



**Environics  
Institute**  
For Survey Research

A  
**FOCUS  
CANADA**  
REPORT

# Public Opinion in Canada & the United States

FALL 2022

## **ENVIRONICS INSTITUTE FOR SURVEY RESEARCH**

Environics Institute for Survey Research conducts relevant and original public opinion and social research related to issues of public policy and social change. It is through such research that organizations and individuals can better understand Canada today, how it has been changing, and where it may be heading. <https://www.environicsinstitute.org>

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As part of its **Focus Canada** public opinion research program (launched in 1976), the **EnviroNics Institute** updated its research on Canadian attitudes about the United States. It also asked questions on social issues in parallel surveys in both Canada and the U.S. The Canadian survey is based on telephone interviews conducted (via landline and cellphones) with 2,000 Canadians between September 6 and 30, 2022. A sample of this size drawn from the population produces results accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points in 19 out of 20 samples. The American survey is based on telephone interviews conducted (via landline and cellphones) with 1,001 adults in the continental United States who are registered voters between September 21 and 26, 2022. A sample of this size drawn from the population produces results accurate to within plus or minus 3.1 percentage points in 19 out of 20 samples.

# Executive summary

The presidency of Donald Trump put considerable strain on the historically strong relationship between Canada and the United States. It did so not only by creating friction between the two governments on issues such as trade, but also by rapidly eroding the Canadian public's traditionally favourable view of their neighbours – and shining a spotlight on growing differences in the values of the two societies.

During the latter decades of the 20th century, a majority of Canadians held a favourable view of the United States – despite the occasional disagreement between Ottawa and Washington on particular policy issues. Canadian opinions about the United States became more divided under the Presidency of George W. Bush, but returned to historical levels after the election victory of Barak Obama in 2008. But favourable opinions fell dramatically and reached new lows after 2016 and the election victory of Donald Trump. The latest Focus Canada survey shows that Canadians' opinion of the United States improved somewhat with the election of Joe Biden – but not to the levels reached during the administrations of previous Democratic Party presidents.

While general opinions of the United States have become more negative over time, views of free trade with the United States have become more positive. In fact, Canadians have never been as supportive of North American free trade as they are today. Over time, Canadians have become more convinced of the economic benefits of free trade, and less concerned about the potential loss of the country's cultural identity or political independence. Moreover, the partisan divide on the issue has disappeared. Whereas the level of support for free trade among Conservatives was previously twice as high as that among supporters of the NDP, the views of two groups of partisans are now virtually identical.

The diminishing concern about the impact of free trade on Canada's cultural identity coincides with some sharp differences of opinion between Canadians and Americans

on prominent social issues. These differences are most stark on the issues of abortion and, especially, gun control – but they are also evident on questions relating to the role of government in reducing income inequality and protecting racial minorities. Moreover, American society is much more divided on such issues, both in terms of differences of opinion among racial groups, and in terms of partisan differences between Republicans and Democrats, or Conservatives and Liberals. While the extent of partisan division on these questions has grown in both countries, this growth is much more pronounced in the United States.

Canadians and Americans have at least one thing in common: in both countries, a large majority is satisfied with their standard of living. In both Canada and the United States, a smaller proportion – though still a majority (about three in five) – is also satisfied with opportunities to get ahead in their country. In this case, however, there has been a noticeable decline in satisfaction since the mid-1980s with prospects for social mobility in the U.S., but not so in Canada. Canadians and Americans are both much less satisfied with their system of government than they are with their economic situation. But, as is the case with views on opportunities to get ahead, there has been a considerable decline in satisfaction with the American system of government in the U.S., whereas views in Canada about the Canadian system of government are virtually unchanged.

In contrast, when it comes to satisfaction with the treatment of the poor and the elderly, opinions have changed for the worse over time in Canada, but not in the U.S. Whereas Canadians were previously much more likely to be satisfied in this area than Americans, this is no longer the case.

Finally, while very few Canadians support the idea of joining the United States, it is nonetheless notable that strong opposition to this idea has grown much stronger over the past three and a half decades.

# General opinion about the United States

Canadians are currently evenly divided, with roughly one in two having a favourable opinion of the United States, and almost as many having an unfavourable one. Canadians' opinion of the United States improved following the election of Joe Biden in 2020, but not to the levels reached during the administrations of previous Democratic Party presidents.

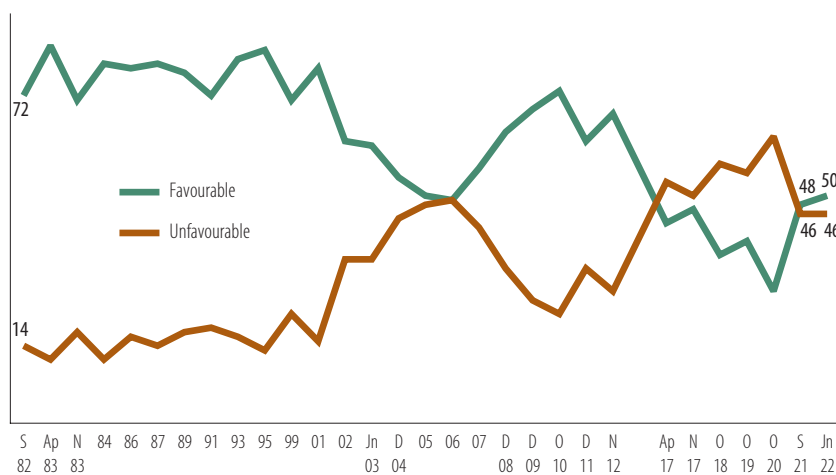
## IN GENERAL, WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE UNITED STATES?

In the last decades of the 20th century, a majority of Canadians (at least 7 in 10) held a favourable view of the United States. This changed following the 9-11 terrorist attacks and the ensuing American military response, notably the invasion of Iraq. By the mid-2000s, Canadians were more evenly divided between those with a favourable and those with an unfavourable view of the United States. Favourable views then increased notably following the election of Barack Obama as president, before falling dramatically again after 2016 and the unexpected election victory of Donald Trump. By September 2020, only 29 percent of Canadians held a favourable view of the U.S. – the lowest level ever recorded since the question was first asked in a Focus Canada survey in 1981.

Canadians' opinion of the United States improved again following the defeat of Trump and the election of Joe Biden – but not to the levels reached during the administrations of previous Democratic Party presidents (Obama, and Bill Clinton). In 2021, 48 percent of Canadians had a favourable opinion of the United States, compared to 46 percent with an unfavourable view. Views have changed little since then. In the most recent survey (September 2022), 50 percent of Canadians express a favourable opinion, and 46 percent have an unfavourable one.

Unfavourable opinions of the U.S. are currently higher in B.C. (55%) and among younger Canadians (53% between the ages of 18 and 29). Women (51%) are more likely to have an unfavourable opinion of the U.S. than men (40%). Among supporters of the main federal political parties, unfavourable views of the U.S. are highest among New Democrat supporters (65%) and lowest among Conservative supporters (33%), with Liberal supporters landing in between these two (50%).

Canadians opinion of the United States  
1982 – 2022



Q.10

In general, what is your opinion of the United States? Is it very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable?

# Support for free trade

Canadians have never been as supportive of North American free trade as they are today. Over time, they have become more convinced of its economic benefits, and less concerned about the potential loss of the country's cultural identity or political independence. Moreover, the partisan divide on the issue has disappeared.

## DO YOU FAVOUR OR OPPOSE THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN CANADA, THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO?

While general opinions of the United States have become more negative over time, views of free trade with the United States have become more positive. In fact, Canadians have never been as supportive of North American free trade as they are today.

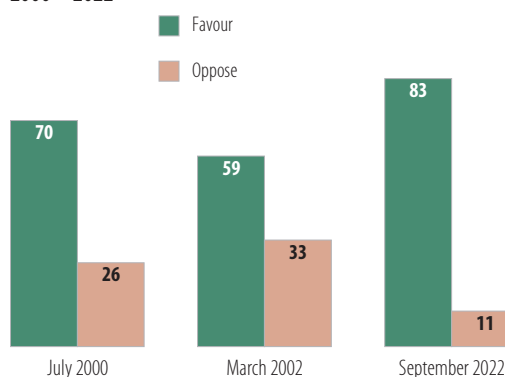
Currently, more than four in five (83%) of Canadians favour the free trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico (NAFTA), and only 11 percent are opposed. The proportion in favour is up 24 points (from 59%) since the question was last asked 20 years ago, in 2002.

The change since the era of passionate debates about the merits of free trade in the late 1980s and early 1990s is even more dramatic. From the time the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement was negotiated in 1987 until the onset of the recession of the early 1990s, opinions in Canada were divided, with roughly as many in favour as opposed. But as the recession took hold, support for free trade declined: the proportion in favour of the agreement hit a low of 24 percent in the spring of 1992. Opinions shifted, however, following the defeat of the Progressive Conservative government that had championed free trade in 1993, and also as the economy began to recover: the proportion in favour of the free trade agreement rose steadily and quickly, reaching 60 percent in late 1994. Today, support for free trade – now framed as an agreement involving Canada, the U.S. and Mexico – is even higher.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this change of opinion is that the partisan divide on the issue has disappeared. In December 1993, Canadians as a whole were evenly divided on the question of support for the free trade

## Support for NAFTA

2000 – 2022



Q.11

*Do you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the free trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico?*

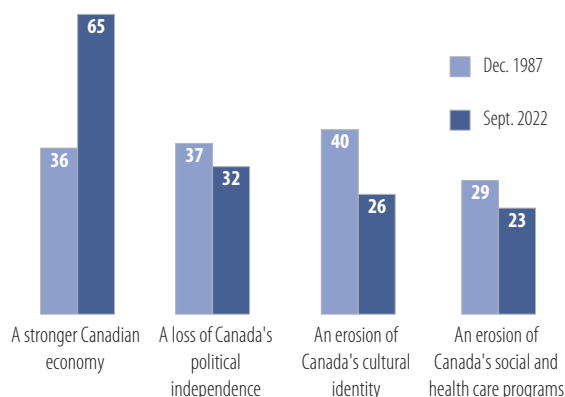
agreement with the U.S., with 46 percent in favour and 46 percent opposed. A majority of Progressive Conservative (59%) and Reform Party (55%) supporters favoured the agreement, while supporters of the Bloc Québécois (45% in favour) and the Liberal Party (48% in favour) were evenly divided, and NDP supporters were solidly opposed (24% in favour). Today, supporters of the four main parties represented in the House of Commons are overwhelmingly in favour of NAFTA, including 89 percent of Liberal Party supporters, 88 percent Bloc Québécois supporters, 84 percent of NDP supporters, and 82 percent of Conservative Party supporters. While in 1993, the level of support among Conservatives was twice as high as that among supporters of the NDP, now the views of the two groups of partisans are virtually identical.

**IMPACT OF CANADA'S FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES.** Additional survey questions asked in 2022 shed light on how opinions on the merits of free trade have evolved. On the one hand, Canadians have become more convinced of the economic benefits. Whereas, as the agreement was being negotiated in 1987, only 36 percent expected the free trade agreement to result in a stronger Canadian economy, today a majority (65%) feel that it has done so. On the other hand, concerns about the loss of the country's cultural identity and political independence have subsided. Specifically, in 1987, 40 percent expected the free trade agreement to result in an erosion of Canada's cultural identity, whereas only 26 percent today feel that it has done so.

These changes are more notable among those who were previously most opposed to free trade.

- In 1987, 25 percent of NDP supporters, and 33 percent of Liberal supporters, expected the free trade agreement with the U.S. to result in a stronger Canadian economy; in 2022, 64 percent and 76 percent, respectively, believe this has been the result (a difference of 39 points for NDP supporters, and 43 points for Liberal supporters).
- In 1987, 53 percent of NDP supporters, and 46 percent of Liberal supporters, expected the free trade agreement with the U.S. to result in an erosion of Canada's cultural identity; in 2022, only 24 percent and 22 percent, respectively, believe this has been the result (a difference of 29 points for NDP supporters, and 24 points for Liberal supporters).

Will (or have) the free trade agreements with the United States resulted in ... ?  
1987 – 2022 %Yes



Q.12  
From what you have heard or read, do you think the free trade agreement with the United States will result in ... / Canada's free trade agreements with the United States have resulted in... ?



# Canadian-American differences in opinion on social issues

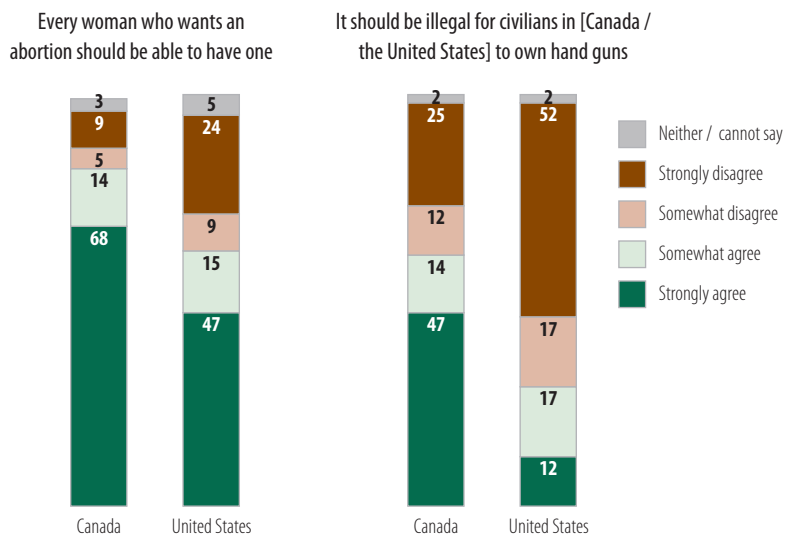
There are sharp differences of opinion between Canadians and Americans on prominent social issues such as abortion and gun control. Canadians also remain more supportive than Americans of government action to promote greater economic and racial equality. On these questions, there is much greater political polarization in the U.S. than in Canada.

**ABORTION AND GUN CONTROL.** The diminishing concern about the impact of free trade on Canada’s cultural identity coincides with some sharp differences of opinion between Canadians and Americans on prominent social issues. Two of these, which have each featured prominently in both Canadian and American politics, are abortion and gun control. While never far from the headlines, each of these issues gained even greater prominence on both sides of the border in 2022. In the case of abortion, the most important development was the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the famous *Roe v. Wade* decision, opening the door to new state-level legislation

criminalizing the procedure. Discussions of gun control were fuelled mainly by successive mass shootings in the U.S., though episodes of gun crimes in Canada – while of a different scale – created pressure on Canadian governments to act as well, leading to new federal measures to control access to hand guns.

On abortion, the differences in opinion between the publics in the two countries are significant. There is now a broad consensus in Canada that abortion should be legal and accessible: 83 percent of Canadians strongly or somewhat agree that “every woman who wants an abortion should be able to have one.” A majority of Americans also agrees with this statement: however, agreement is 21 points lower, at 62 percent (among women, 85% in Canada compared to 65% in the U.S. agree). Strong agreement in Canada (68%) is also 21 points higher than strong agreement in the U.S. (47%). Conversely, one in four Americans (24%) strongly disagree, compared to only nine percent of Canadians.

## Opinions on abortion and hand guns 2022 Canada and the United States

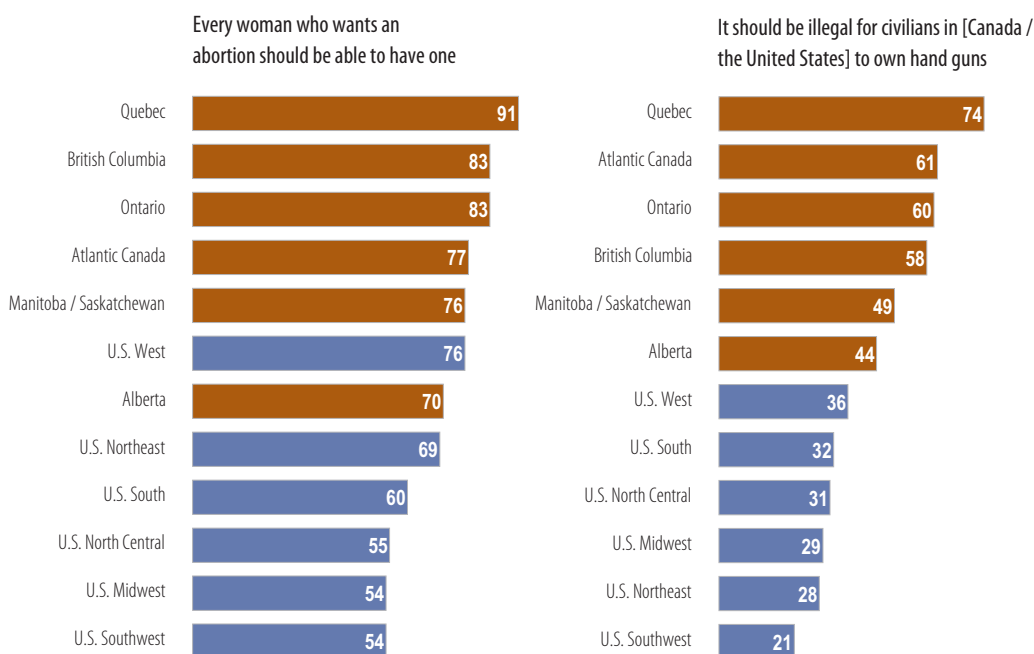


Q.13B & E  
Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ... ?

Differences of opinion between the two countries on gun control are even more stark. A majority of Canadians (61%) strongly or somewhat agrees that “it should be illegal for civilians in Canada to own hand guns” – twice the proportion of Americans (30%) who say that hand guns should be illegal in their country. The level of strong agreement in Canada (47%) is about four times that in the U.S. (12%). Conversely, Americans (52%) are twice as likely as Canadians (25%) to strongly disagree.

On both of these questions, there is some regional difference in Canada: agreement that “every woman who wants an abortion should be able to have one” ranges from 70 percent in Alberta, to 91 percent in Quebec; agreement that “it should be illegal for civilians in Canada to own hand guns” similarly ranges from 44 percent in Alberta to 74 percent in Quebec. The most “conservative” regions of Canada, however, do not resemble the most conservative regions of the United States – rather, they are closer to the most liberal regions to the south. On abortion, for instance, views in Alberta are similar to those in the U.S. Northeast. On hand guns, agreement in Alberta is 12 points higher than agreement in on the U.S. west coast.

**Opinions on abortion and hand guns**  
2022 % Agree, by region, Canada and the United States



Q.13B & E

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ...?

**THE WELFARE STATE.** It is generally accepted that Canadians are more supportive of government action to protect less fortunate citizens, while Americans favour smaller governments and greater individual self-reliance. The survey results validate this impression.

Canadians (77%) are more likely than Americans (58%) to agree that “the government should reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor,” though it is notable that majorities in both countries support such action. Strong opposition to government intervention to reduce the income gap is three times higher in the U.S. (29%) than in Canada (9%). The average response in the U.S., however, overlays a divergence of views among identity groups: 83 percent of African Americans and 70 percent of Hispanics agree that the government should reduce the income gap, compared to 51 percent of whites. In Canada, the level of agreement between those who are white and those who are racialized is the same (77% each).

Agreement in the United States is also much lower today than in 1986, when the question was also included in a Focus Canada survey: agreement dropped from 73 percent to 58 percent. Notably, however, agreement did not fall among

African Americans. In 1986, 81 percent of African Americans agreed that the government should reduce the income gap, which was eight points higher than the American average. In 2022, agreement among African Americans is just as high (83%), but this is now 25 points higher than the average.

Drug use policy is not normally seen as part of the welfare state, but in recent years, particularly in the wake of a mounting opioid addiction crisis, there has been greater emphasis on the need to approach the issue of recreational drugs from the perspective of public health rather than criminal justice. To some extent, both Canada and the United States have sought to re-orient their policies on drugs away from a punitive approach towards a harm-reduction approach that includes steps to address problems relating to mental health and addiction.

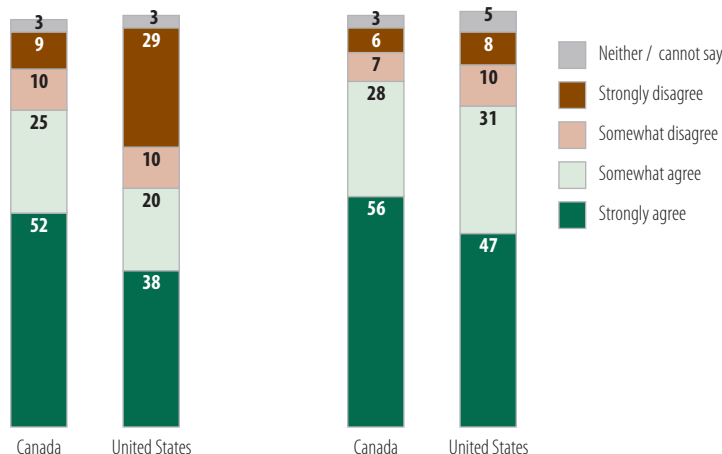
On this particular issue, the publics in the two countries are not as far apart. Roughly four in five people in each country agree that “people who are addicted to drugs should be provided with treatment by the health care system and not treated like criminals.” Overall agreement is only slightly higher in Canada (84%) than in the United States (78%).

## Opinions on the income gap and drug addiction

2022 Canada and the United States

The government should reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor

People who are addicted to drugs should be provided with treatment by the health care system and not treated like criminals



Q.13C & G

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ... ?

**RACIAL DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY.** Both Canada and the United States contend with issues related to racism and unequal treatment of racial minorities in their societies. But the U.S. is more divided as to whether more government action to protect racial minorities is required.

There is little disagreement as to the general value of diversity. In both Canada (95%) and the United States (88%), there is almost unanimous agreement (strongly or somewhat) that young people in their country today “are fortunate to grown up surrounded by friends from all different races and religions.” In each country, a majority strongly agrees.

Majorities in each country also agree (strongly or somewhat) that “the government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly,” but agreement is somewhat higher in Canada (81%) than in the U.S. (66%). Overall disagreement (strongly or somewhat) is almost twice as high in the U.S. (29%) as in Canada (16%). Once again, there is a wider gap in views among identity groups in the U.S. compared to Canada. In the U.S., African A-mericans

(76%) are twice as likely as whites (38%) to strongly agree that the government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly – with a difference of 38 points between the two groups. In Canada, the difference between strong agreement among those who are racialized (62%) and whites (49%) is 13 points. In terms of overall agreement (whether strongly or somewhat), the gap in Canada between these two groups is only six points, compared to a 32-point gap between African Americans and whites in the U.S.

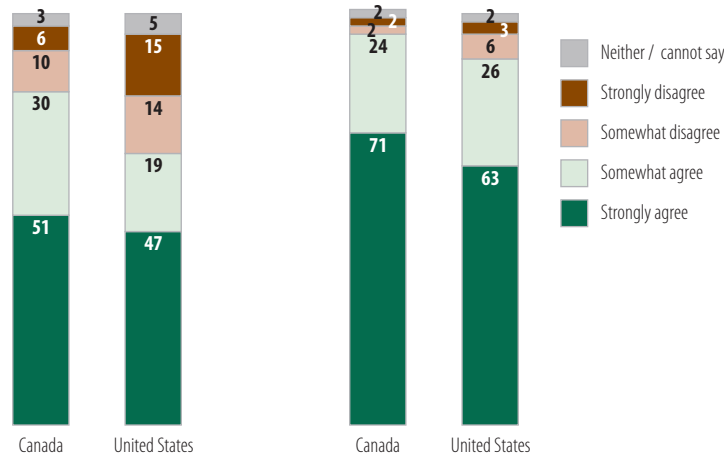
Over time, the two countries are also trending in different directions. Compared to opinions in 1986, Canadians today are somewhat more likely to agree that the government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly (an increase of 7 points); Americans, however, are somewhat less likely to agree (a decrease of 9 points). In 1986, the level of agreement in the two countries was similar; today, agreement that the government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly is 15 points higher in Canada.

### Opinions on racial diversity and equality

2022 Canada and the United States

The government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly

Young [Canadians / Americans] today are fortunate to grown up surrounded by friends from all different races and religions



Q.13D2 & F

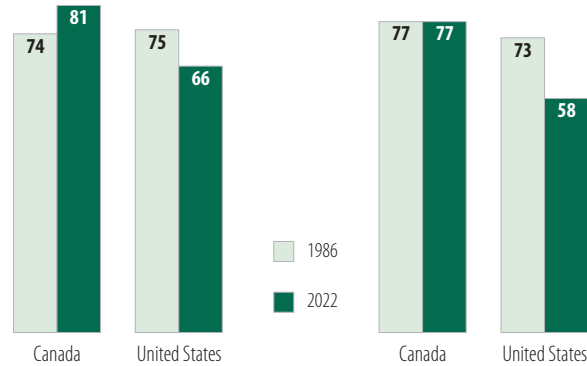
Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ... ?

## Government should do more for minorities and the poor

1986 – 2022 Canada and the United States

Agree (strongly or somewhat): the government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly

Agree (strongly or somewhat): the government should reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor

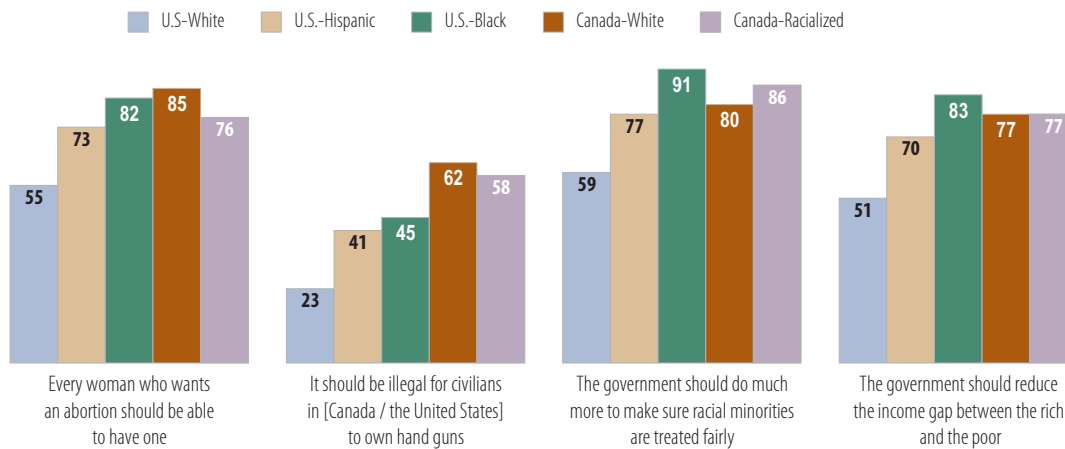


Q.13D2 & G

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ... ?

## Opinions on social issues

2022 % Agree, by identity, Canada and the United States



Q.13B, E, F & G

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ... ?

**POLITICAL POLARIZATION.** Social issues and the question of the role of the state in reducing inequality have traditionally divided citizens on the left and right of the political spectrum. In democratic societies, such differences are healthy in principle: they fuel political debate and electoral choice. In practice, concerns have been expressed about growing political polarization: that the distance between partisans has grown so great as to make political compromise impossible. Excessive polarization threatens democracy when groups of partisans are unable to accept their occasional electoral defeats and see their opponents not as rivals, but as enemies.

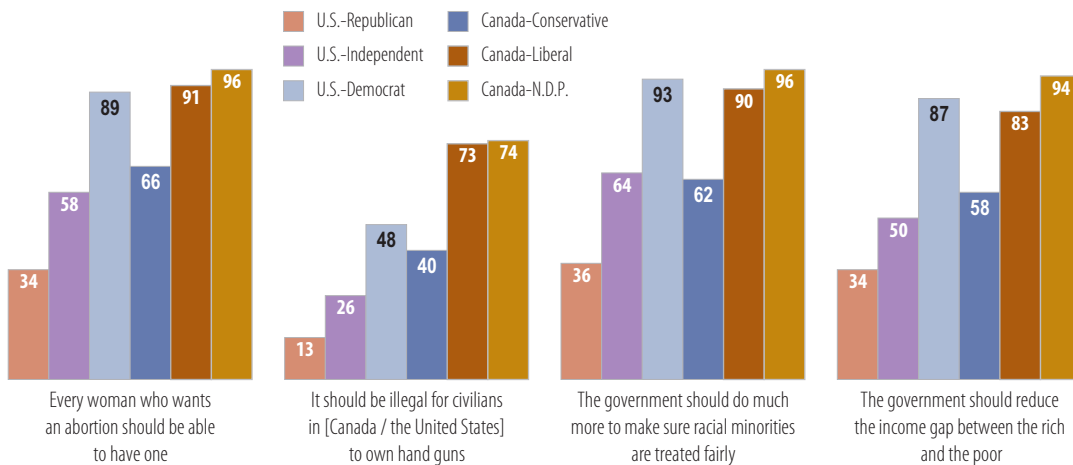
The Focus Canada survey cannot determine how much difference in opinion among partisans is too much, but it can

show that the distance between partisans is much greater in the U.S. than in Canada.

On several of the social issues covered in the survey, there is roughly a 25 to 35 percentage point difference in Canada between the views of Conservative Party supporters, on the one hand, and supporters of the Liberals or NDP, on the other. The difference between supporters of the Republican and Democratic parties in the United States, however, is generally twice as large. On the question of whether the government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly, for instance, the gap in agreement between U.S. Republicans and Democrats is 57 points, compared to a 34-point gap between Canadian Conservatives and NDP supporters.

### Opinions on social issues

2022 % Agree, by federal party support, Canada and the United States



Q.13B, E, F & G

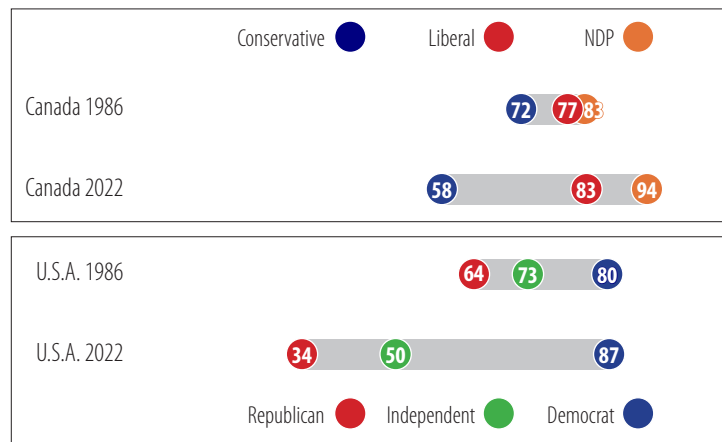
Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ...?

Moreover, while the distance between groups of partisans on these questions has grown in both countries, this growth is much more pronounced in the United States. This can be shown by looking at opinions on two questions which were asked in an earlier Focus Canada survey in 1986. On the question of whether the government should reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor, supporters of the Republican and Democratic parties in the U.S. were separated by 16 points in 1986 (in terms of their level of agreement); that gap is now 53 points. In Canada, the gap between Conservative and Liberal party supporters

widened as well, but to a lesser extent, from five points to 25 points (the gap between Conservative and NDP supporters widened from 11 points to 36 points). Similarly, on the question of whether the government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly, the gap in agreement between supporters of the Republican and Democratic parties in the U.S. increased from five points in 1986 to 57 points today. In Canada, the gap between Conservative and Liberal party supporters grew from four points to 28 points (the gap between Conservative and NDP supporters grew from eight points to 34 points).

### The government should reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor

1986 – 2022 % Agree, by party support, Canada and the United States

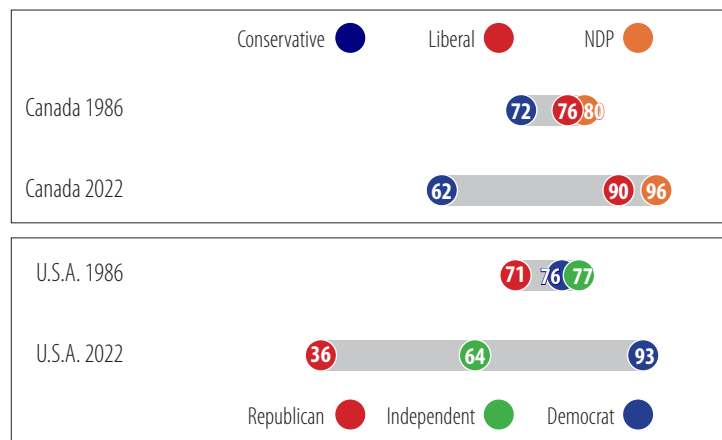


Q.13G

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ...?

### The government should do much more to make sure racial minorities are treated fairly

1986 – 2022 % Agree, by party support, Canada and the United States



Q.13F

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements ...?

In both cases, the biggest change occurred among supporters of the U.S. Republican party. Agreement on the question about reducing the gap between the rich and poor dropped by 30 points among U.S. Republicans between 1986 and 2022, compared to a 14-point drop among Canadian Conservatives. In terms of agreement about doing more to

make sure racial minorities are treated fairly, the decrease was 35 points in the case of U.S. Republicans, compared to a 10-point drop among Canadian Conservatives. As a result, there is a much greater distance between U.S. Republicans and Canadian Conservatives today than there was in the mid-1980s.



# Levels of satisfaction in Canada and the United States

A majority in both Canada and the United States continue to express satisfaction with their standard of living. In the U.S., but not in Canada, satisfaction has declined significantly when it comes to opportunities to get ahead, and to their system of government. Canadians, in contrast, have become considerably less satisfied with social and health services for the poor and elderly in their country.

## SATISFACTION WITH STANDARD OF LIVING AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GET AHEAD.

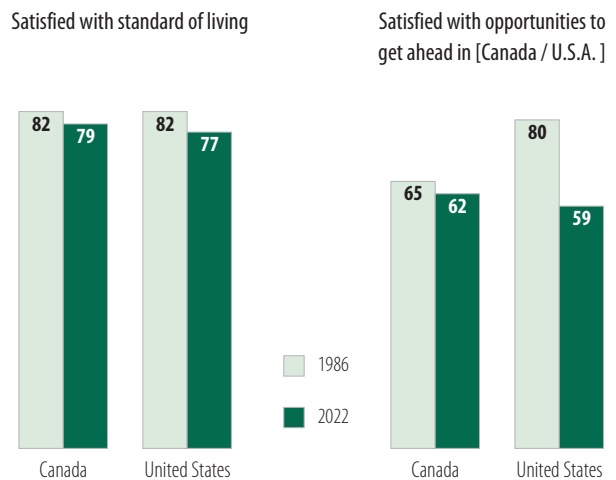
Canadians and Americans have at least one thing in common: in both countries, a large majority (about four in five) is satisfied (either very or somewhat) with their standard of living. What's more, in both countries, opinions today are more or less the same as they were in 1986, when this question was also asked on both sides of the border.

In both Canada and the United States, a smaller proportion – though still a majority (about three in five) – is also satisfied with opportunities to get ahead in their country. In this case, however, there has been a noticeable change over time in the U.S., but not in Canada. The proportion of Americans who are very or somewhat satisfied with opportunities to get ahead in their country has declined from 80 percent in 1986, to 59 percent today. Whereas Americans were previously more satisfied than Canadians with the opportunities available to them, this is no longer the case.

In both countries, views on this question among supporters of different political parties have diverged. In the U.S., satisfaction dropped for both main parties, but by more for Republicans (by 36 points, from 90% to 54%, compared to an 11-point drop among Democrats, from 76% to 65%). In Canada, satisfaction increased over the past three and a half decades among supporters of the Liberal Party (by 12 points, from 68% to 80%) and of the NDP (by 8 points, from 55% to 63%), but fell considerably among Conservatives (by 26 points, from 72% to 46%).

## Satisfaction with standard of living and opportunities to get ahead

1986 – 2022 % Agree, Canada and the United States



Q.4B & D

Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with ... ?

In is noticeable that, on both of these questions – satisfaction with one's standard of living, and satisfaction with opportunities to get ahead – there has been a considerable shift in opinion in the U.S. among African Americans. In terms of the standard of living, satisfaction in 1986 among African Americans (57%) was 25 points below the country-wide average; in 2022, satisfaction among African Americans had risen to 82 percent, slightly above the average. And while satisfaction with opportunities to get ahead declined overall in the United States, it increased somewhat among African Americans (from 52% to 59%). In 1986, satisfaction among African Americans was 28 points below average; in 2022, it matches the average.

**SATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT, AND HELP FOR THE POOR AND THE ELDERLY.** Canadians and Americans are much less satisfied with their system of government than they are with their standard of living. About one in two Canadians (53%) say they are very or somewhat satisfied with their country's system of government; in the United States, even fewer (44%) are very or somewhat satisfied with the system of government in that country.

As is the case with views on opportunities to get ahead, there has been a considerable decline in satisfaction with the American system of government in the U.S. (down 32 points), whereas views in Canada about the Canadian system of government are virtually unchanged (up 2 points).<sup>1</sup> At the same time, in both countries, views on this question among supporters of different political parties have once again diverged. The pattern of this divergence, however, is different in Canada than in the United States.

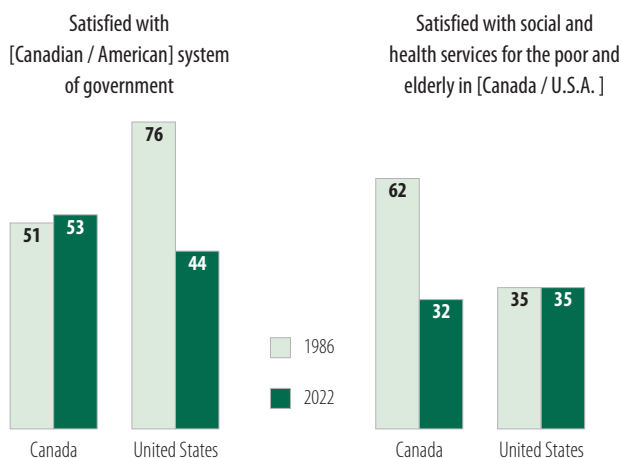
In Canada, Progressive Conservative supporters were more satisfied than Liberal Party or NDP Party supporters in 1986 – at time when the PC's under Brian Mulroney formed government in Ottawa. In 2022, at the time when the Liberal Party forms government, the groups of partisans have switched places, with Liberal supporters more satisfied than Conservative supporters. The 31-point decline in satisfaction among Conservatives is thus offset by a 30-point increase in satisfaction among Liberal supporters.

In the United States, supporters of both the Republican and the Democratic parties are less satisfied with their country's system of government today than they were in 1986 – and the same is true of independents (who identify with neither of the two main parties). The decline in satisfaction is larger among Republicans (whose candidate held the presidency in 1986, but not in 2022): down a striking 52 points. But satisfaction is also 31 points lower among independents, and 19 points lower among Democrats.

Finally, satisfaction in both countries is much lower when it comes to treatment of the poor and the elderly. In both Canada and the United States, only about one in three is either very or somewhat satisfied with social and health services for the poor and elderly in their country. Opinions

## Satisfaction with system of government, and help for poor and elderly

1986 – 2022 % Agree, Canada and the United States



Q.4A & C  
Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with ... ?

in the two countries are remarkably similar: in Canada, 31 percent are very dissatisfied with these services, and 64 percent are either very or somewhat dissatisfied; the corresponding figures in the U.S. are 33 percent and 61 percent, respectively.

<sup>1</sup> Additional Canadian surveys conducted between 1986 and 2022 show that levels of satisfaction with the country's system of government have fluctuated over time; satisfaction was lower in the early 1990s and higher in the early 2010s.

In this case, however, opinions have changed significantly over time in Canada, but not the U.S. In Canada, satisfaction with social and health services for the poor and elderly in Canada has declined by 30 points (from 62% to 32%). Whereas Canadians were previously much more likely to be satisfied in this area than Americans, this is no longer the case.

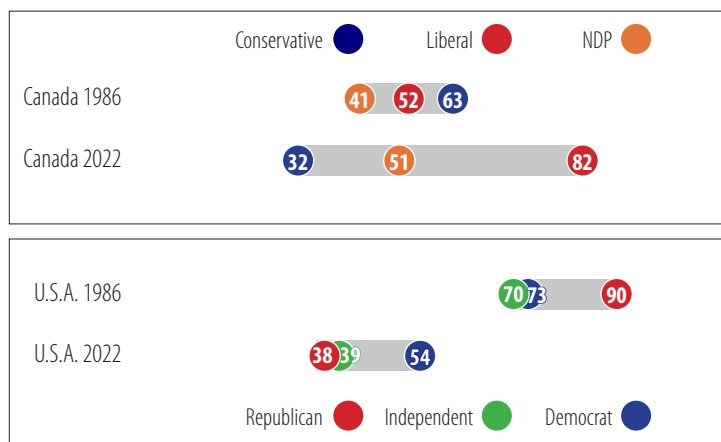
This decline in satisfaction in Canada is sharper among those aged 60 or older (down 44 points) compared to those age 18 to 29 (down 15 points). It is also more pronounced among

supporters of the Conservative Party (down 45 points) compared to Liberal Party supporters (down 21 points).

Across the four items asked about in the survey – standard of living, opportunities to get ahead, the system of government, and social and health services for the poor and elderly – there have been significant declines in satisfaction among Americans in two cases: opportunities to get ahead, and the system of government. In Canada, however, there has been a significant decline in satisfaction only in the case of social and health services for the poor and elderly.

### Satisfied with the [Canadian / American] system of government

1986 – 2022 % Satisfied, by party support, Canada and the United States



Q.4A

Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with ... ?

# Canada's independence

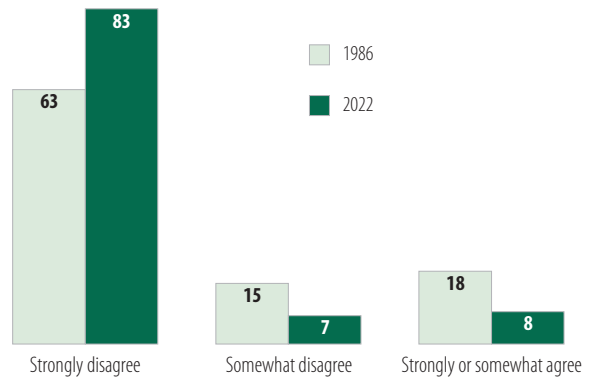
There has been an increase since 1986 in the proportion of Canadians that strongly disagrees with the idea that Canada and the United States should unite into one country.

**SHOULD CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES UNITE INTO ONE COUNTRY?** Very few Canadians support the idea of joining the United States. Nonetheless, it is notable that opposition to this idea has grown over the past few decades.

In 1986, 78 percent of Canadians strongly or somewhat disagreed that “Canada and the United States should someday unite into one country,” and 18 percent strongly or somewhat agreed. Today, overall disagreement has risen to 90 percent, with agreement falling to eight percent. Strong disagreement has increased 20 points, from 63 to 83 percent.

Opinions on this question today are relatively uniform across different population groups, with large majorities in every region, from different backgrounds, and with different partisan allegiances, rejecting the idea of an eventual union between Canada and the United States.

Should Canada and the United States unite into one country?  
1986 – 2022



Q.13A

*Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements: Canada and the United States should someday unite into one country.*



