

**FOCUS**  
  
**CANADA**

2025 SPRING  
SERIES

# Public Opinion About Canada- USA Relations

**Environics  
Institute**  
For Survey Research

### **ENVIRONICS INSTITUTE FOR SURVEY RESEARCH**

The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 with a mandate to conduct in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society.

### **FOCUS CANADA**

As part of its **Focus Canada** public opinion research program (launched in 1976), the **Environics Institute** updated its research on Canadian attitudes about Canada-U.S. relations. The survey is based on telephone interviews conducted (via landline and cellphones) with 2,000 Canadians between May 5 and 18, 2025. 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.

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# Executive summary

Canada and the United States have enjoyed a strong relationship for more than a century. There have been ups and downs depending on the respective leaders in each country, but underneath remained a solid foundation of trust and partnership. This has played out through expanding integration across the two economies, an enduring defense partnership through NATO and the Strategic Air Command, and a welcoming coast-to-coast border easily crossed by countless Canadians and Americans for business, leisure and family visits.

The second Trump administration has quickly upended this historic relationship, through punitive tariffs on Canadian industry, intrusive border restrictions, and repeated talk of absorbing Canada as the US 51st state. This sudden aggressive posture from a long-trusted ally now poses the greatest existential threat to Canada since its founding as a Dominion in the mid 19th century (an act prompted in large part by fears of US annexation at that time).

In Canada, public reaction to these events has been swift and unequivocal, as revealed in the latest Focus Canada survey which was conducted May 5 to 18, 2025. Canadians have become much more negative in their view of the United States and more “elbows up” confident in their own country as a sovereign nation.

Public favourability of the United States has plummeted over the past eight months, equaling the negative views expressed towards the end of Trump’s first term in office. As in 2020, Canadians are now more than twice as likely to hold an unfavourable view of the USA as a favourable one. What is different this time is the speed in which the shift has taken place: Canadians’ dislike of the US shot up in a matter of a few months since the new administration took office in Washington in January, compared to the three years it took for this perspective to take hold during Trump’s first term. Canadians may feel negative about the USA for a number of reasons but it most clearly reflects a dislike of Donald Trump, as close to eight in ten disapprove of his performance as President.

Moreover, Canadians’ response to concerns about events in the United States has now expanded beyond general opinions to more concrete action. One-third report they

have already changed their plans for travelling to the USA this year because of the current political climate in that country. This is double the proportion who said they cut back on US travel in 2017, during the first Trump administration. In 2025, one in four say they never considered plans for visiting the USA this year, also a higher number than before and further indication of how Canadians are now choosing to travel elsewhere.

The unprecedented current threat to the country’s sovereignty is likely to remain unresolved for some time, but the idea of becoming part of the United States is a non-starter for most Canadians. Nine in ten disagree (with 8 in 10 in strong disagreement) with the idea that the two countries should someday unite into one, compared with fewer than one in ten expressing support. Again, public opposition to such a merger is stronger than in the 1980s during the national debate about free trade.

Most Canadians also express confidence in the future of the country’s sovereignty. In the face of the current threat emanating from the United States, seven in ten believe it is very likely that Canada will remain an independent country; only one in ten think this outcome is in doubt.

Such widespread public confidence in Canada’s future is all the more notable given that it is much stronger than what it was in 1990 shortly after the signing of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement.

These latest shifts in public opinion about the United States and Canadian sovereignty reflect national trends, as they are evident across the country and among most identifiable groups. Positive views of the USA, President Trump and uniting the countries are a bit higher in the Prairie provinces and among younger Canadians, but these reflect marginal differences; similarities with other Canadians stand out more than differences. What stands out clearly is the perspective of those who voted for the federal Conservative Party in the election held just before this survey was fielded. Compared with other Canadians, Conservative voters are twice as likely to remain positive in their opinion of the United States, approve of Donald Trump’s performance, and support a future merger of the two countries.



# General opinions about the USA

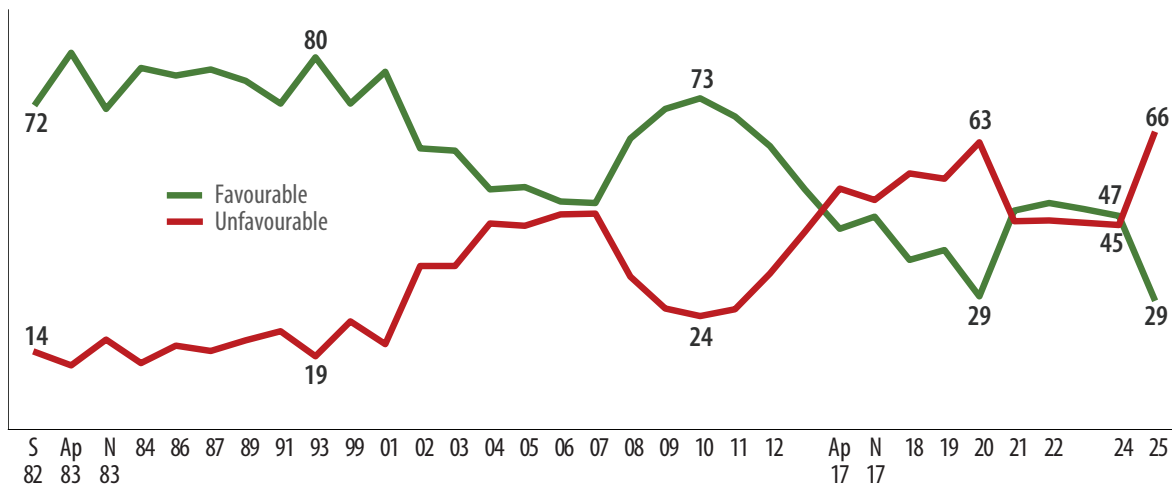
The reelection of Donald Trump has once again caused a sharp drop in Canadians' overall opinion of the United States, which is now at its most unfavourable level on record. Just over one in ten Canadians approve of Trump as President, as was the case in 2018, during his first term.

**OVERALL OPINION OF THE USA.** The reelection of Donald Trump in 2024 has once again resulted in a dramatic shift in how Canadians think about the USA. Fewer than three in ten now have a very (7%) or somewhat (22%) favourable opinion of the United States (down 18 percentage points since September 2024), compared with more than twice as many whose opinion is somewhat (26%) or very (40%) unfavourable (up 21 points); this largely matches Canadian sentiment recorded in October 2020 as Trump's first term was coming to an end. The

most significant shift since last September is the jump in proportion who hold a "very unfavourable" opinion of the USA (up 22 points to 40%), marking what is by far the most negative opinion of the USA held by Canadians since Focus Canada began asking this question in 1982.

This significant downturn in opinion of the USA is evident across regions of the country and groups identified by demographic characteristics. The rise in strong negative feelings is most noticeable in Quebec and British Columbia, as well as among Canadians ages 60 plus, women, and those with a university degree. A favourable view of the USA is now a minority opinion across most of the population, but most evident among residents of the Prairie provinces (35%) and Canadians ages 18 to 29 (38%).

Canadian public opinion of the United States  
% 1982 - 2025



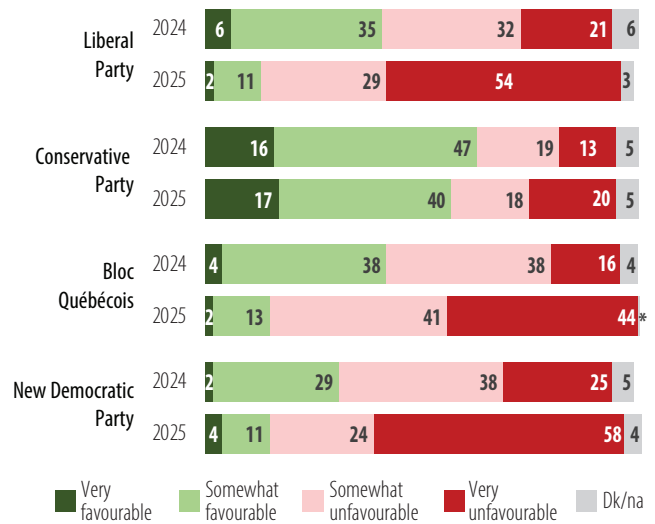
Q.4 In general, what is your opinion of the United States? Is it very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable?

Canadian public opinion about the United States is most strongly linked to federal political party support (as measured by reported vote in the recent federal election). In sharp contrast with other voters, those who voted for the Conservative Party on April 28 are more likely to be favourable (57%) than unfavourable (38%) in their view of the USA. Their opinions have worsened only modestly since last fall (with very unfavourable ratings up by only 7 percentage points).

By comparison, among Canadians who voted for the Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois or NDP, well over eight in ten now hold an unfavourable view of the USA, with “very unfavourable” ratings up between 28% and 33% since last fall).

## Canadian public opinion of the United States

% 2024 - 2025 By Federal party vote



Q.4 In general, what is your opinion of the United States? Is it very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable?

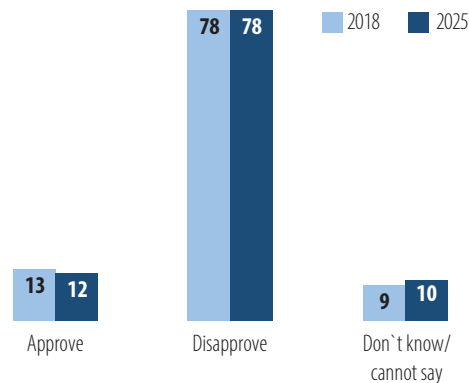
**APPROVAL OF DONALD TRUMP.** As was the case during his first term, Donald Trump receives very low approval ratings from Canadians. Just over one in ten (12%) approve of the way he is handling his job as US President, compared with 78 percent who disapprove, and another 10 percent who do not offer any opinion. These results are almost identical to those recorded in September 2018, part-way into the President’s first term.

Not surprisingly, opinions about the President are tightly linked to how Canadians view the US overall. Six in ten (61%) Canadians express both disapproval of Trump’s performance and an unfavourable view of the USA. By comparison, only 10 percent both approve of the President and hold a positive view of the country he leads.

Trump remains unpopular across the Canadian population. He is most likely to receive approval ratings in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (21%) and Alberta (20%), as well as among people who voted for the federal Conservative Party in the recent federal election (30%). This view is least apt to be shared in Quebec (8%), among Canadians ages 60 plus (8%), and among those who voted for the federal Liberal Party (3%), Bloc Québécois (1%) or NDP (1%).

## Approval of Donald Trump as U.S. President

% 2018 - 2025



Q.5 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President of the United States?



# Changing plans for US travel

More than one-third of Canadians report having changed their plans to visit the US this year. This is more than double the proportion who made this decision in 2017, early in Trump's first term.

The USA has long been a very popular destination for Canadian travelers, who have taken advantage of proximity, inexpensive flights and efficient border crossings to visit in large numbers. This began to change almost a decade ago, when Trump's first administration instituted travel restrictions on foreign visitors, with a particular focus on those holding passports from Middle Eastern countries. These changes prompted some Canadians to reconsider their travel plans south of the border.

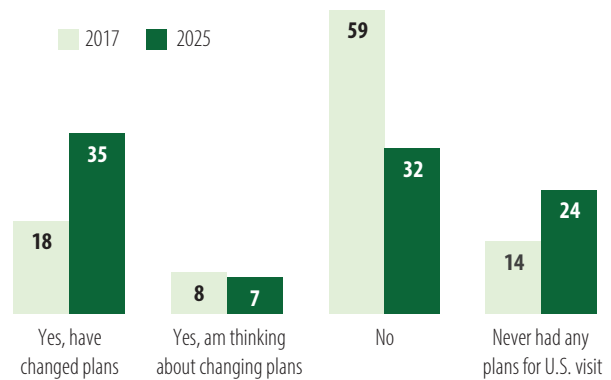
Shortly upon taking office in 2025, the new Trump administration imposed new restrictions on foreign visitors, and empowered border agents to be more selective in who they allowed entry. The media soon circulated stories of Canadians and other foreign visitors being confronted with intrusive questions, searches of their electronic devices, denial of entry, and in a few cases lengthy detentions for ostensible violations of US policy. The result is a sharp jump in Canadians deciding to forgo their plans for US travel.

One-third (35%) of Canadians say they have changed their plans to visit the US this year, which is double the proportion recorded in April 2017 (early in Trump's first term in office). Another seven percent indicate they are thinking about changing plans (unchanged from 2017).

The decision to cancel plans for US travel is a common response across the country, but especially noticeable among British Columbians (44%), Canadians ages 45 to 59 (43%), those with higher incomes (42%) and women (39%), while less evident among Canadians 18 to 29 (25%) and residents of the Prairie provinces (28%). But changed US travel plans this year appear to be most closely linked to political partisanship: This is most widely reported by Canadians who recently voted for the federal Liberal Party (49%) or NDP (45%), while least apt to be mentioned by those who voted for the federal Conservatives (21%).

## Changing plans to visit the U.S. this year?

% 2017 - 2025



Q.6 Have you personally either changed your plans, or are thinking about changing your plans, for travelling to the United States this year because of the current political climate in that country?



# Canadian sovereignty

More than eight in ten Canadians strongly reject Donald Trump’s proposal for their country to become part of the United States. Seven in ten also believe it is very likely than Canada will remain independent of the USA, more than twice as many as expressed this view shortly after the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement.

Early in his new administration President Trump repeatedly voice the opinion that Canada is not a real country and would be better off as his country’s 51st state. The US government has yet to take any concrete actions on this idea, but it represents the most substantial existential threat to Canadian sovereignty since its founding as a Dominion in 1867. Canadian leaders and citizens have forcefully pushed back in an “elbows up” moment to declare that joining the US would never happen.

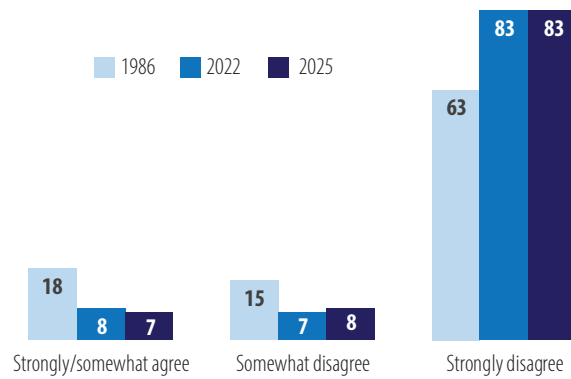
**SHOULD CANADA JOIN THE USA?** Few Canadians express interest in the idea of uniting their country with the United States. Fewer than one in ten say they strongly (4%) or somewhat (4%) agree that “*Canada and the United States should someday unite into one country*”, compared with nine in ten who somewhat (8%) or strongly (83%) disagree.

Canadians’ opinions on this question are essentially unchanged from 2022 (when this question was last asked in Focus Canada), but more strongly in opposition than four decades ago (in 1986) when 63 percent strongly disagreed with this statement about someday uniting with the USA.

There is strong public opposition to a merger with the United States across the country, with at least seven in ten in every identifiable group expressing disagreement. Support for the idea is most evident in Alberta (11%, up 5 percentage points from 2022), among Canadians ages 30 to 44 (12%, up 4) and those who recently voted for the federal Conservative Party (15%, up 4). Strong opposition is most widely voiced by Canadians ages 60 plus (90%, up 5) and those who voted for the federal Liberal Party (94%, up 11) or NDP (93%, up 1).

Positions by political affiliation were noticeably different four decades ago, when it was Liberal Party supporters who were most likely to express support for Canada uniting someday with the USA (23% agreed with the statement, versus 74% who disagreed), compared with those aligned with the Progressive Conservative Party (19%, versus 78%) or NDP (15%, versus 83%).

Should Canada and the U.S. unite into one country?  
% 1986 - 2025



Q.7 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.

**WILL CANADA REMAIN INDEPENDENT FROM THE UNITED STATES?** Apart from whether Canadians believe Canada should or should not become part of the United States, what do they currently make of the prospects of this political union taking place? The USA's overwhelming economic and military dominance notwithstanding, few think such a merger is likely to happen.

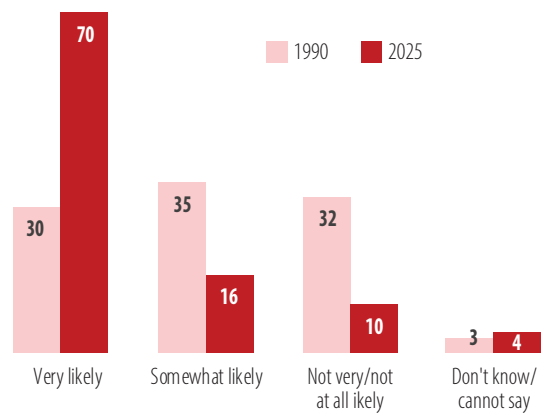
Seven in ten (70%) Canadians say it is very likely that “we will be able to keep Canada independent from the United States.” One in six (16%) see this as somewhat likely, with another one in ten who maintain it is not very (6%) or not at all (4%) likely.

Such strong public confidence in enduring Canadian sovereignty is striking given the economic and political threats coming from the Trump administration. It is even more notable when compared to the situation 35 years ago, following the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement that many Canadians feared would erode their country’s sovereignty. The same survey question when asked in 1990 found that only three in ten (30%) Canadians at that time believed it was very likely that Canada would remain independent from the United States.

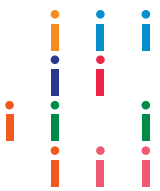
Public confidence in protecting an independent Canada is the majority view across the country, with at least six in ten Canadians from every region and demographic subgroup saying it is very likely that Canada will remain independent from the USA. This sentiment is most widely expressed in British Columbia (79%) and among Canadians ages 45 plus (74%), and less so among Quebecers (60%). As with other opinions on this topic, views on this question diverge most sharply on political affiliation, between those who recently voted for the Liberal Party (82% say very likely) and those who voted Conservative (55%).

As might be expected, opinions about the prospects for protecting Canadian sovereignty are closely linked to opinions about the USA and whether the two countries should unite. Belief in Canada very likely remaining independent is especially widespread among those who hold an unfavourable view of the USA (77%), disapprove of Donald Trump’s performance as president (76%), and strongly disagree that Canada should unite with the USA (77%). A clear majority (64%) of Canadians both strongly oppose their country uniting with the USA and also believe it is very likely this outcome will never happen. By comparison, very few (3%) both support a political union and think it is likely to become a reality.

**Will Canada remain independent from the United States?**  
% 1990 - 2025



Q.8 Thinking about Canada over the next decade, do you think that it is very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely or not at all likely that we will be able to keep Canada independent from the United States?



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