

# ***American Public Opinion and Trade***

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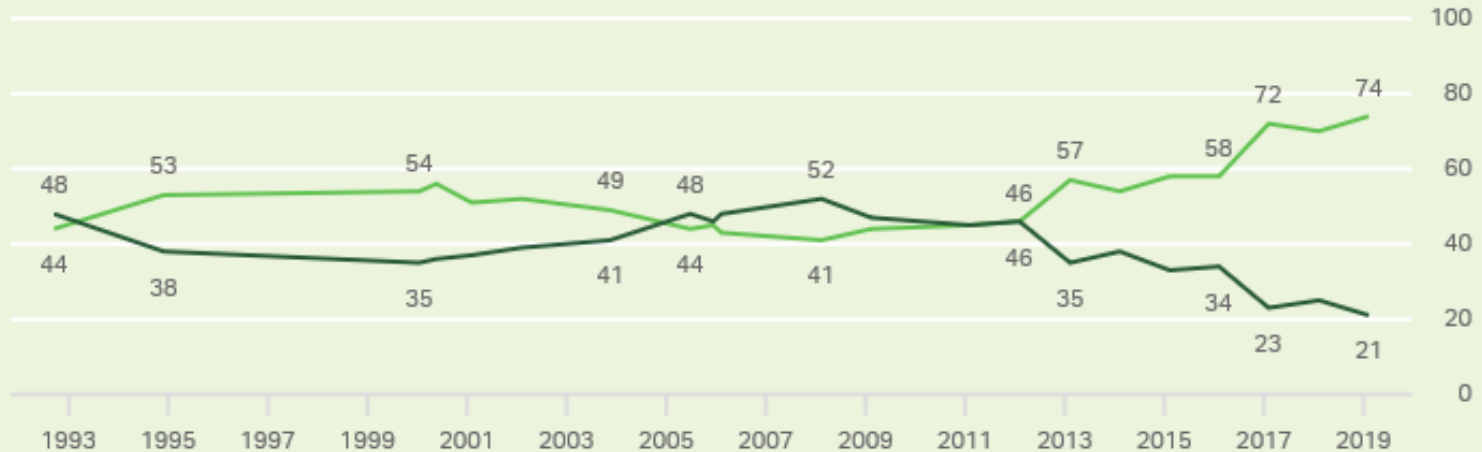
**U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
International Affairs

# Americans overwhelmingly see trade as positive

## Record High in U.S. See Implications of Trade as Positive for U.S.

What do you think foreign trade means for America? Do you see foreign trade more as -- an opportunity for economic growth through increased U.S. exports or a threat to the economy from foreign imports?

■ % Opportunity for growth ■ % Threat to economy

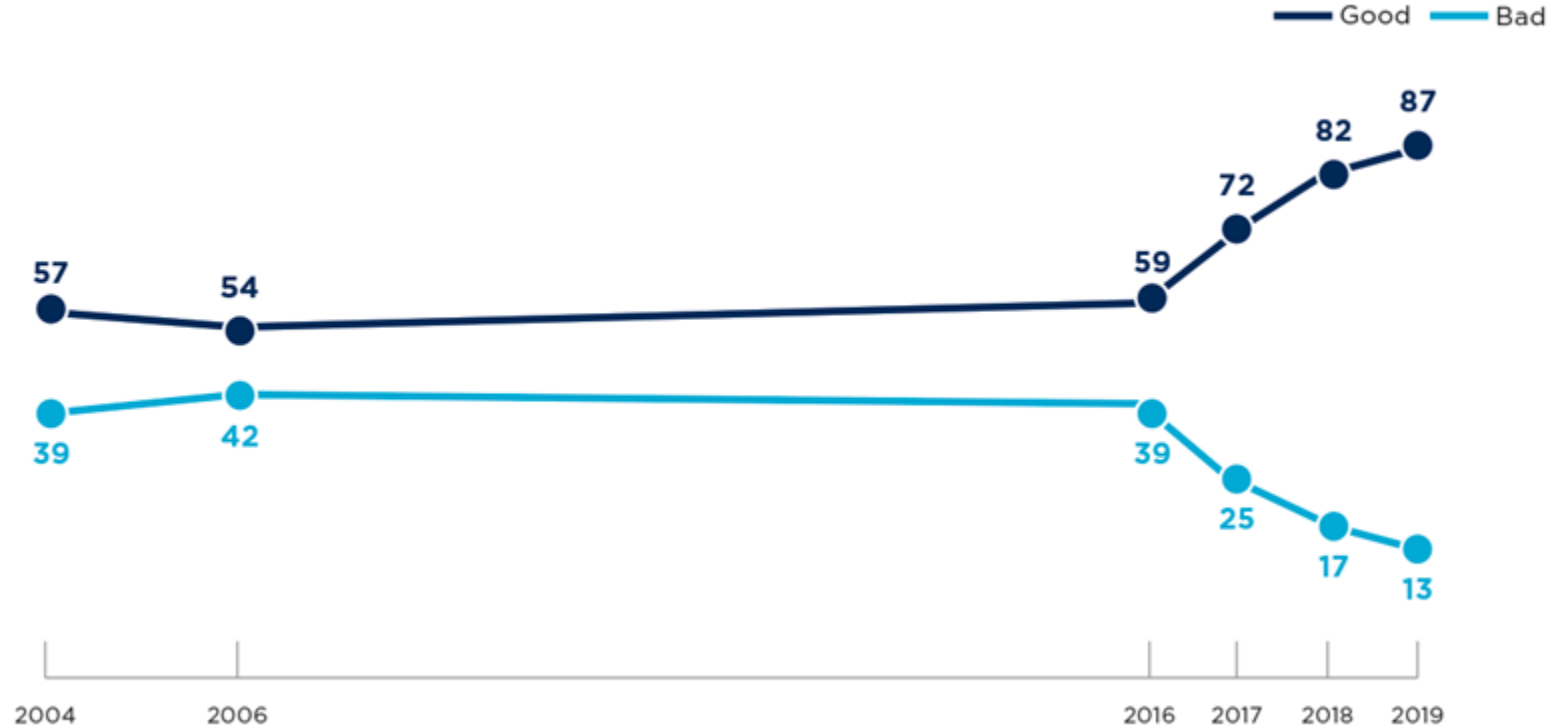


GALLUP

Source: [Gallup](#), March 2019.

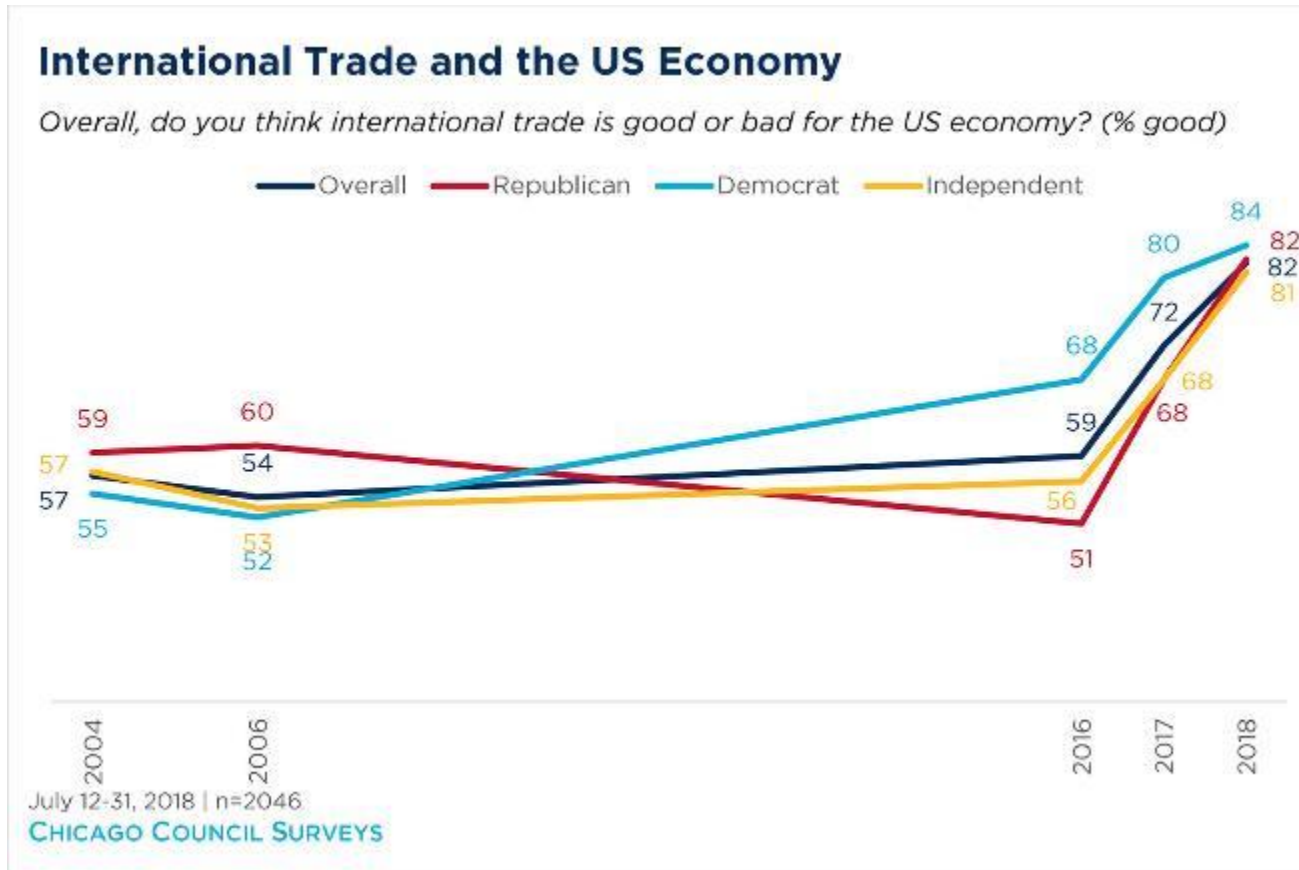
# Multiple polls show this trend

*Do you think international trade is good or bad for the US economy?*



Source: [Chicago Council on Global Affairs](#), September 2019.

# And that's true of Republicans and Democrats

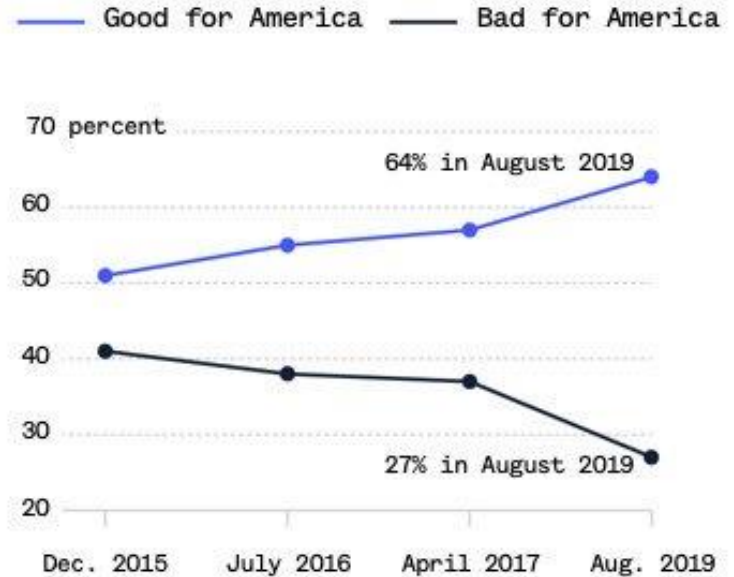


# Here's another poll saying the same thing

Source: [NBC News/WSJ](#) poll, August 2019.

## Free trade reaches all-time high

Free trade with foreign countries.



### Note

Poll taken August 10-14, margin of error +/- 3.1 percent

Sources: NBC News/WSJ poll

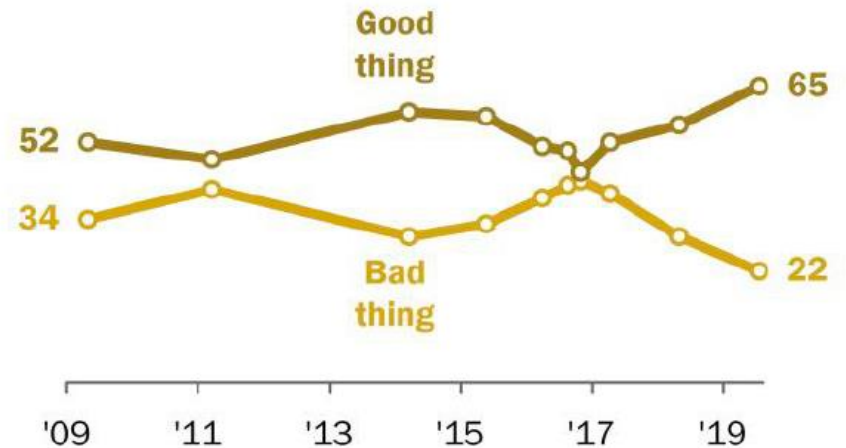
Graphic: Robin Muccari / NBC News

**And not just  
“trade” in general:  
Americans  
increasingly say  
free trade agreements  
are good for the  
country**

Source: [Pew](#), July 2019.

## **Growing share say free trade agreements have been good for the U.S.**

*% who say free trade agreements between the U.S. and other countries have been a \_\_\_\_ for the United States*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-15, 2019.

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# More Americans think tariffs hurt the economy

13. In general, do you think imposing tariffs or fees on products imported from other countries helps the U.S. economy, hurts the economy, or doesn't make much of a difference either way?

	<u>Helps</u>	<u>Hurts</u>	No <u>difference</u>	<u>(Don't know)</u>
11-13 Aug 19	29%	46	15	10
9-12 Jun 19	33%	45	17	5

*For reference: Recently, the United States increased tariffs or fees on imports from China -- in the long run, do you think this strategy will help the U.S. economy, hurt the economy, or not make much of a difference either way?*

11-14 May 19	34%	45	11	9
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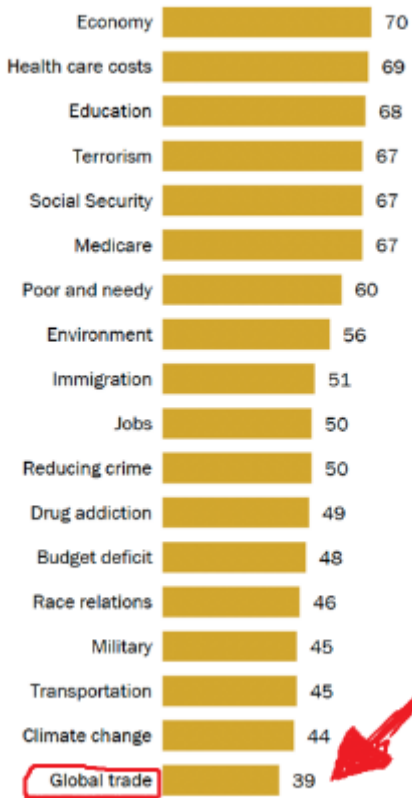
*For reference: Recently, the United States increased tariffs or fees on imports from other countries. In the long run, do you think these tariffs will help the U.S. economy, hurt the economy, or not make much of a difference either way?*

16-19 Sep 18	36%	42	16	6
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Fox News: 46% say tariffs hurt the economy vs 29% say they help  
(17% underwater in 8/19 vs 11% in 5/19 and 6% in 9/18)

## Public's policy priorities for 2019

*% who say \_\_\_\_ should be a top priority for Trump and Congress this year*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 9-14, 2019.

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**BUT ...**  
**trade just isn't a priority**  
**for most Americans**

Source: [Pew](#), January 2019.



# And it's been that way for a long time

Source: [Pew](#), January 2019.

## Public's policy priorities: 2011-2019

% who say \_\_\_\_ should be a top priority for the president and Congress

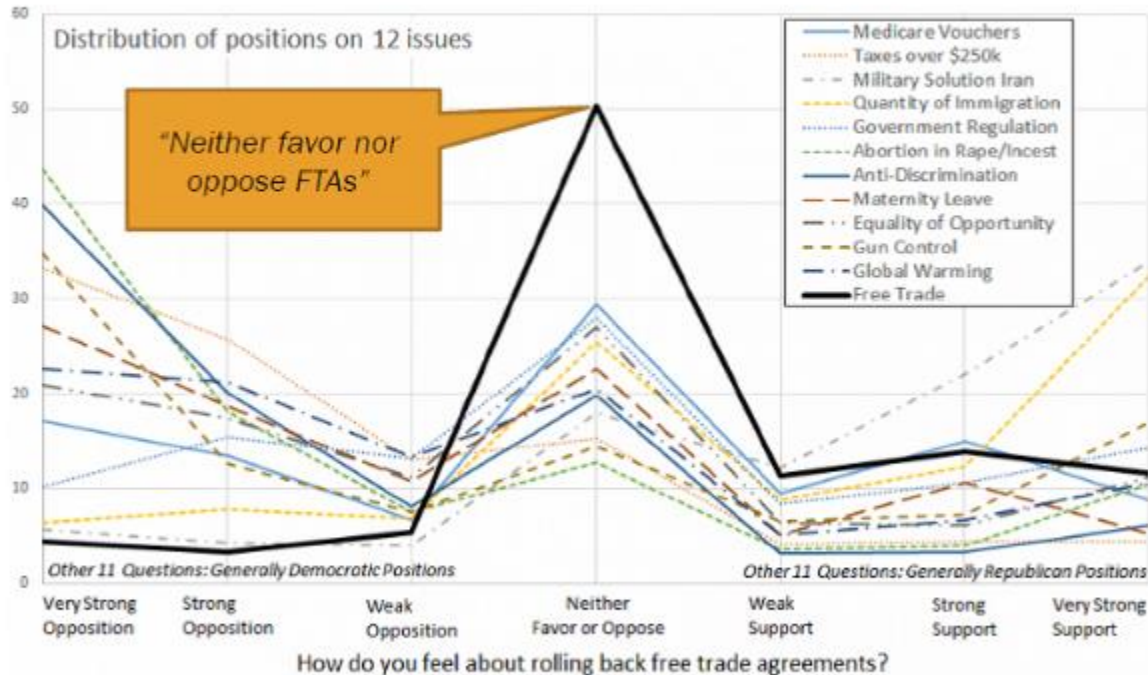
	8 years ago Jan 2011	4 years ago Jan 2015	1 year ago Jan 2018	Now Jan 2019	8-year chg '11-'19	1-year chg '18-'19
	%	%	%	%		
Strengthening nation's economy	87	75	71	70	-17	-1
Reducing health care costs	61	64	68	69	+8	+1
Improving education	66	67	72	68	+2	-4
Defending against terrorism	73	76	73	67	-6	-6
Securing Social Security	66	66	67	67	+1	0
Securing Medicare	61	61	66	67	+6	+1
Problems of poor and needy	52	55	58	60	+8	+2
Protecting environment	40	51	62	56	+16	-6
Dealing with immigration	46	52	47	51	+5	+4
Improving job situation	84	67	62	50	-34	-12
Reducing crime	44	57	56	50	+6	-6
Dealing with drug addiction	--	--	49	49	--	0
Reducing budget deficit	64	64	48	48	-16	0
Addressing race relations	--	49	52	46	--	-6
Strengthening the military	43	52	46	45	+2	-1
Improving transportation	33	42	49	45	+12	-4
Dealing with climate change	26	34	46	44	+18	-2
Dealing with global trade	34	30	38	39	+5	+1

Notes: In 2013 and earlier, the item "dealing with the issue of immigration" asked about "illegal immigration." In 2015 and earlier, the item "Dealing with global climate change" asked about "global warming." Significant changes in **bold**.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 9-14, 2019.

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# When you dig into the numbers, it appears most Americans “neither favor nor oppose” trade deals



# CONCLUSION

Americans are pretty favorably inclined toward trade,  
but it's not a top priority.

Most view trade as 😏

This may account for some of the volatility evident  
in public opinion on trade over the past decade,  
with many voters adopting the views  
of their favored political leaders.

And that makes political leadership  
on trade even more important.