Build Canada

# "Elbows up" is not a blank cheque

## National poll

September 8, 2026

# Methodology

Build Canada

Sample: 1696

2026-08-31 - 2026-09-04

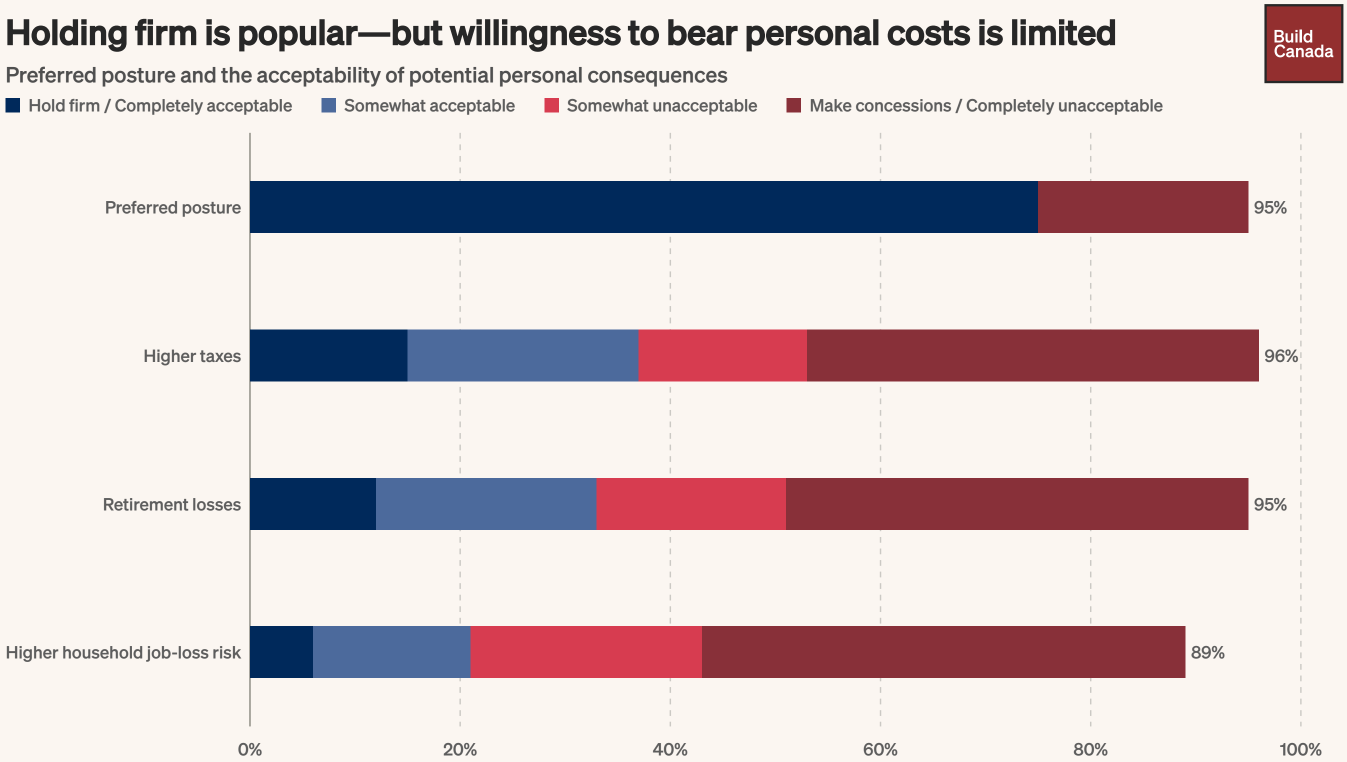
Build Canada conducted a bilingual survey of a random sample of 1,696 Canadian residents from August 31 to September 4, 2026, using SMS-to-online technology. Participants were reached through random digit dialing (RDD) to cellphones. Respondents completed the survey in English (1,590) or French (106). Of 1,760 recorded responses, 1,696 qualified for analysis. 64 were excluded for incomplete or invalid demographic submissions.

The resulting data was weighted to match targets based on the 2021 Census. For the poll, the margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin is higher for sub-samples. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Full question wording (in French and English), question ordering and tables are available here .

The survey was commissioned, funded and conducted by Build Canada. Build Canada is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) and adheres to CRIC's Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements. This survey was registered to CRIC's Research Verification Service under project code: 20260831-BU261.

Three-quarters of Canadians surveyed favour holding firm in the trade dispute even if economic costs last longer. Yet approximately 68% find a noticeably higher chance of someone in their household losing their job unacceptable as part of Canada's response to U.S. tariffs. Majorities also reject higher taxes and retirement losses.

These results reveal tension between Canada's preferred negotiating position and Canadians' acceptance of its potential economic consequences.




'Not sure' omitted. The posture row uses hold firm / make concessions; cost rows use the full acceptability scale. Tax and retirement figures pool three split-ballot scenarios.
Source: Build Canada bilingual survey, Aug. 31–Sept. 4, 2026, n=1,696. MOE ±3.1 pts, 19/20.

# Key takeaways

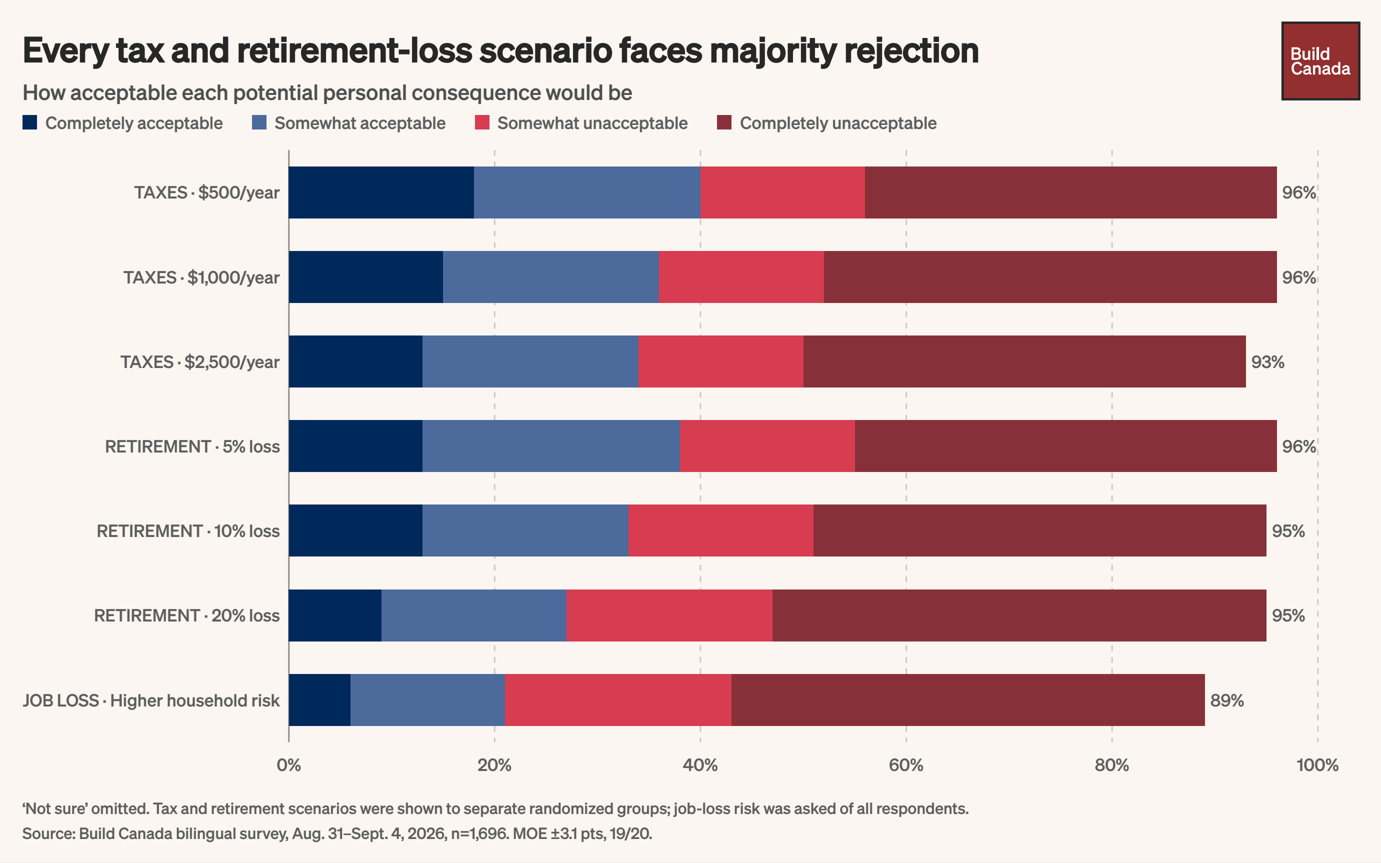
- **Holding firm has broad support, but personal costs meet resistance.** Seventy-five percent favour holding firm despite prolonged economic costs; approximately 68% find increased household job-loss risk unacceptable.
- **Higher taxes and retirement losses face majority rejection at every level tested.** Approximately 56%-60% reject tax increases, while 58%-68% reject retirement losses.

- **Willingness differs by employment status.** Fifty-four percent of retirees would accept higher costs indefinitely, versus 36% of full-time workers. Forty-four percent of blue-collar respondents would accept no higher costs, compared with 20% of white-collar respondents.

- **Many already report making some sacrifices.** Sixty-nine percent say they bought Canadian despite higher prices, 57% cancelled or avoided U.S. travel, and 55% stopped buying specific American brands.

- **The partisan divide is substantial.** Holding firm attracts 96% support among reported Liberal voters and 41% among reported Conservative voters; willingness to accept higher costs indefinitely is 56% and 19%, respectively.

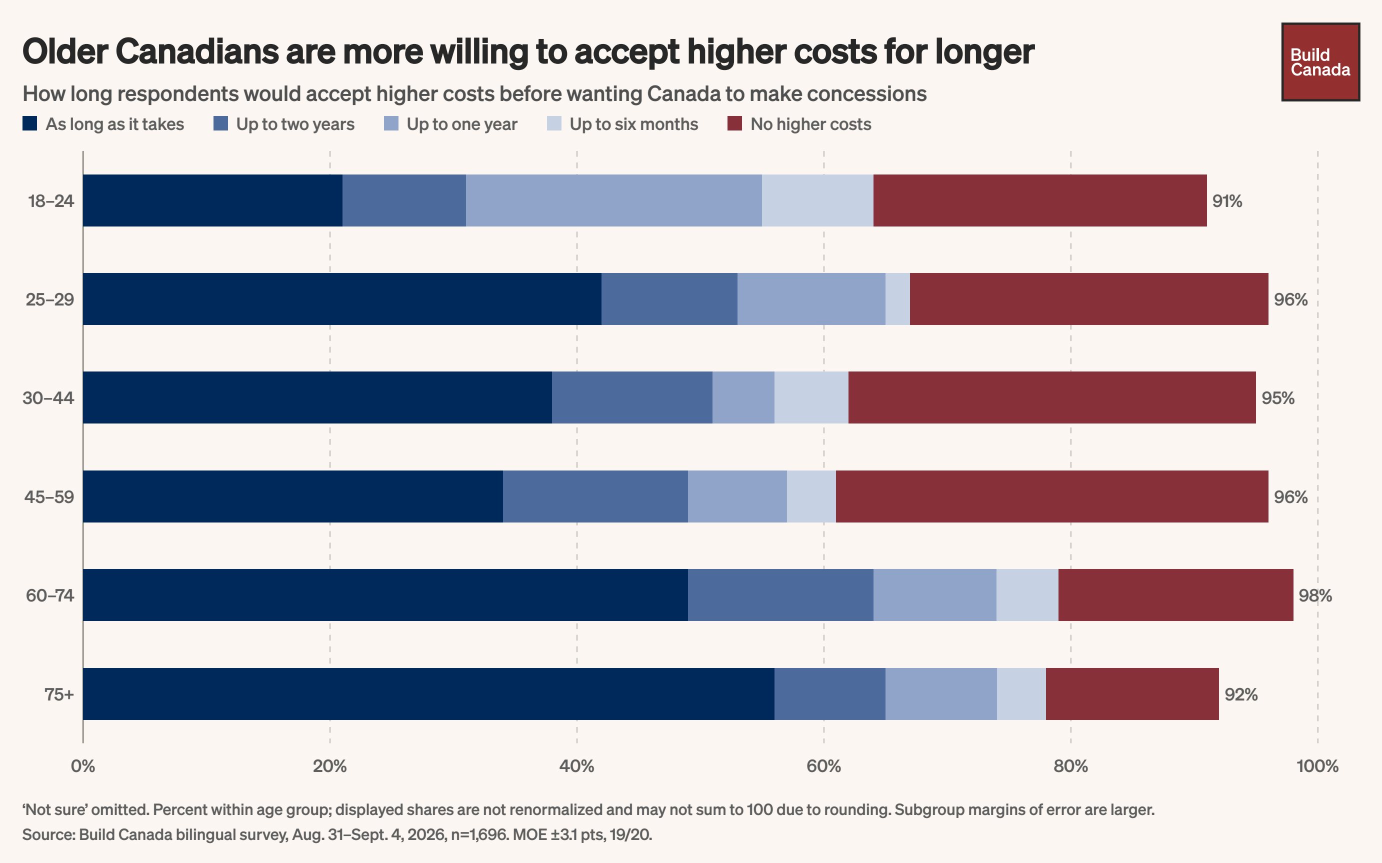
## Canadians reject higher taxes, retirement losses and job-loss risk as consequences of trade war




Approximately 68% find increased household job-loss risk unacceptable, including 46% who call it completely unacceptable. Approximately 21% find it acceptable; 11% are unsure.

Across separate groups shown annual household tax increases of $500, $1,000 or $2,500, approximately 56%-60% find the increase unacceptable. For retirement savings or investment losses of 5%, 10% or 20%, rejection ranges from approximately 58% to 68%. Every version attracts majority rejection.

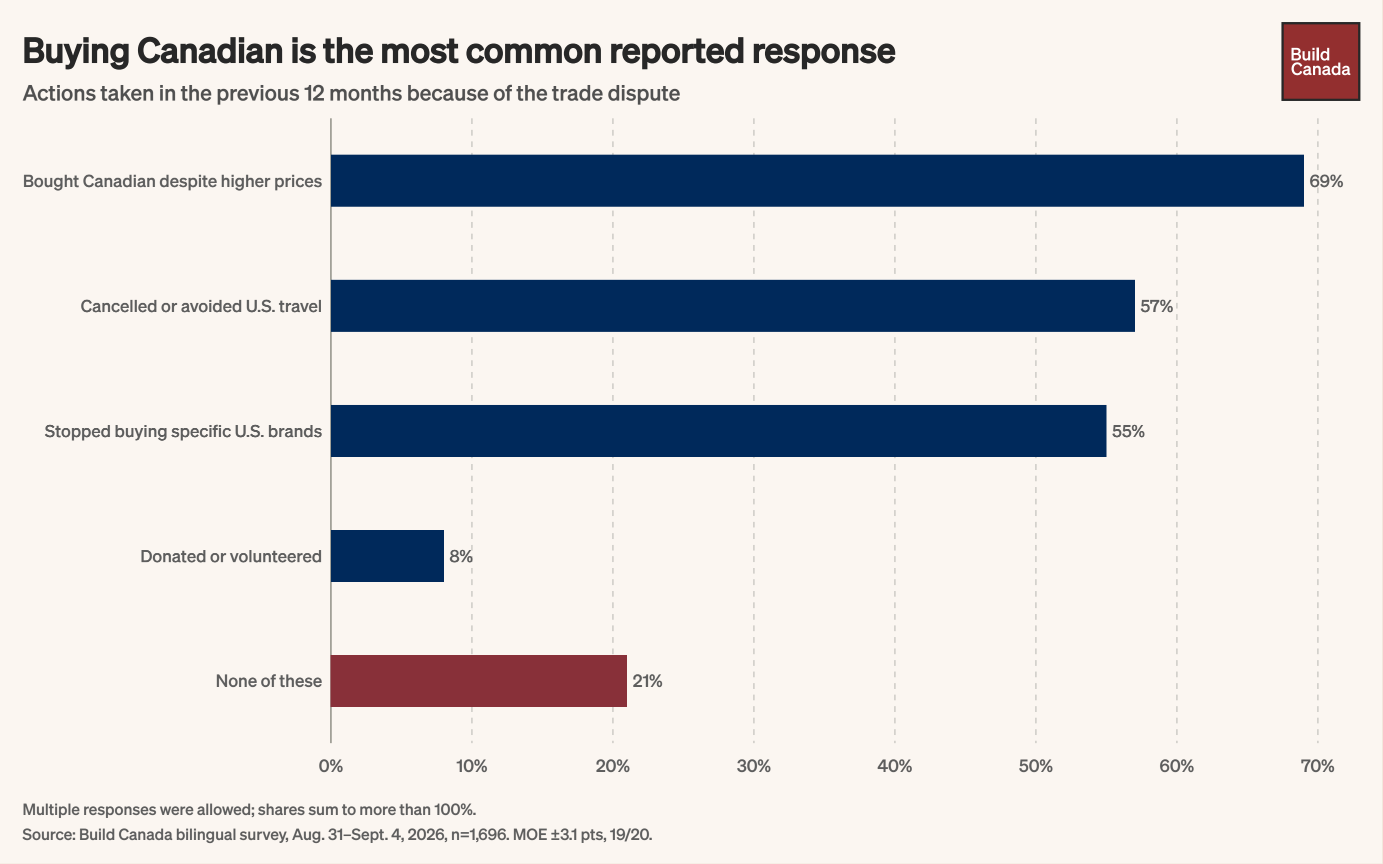
# Retirees are willing to endure higher costs for longer




Fifty-four percent of retirees would accept higher costs indefinitely, compared with 36% of full-time workers. Among blue-collar workers, 44% would accept no higher costs, versus 20% of white-collar workers.

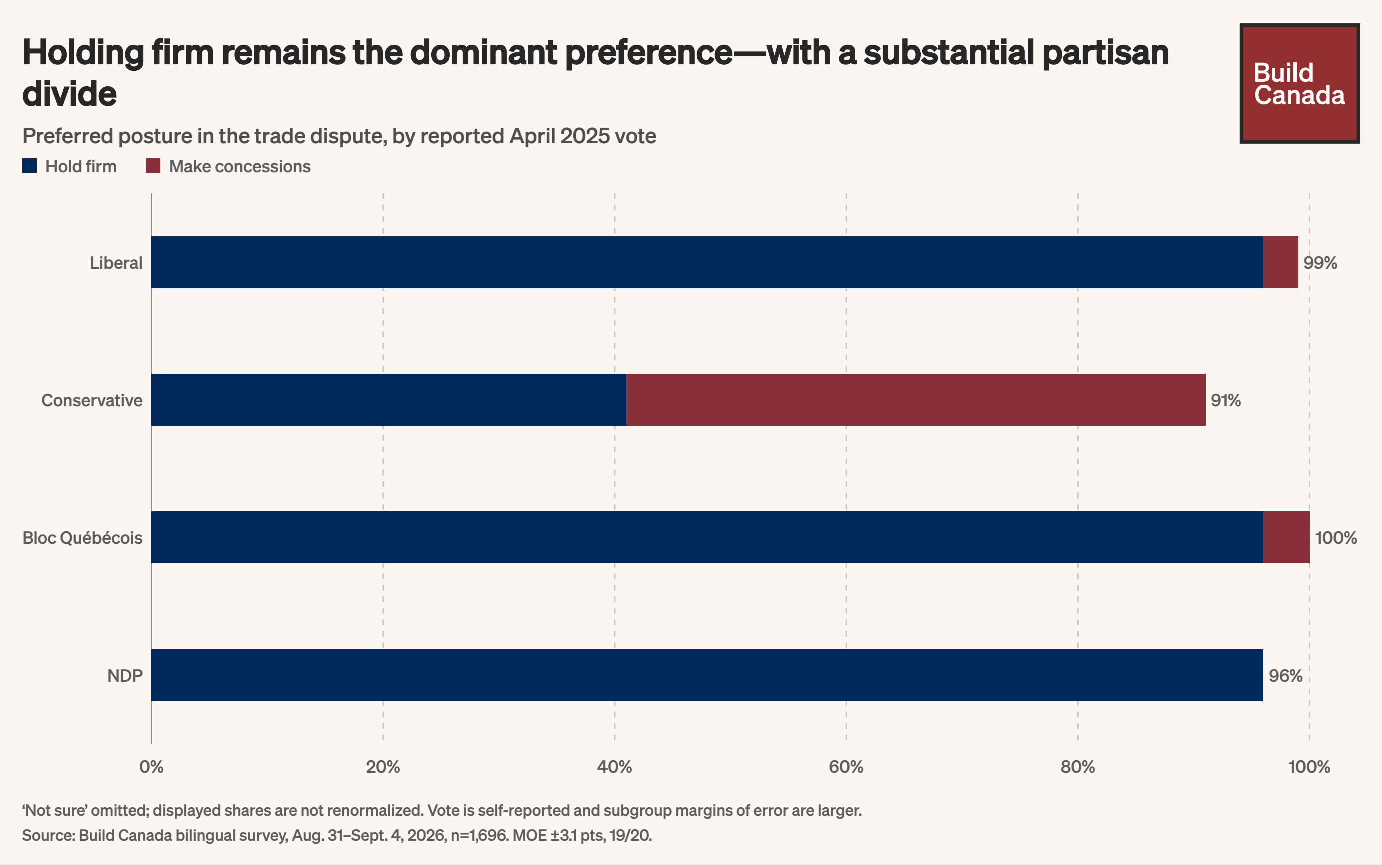
Age differences also appear: 33% of those aged 30-44 and 35% aged 45-59 would accept no higher costs, compared with 19% aged 60-74 and 14% aged 75 or older.

# Sacrifice is already happening, by avoiding U.S. travel and buying Canadian




For most, support for Canada's position has meant buying Canadian and avoiding U.S. trips. Sixty-nine percent report choosing Canadian products despite higher prices. Fifty-seven percent cancelled or avoided U.S. travel, and 55% stopped buying specific American brands during the previous twelve months in response to the dispute.

# Holding firm remains the dominant preference, with a substantial partisan divide




Seventy-five percent of respondents favour holding firm despite prolonged economic costs; 20% prefer concessions for a quick agreement.

Among respondents reporting a Liberal vote in April 2025, 96% favour holding firm, compared with 41% of reported Conservative voters. Willingness to accept higher costs indefinitely is 56% and 19%, respectively.

The 55-point partisan gap in support for holding firm exceeds the 23-point difference between white-collar and blue-collar respondents. The survey does not establish whether these differences reflect political preferences, economic circumstances, or a combination of factors.