

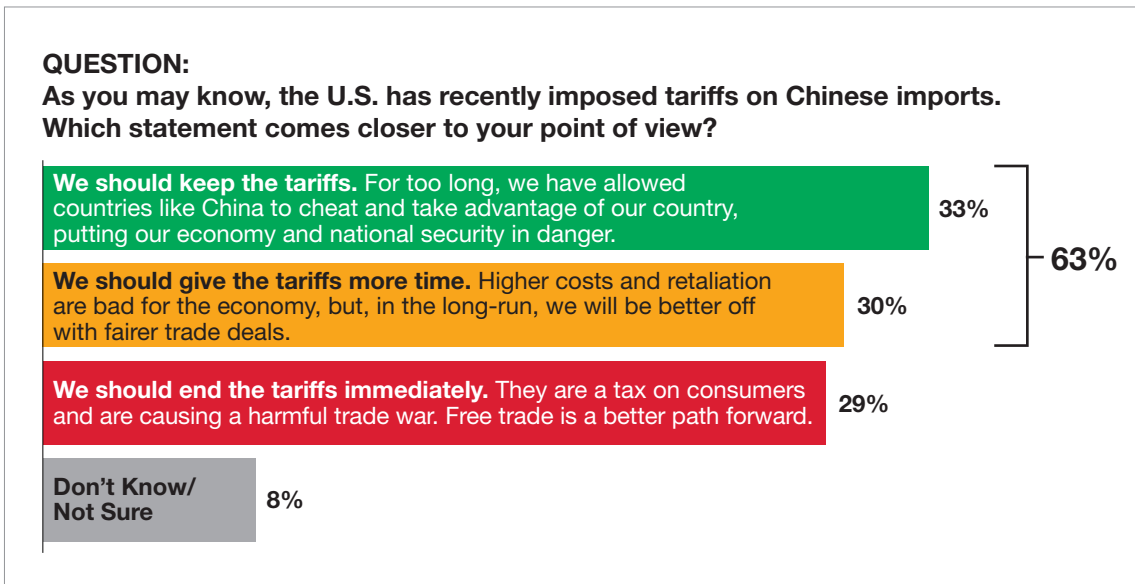
TO: The Alliance for American Manufacturing
FROM: The Mellman Group, Inc. & Public Opinion Strategies
RE: National Survey Results
DATE: September 20, 2018

This analysis represents the findings of a national survey of 1,200 likely 2018 general election voters from Aug. 28 through Sept. 9, 2018. Survey interviews were conducted on both landlines and cellphones, using a registration-based sample. The margin of error for is +/-2.8 % at the 95% level of confidence, and is higher for subgroups.

Our recently completed survey finds that a 63% majority of the 2018 electorate supports keeping the tariffs on China imposed this year or giving them more time to work. This survey, which shows Democrats with an 8-point lead in the generic congressional vote (46%-38%), also shows that support for the tariffs extends across party lines, including plurality support among voters backing the Democrat in the generic vote. Furthermore, at this time, more voters put a premium on addressing China’s unfair trade practices than are worried about the potential for a “trade war.” This is the only recent publicly released survey to explore views on trade in-depth, going beyond a simple binary approach.

A Majority Supports Keeping The China Tariffs Or Giving Them More Time

Given three statements about the tariffs on China, a plurality identified with the statement that “we should keep the tariffs” (full wording on chart below) and another 30% felt we should at least “give the tariffs more time.” Together, this constitutes a 63% majority; with a full 51% majority saying they feel this way strongly.



This support compares to only 29% who favor ending the tariffs immediately because they are a “tax on consumers” and “are causing a harmful trade war.”

Support for at least giving the tariffs more time spans across important voter demographics. Though support for keeping or giving the tariffs more time was slightly higher among older men (those over 50 years old) (69%) and older women (63%), support remains above a majority among younger men (60%) and women (59%). The majority support at roughly 60% also holds across region, race and education levels. Among Hispanic and African-American voters, 59% and 58% respectively, feel we should at least give the tariffs more time. White working-class voters are slightly higher, with 67% supporting at least giving the tariffs more time, including a 38% plurality that prefer to “keep the tariffs.” Among white non-college educated voters, 43% feel we should keep the tariffs.

Even among those who support a Democrat in the generic vote and those who have an unfavorable view of President Trump, there are still pluralities who want to at least give the tariffs more time.

This poll, conducted as campaigns for the midterms are moving into full-gear for the fall push, shows the generic Democratic congressional candidate with an 8-point lead (46%-38%) over the Republican. A 47% plurality of those voting Democratic want to either keep the tariffs (19%) or give them more time (27%). Even among the majority who have an unfavorable view of the president (favorable 43%, unfavorable 54%), half (50%) want to at least give the tariffs more time, compared to 42% who want to end them. That is more than offset not only by the 78% majority among those supporting the Republican (49% keep the tariffs, 28% give them time), but also by a similar 76% majority among those not yet choosing a side in the generic vote (35% keep the tariffs, 41% give them time).

Large Majorities Agree We Must Be Willing To Get Tough With China Using Trade Restrictions

Underlying this support is overwhelming agreement with the principle that we must be willing to get tough with China and other countries using unfair trade. By a 66-point margin (81% agree, 15% disagree) voters agree with the statement that “We must be willing to get tough with trade restrictions on countries like China who cheat in international trade.” Republicans are most broadly supportive (94% agree) but this also includes 70% of Democrats and 78% of independents. In fact, 47% of Democrats and 59% of independents feel that way strongly.

Three-quarters (75%) agree that “free trade is a goal, but in the real world we cannot get there unless we are also willing to use tough measures at the same time,” including 50% who feel that way strongly. In comparison, only a third (32%) strongly agrees that “Free trade agreements have always benefited the U.S. and we should sign more of them.”



At This Point, More Voters Are Worried About Unfair Trade Than A Trade War

While there has been considerable news coverage about the potential for a “trade war,” this is a relatively limited concern for voters. Less than a fifth (18%) said that “trade wars raising prices and hurting the economy” was one of their biggest worries, well behind other concerns, including “health care is too expensive” (42%); “our kids... are not getting the education they need” (36%); and “important infrastructure – like bridges, roads and water systems – are falling apart” (31%). Worries about a trade war were also behind concerns about “too many jobs being shipped overseas” (24%) and “we have lost too many manufacturing jobs” (23%).



Moreover, just over a third (37%) shared the view that “tariffs will spark a global trade war,” compared to a 54% majority who felt that “taking steps to protect American companies and workers ... will force China to finally address these unfair practices.” The concern about unfair trade outweighs concerns about a trade war across most demographics including by race, class and education. The plurality of independents (48%) and the large majority of Republicans (71%) are more concerned about unfair trade, with most feeling that way strongly (38% of independents and 55% of Republicans) Though the numbers among Democrats lean the other way with 50% identifying more with the concerns about a trade war, only a third (35%) feel that way strongly. By comparison among African-Americans, white working class voters, and older men and older women, large majorities are more concerned with unfair trade, and over 40% feel that way strongly.

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