

# The Gallup Poll

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Lack of Information Is Widespread

SUPPORT FOR PANAMA TREATIES  
INCREASES WITH KNOWLEDGE.

By George Gallup

PRINCETON, N.J. -- The more Americans know about the Panama Canal treaties, the more likely they are to favor Senate ratification of the pact, lending support to President Jimmy Carter's thesis.

When those surveyed who have not heard or read about the debate over the treaties (26 per cent) are given a brief description of the pact and are asked to vote on it, they vote it down by nearly a 2-to-1 margin (39 to 23 per cent with 38 per cent undecided).

However, when the results are limited to just those who have heard or read about the debate (74 per cent), opinion is more closely divided, with 48 per cent opposed, 40 per cent in favor, with 12 per cent undecided.

Finally, the views of the "better informed" were measured. The informed are defined as those who can correctly answer three questions dealing with key facts about the pact:

the year the canal is to be turned over to the Republic of Panama, whether or not the U.S. has the right to defend the canal against third-nation attacks, and whether or not the biggest U.S. aircraft carriers and supertankers are able to use the canal.

The vote among this "better informed" group (i.e. the one person in 14 who can answer all three questions correctly) is 5-to-4 in favor of the treaties.

To determine current attitudes on the Panama pact, as well as the relationship between knowledge and attitudes, a series of questions were asked in the latest nationwide Gallup Poll..

Following is the key question asked of everyone in the sample:

"The treaties would give Panama full control over the Panama Canal and the Canal Zone by the year 2000, but the United States would retain the right to defend the canal against a third nation. Do you favor or oppose these treaties between the U.S. and Panama?"

Here are the results based on varying levels of awareness and knowledge:

## THOSE NOT AWARE OF TREATIES

Favor	23%
Oppose	39
No opinion	38

## THOSE AWARE OF TREATIES

Favor	40%
Oppose	48
No opinion	12

## THE 'BETTER INFORMED' \*

Favor	51%
Oppose	46
No opinion	3

\* Results subject to wide sampling fluctuation due to small number of cases.

LACK OF INFORMATION  
IS WIDESPREAD

The current survey reveals a serious lack of knowledge about the key facts of the Panama treaties, with about four in 10 Americans aware that the U.S. has the right to defend the canal, only about one in four aware that the canal is to be turned over in the year 2000 and only about one in seven aware that aircraft carriers and supertankers cannot use the canal.

Here are the responses (based on total sample) to the

three questions dealing with facts about the treaties:

"As far as you know, in what year is the Panama Canal to be turned over completely to the Republic of Panama, by terms of the treaties?" (Correct answers: 1999 and 2000.)

Correct 26%

Incorrect/

Don't Know

Not Heard/Read 74

"As far as you know, will the United States have the right to defend the Panama Canal against third-nation attacks after Panama takes full control?" (Correct answer: yes.)

Correct 43%

Incorrect/

Don't Know

Not Heard/Read 57

"To the best of your knowledge, how much do the biggest U.S. aircraft carriers and supertankers now use the Panama Canal -- a great deal, quite a lot, not very much, or not at all?" (Correct answer: not at all.)

Correct 14%

Incorrect/

Don't Know

Not Heard/Read 86

Those who have heard or read about the debate over the Panama Canal treaties were also asked what they regard as the best arguments in favor of and against the treaties.

Here are the responses, in order of frequency of mention:

BEST ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

1. A good public relations move -- remove stigma of colonialism
2. Canal is not important to U.S. interests
3. Maintaining canal is too expensive
4. To avoid a conflict/prevent hostilities
5. Not giving it totally away -- we would be able to defend it against attack from third nation
6. It belongs to the Panamanians -- it's part of their land

BEST ARGUMENTS AGAINST

1. U.S. has economic stake in canal
2. U.S. should not pay them to take the canal
3. Panama may not stick to terms of treaties
4. They will soon keep us from using the canal at all
5. Communists will take it over
6. Canal is important to our national security
7. We built and paid for it -- we should keep it

The results reported today are based on in-person interviews with 1,509 adults, 18 and older, taken in person in more than 300 scientifically-selected localities across the nation during the period Sept. 30-Oct. 3.

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