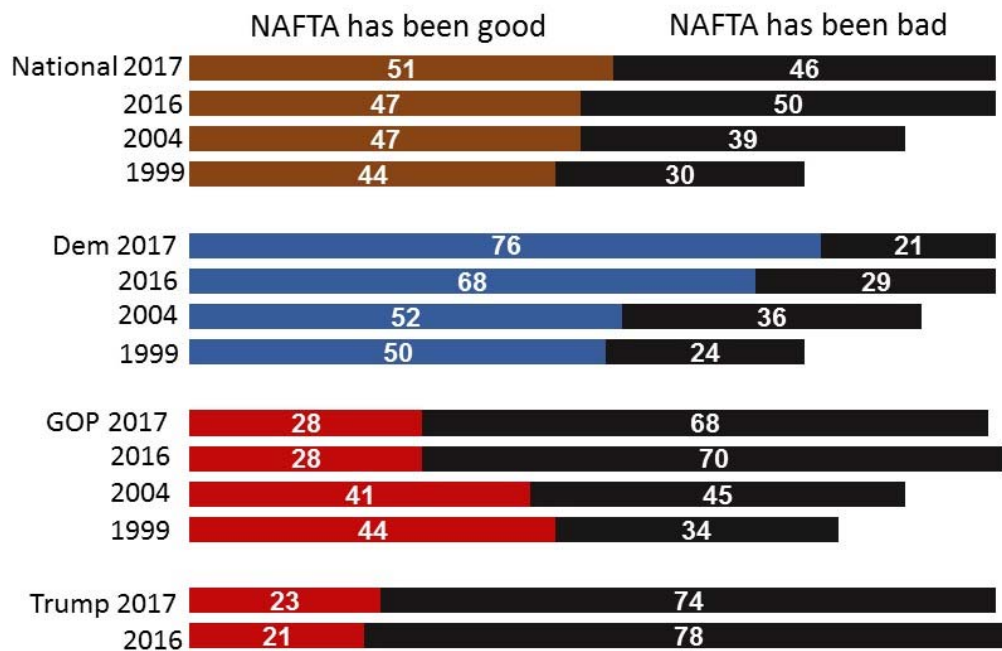


NAFTA

The sharpest divergence between the parties is on the question of NAFTA. Large majorities of Republicans now say that NAFTA has been bad for the US while large majorities of Democrats say it has been good.

Partisan polarization is particularly pronounced in relation to NAFTA. While in 2004 Republicans were roughly divided on NAFTA, in 2016 negative views jumped to seven in 10 among and nearly eight in ten among Trump voters. This view has only moderated slightly between 2016 and 2017. Meanwhile Democrats have gone from approving it by a slight majority in 2004, rising to an overwhelming majority by 2017.

Do you think the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, has been good or bad for the United States?





POSSIBLE MITIGATION OF NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

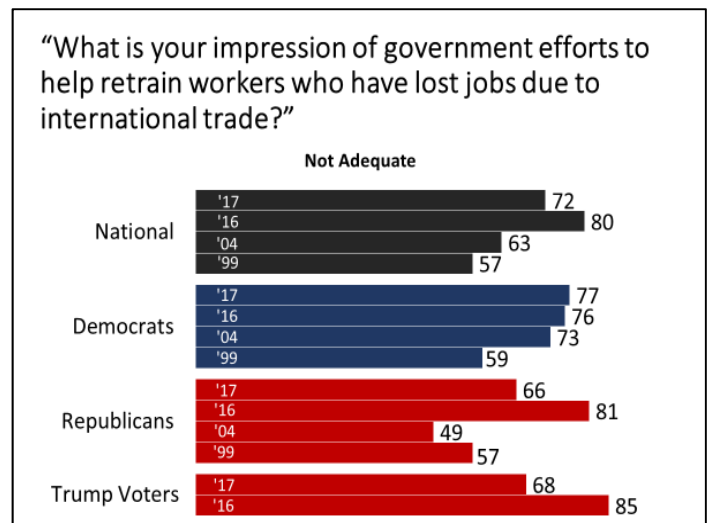
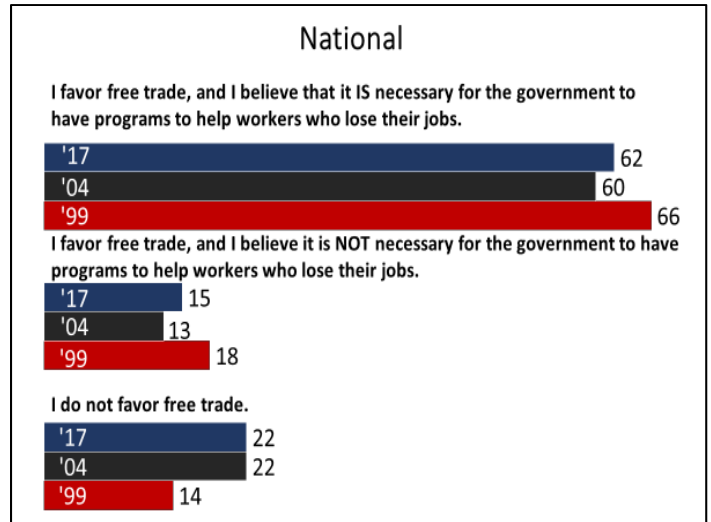
Trade Adjustment Assistance

A large majority favors coupling free trade with programs to help workers who lose their jobs. Large bipartisan majorities complain that such government programs are inadequate. But Republicans show mixed feelings about such programs.

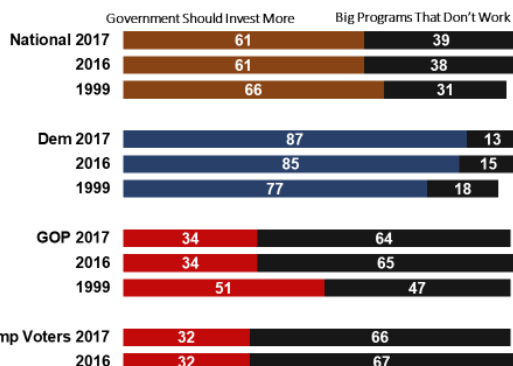
Overall a position that elicits substantial consensus is that free trade should be pursued in conjunction with federal programs to help workers lose their jobs as a result i.e. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). More than six in ten have consistently endorsed this view.

Overwhelming majorities also say that TAA programs are inadequate and large majorities say that the government should invest more in such programs.

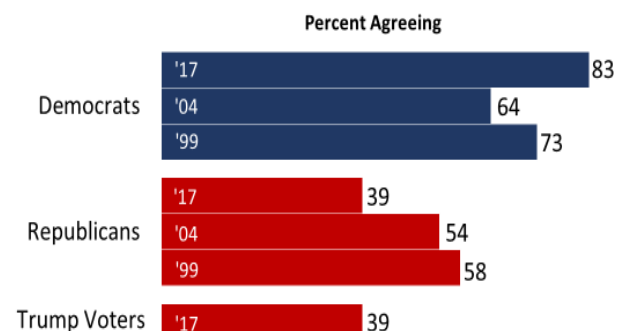
With Republicans though the response is more complex. In 2016 overall overwhelming majorities expressed dissatisfaction with TAA programs, including more than eight in ten Republicans and Trump voters. But in both 2016 and 2017 majorities of Republicans said that such programs do not work, and in 2017 only four in ten embraced the general principle of supporting free trade coupled with TAA programs.



Some people say that the federal government should invest more in worker retraining and education to help workers adapt to changes in the economy. Others say that such efforts just create big government programs that do not work very well.



Statement #1: I favor free trade, and I believe that it IS necessary for the government to have programs to help workers who lose their jobs





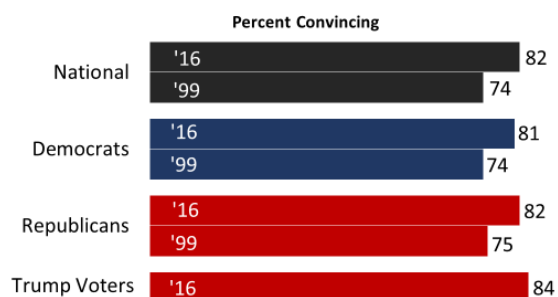
Labor Standards in International Trade Agreements

An overwhelming bipartisan majority favors having labor standards in trade agreements as a way of ensuring that countries do not get unfair advantages from low standards and for moral reason.

Arguments in favor of labor standards in trade agreement were overwhelmingly endorsed while arguments against them fared poorly.

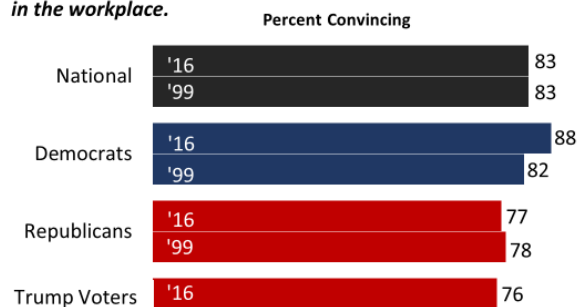
Argument #1 in favor of including labor standards in trade agreements:

Countries who do not maintain minimum standards have an unfair advantage because they can exploit workers and produce goods for less. This threatens jobs for American workers.



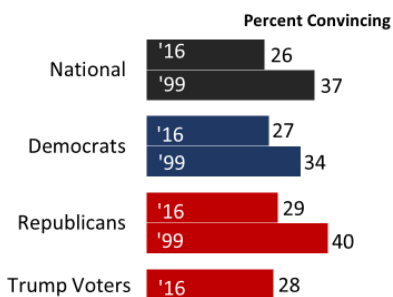
Argument #2: In favor of including labor standards in trade agreements:

Countries should be required to meet minimum standards because it is immoral for workers to be subject to harsh and unsafe conditions in the workplace.



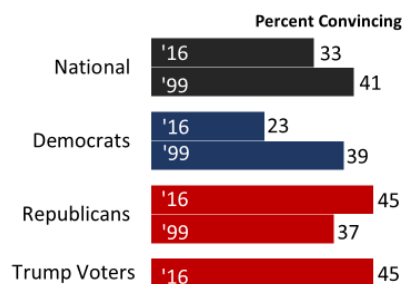
Argument #1: Against including labor standards in trade agreements

If countries are required to raise their standards this will force some companies to eliminate the jobs of poor people who desperately need work.



Argument #2: Against including labor standards in trade agreements:

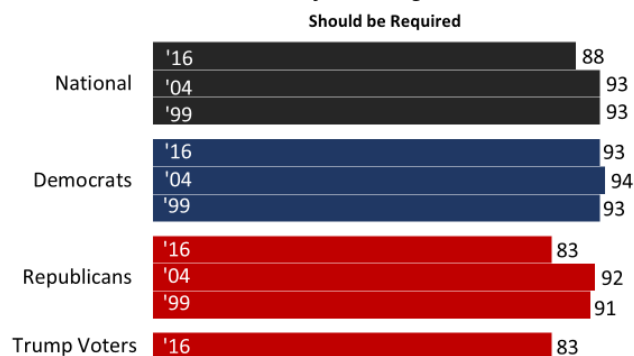
It is up to each country to set its own labor standards. The international community should not intrude by trying to dictate what each country should do within its borders.



In conclusion, overwhelming bipartisan majorities favored having such labor standards in trade agreements.

Conclusion: including labor standards in trade agreements:

So, overall, do you think that countries that are part of international trade agreements should or should not be required to maintain minimum standards for working conditions?



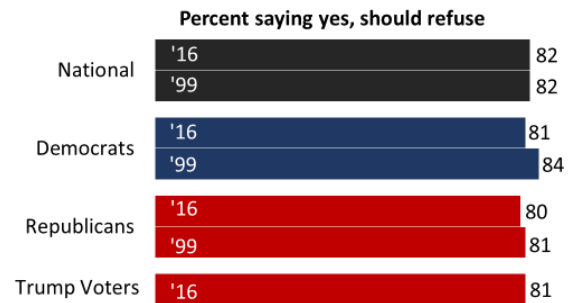


An overwhelming bipartisan majority—77% in 2016—also said that wages abroad should be allowed to rise by allowing workers to organize into unions and by putting a stop to child labor. However, Republican support for this idea dropped to 64% in 2016 from 75% in 2004.

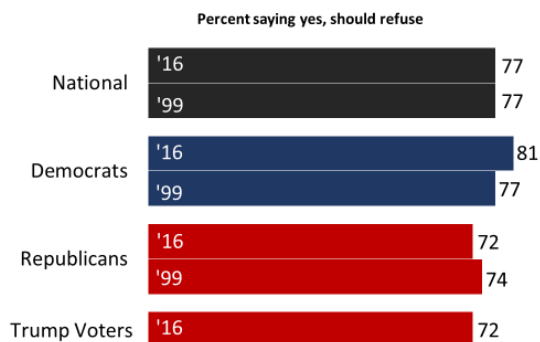
Respondents were presented a series of possible violations of such international labor standards and asked whether the US should refuse to import products manufacture under those conditions.

Overwhelming bipartisan majorities said that the United States should not allow products to be imported when they have been made under conditions that are in violation of international labor standards related to child labor and workplace safety.

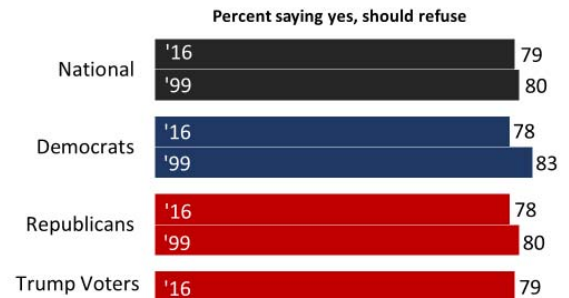
When the products are made by children under 15 who are forced to work under threat of punishment.



When the products are made by workers in factories that are unsafe or unhealthy

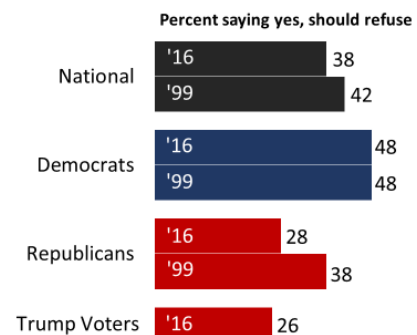


When the products are made by children under the age of 15 who are required to work so many hours that they cannot go to school



However, less than half said that the US should refuse to import products made by workers who are not allowed to organize into unions. Even among Democrats only 48% favored imposing this standard.

When the products are made by workers, who are not allowed to organize into unions.



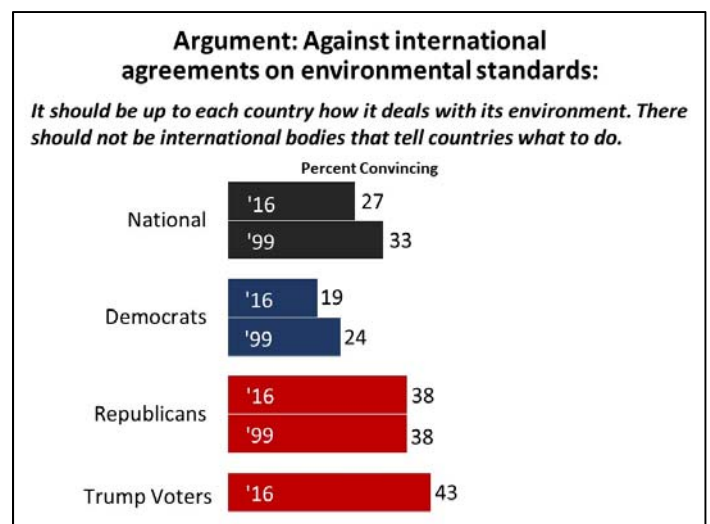
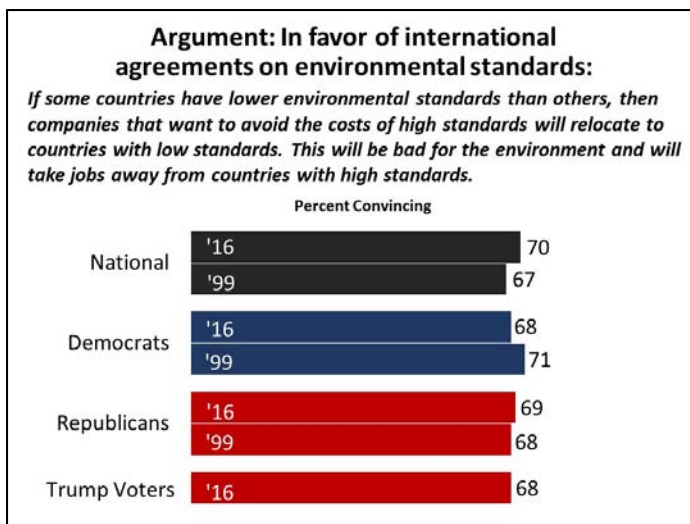


International Environmental Standards

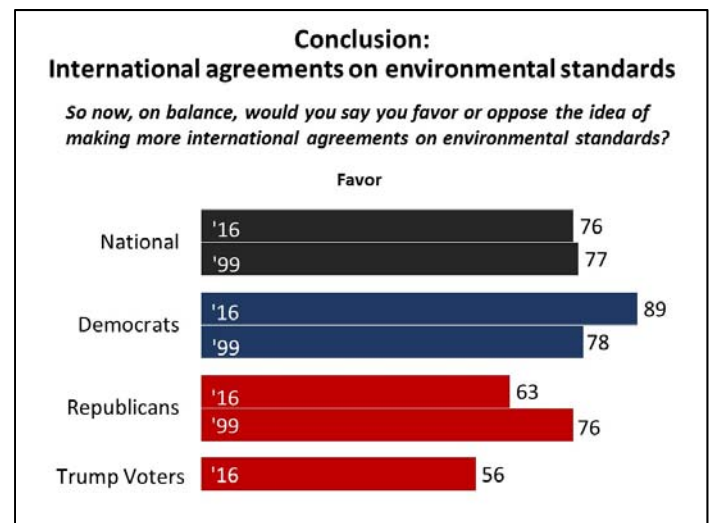
A large bipartisan majority supports making more international agreements on environmental issues.

Similar to the issue of international labor standards, countries with low environmental standards have the potential for having an unfair advantage in international trade because companies may relocate to keep their costs low.

Presented the argument in favor of having international agreements on environmental standards to prevent such advantage seeking, as was found much less convincing, though 43% of Trump voters did find it convincing.



In conclusion, three quarters endorsed such international standards. Between 1999 and 2016 Democratic support leapt from eight in ten to nine in ten. Republican support slipped from three quarter to just under two thirds. Fifty six percent of Trump supporters agreed.





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SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

The **Program for Public Consultation** seeks to improve democratic governance by consulting the citizenry on key public policy issues governments face. It has developed innovative survey methods that simulate the process that policymakers go through—getting a briefing, hearing arguments, dealing with tradeoffs—before coming to their conclusion. It also uses surveys to help find common ground between conflicting parties. The Program for Public Consultation is part of the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland.

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