

Tracking Poll #5
Report on Arab American Battleground States Poll
October 19-21, 2004

Conducted by Zogby International
for
The Arab American Institute

Analysis by Dr. James J. Zogby

Introduction

From October 19 to October 21, 2004 the Arab American Institute polled 500 Arab American voters in four states: Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida.

This is the fifth in a series of six polls of Arab American voters in these four states **and the final pre-election poll**. Because these states will be among those to be hotly contested in the 2004 election, and because they also contain sizable Arab American communities, we believed that it was useful to track the attitudes of Arab American voters in these “battleground states.”

The four states covered in our study all rank among the top ten in Arab American population. Together they include more than 1.1 million persons. Given the propensity of Arab Americans to vote in somewhat larger numbers than the overall population, Arab Americans in these four states represent **a likely voter turnout of more than 510,000 voters** (235,000 in Michigan, 120,000 in Florida, 85,000 in Ohio, and 75,000 in Pennsylvania.) The Arab American vote represents slightly more than 5% of the overall vote in Michigan, 2% in Florida, just under 2% in Ohio, and more than 1.5% of all Pennsylvania voters.

In 2000, Gore won Michigan and Pennsylvania by slightly more than 200,000 votes in each state. Bush won Ohio by 165,000 and the two virtually tied in Florida.

In February 2004, we conducted our first poll in this series. In that poll we established a benchmark for President Bush’s job performance and reelection in a two-way and three-way race.

In April 2004 we conducted the second poll in this series. In that poll we evaluated the importance that Arab American voters attach to several key issues and which candidate they feel would be best qualified to address these issues.

In the July and September 2004 polls we sought to understand why Arab American voters choose Bush, Kerry, or Nader; how strong their support is for each candidate; and what factors, if any, would cause them to change their vote in November.

In this poll (October 2004) we sought to make a final determination of Arab American voter preference less than two weeks before election day.

The results for the October poll follow. Where relevant, for purposes of comparison, the results of earlier polls appear in parentheses ().

Results of Fourth Arab American Battleground State Tracking Poll

A. Bush Reelection

- 1) The percentage of Arab Americans who feel that the President deserves to be reelected has dipped slightly.

	<u>October</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>February</u>
Reelect	30.5	31.5	24.5	28
Someone New	65	62	69	65

	<u>Overall*</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>US Born</u>	<u>Immigrant</u>	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Muslim</u>
Reelect	30.5 (31.5)	10 (6)	66 (76)	20 (19)	34 (35.5)	20 (20.5)	41 (39)	39 (48.5)	13 (5)
Someone Else	65 (62)	89 (90.5)	10 (19.5)	75 (69)	63 (58)	73 (73)	54 (52)	57 (47)	82 (91)
Not Sure	4 (6.5)	3 (3)	4 (4.5)	4 (12)	3 (6.5)	7 (6.5)	5 (9)	4 (4.5)	5 (4)

* (September 2004)

- 2) In the 3-way race (excluding Pennsylvania and Ohio where Nader will not appear on the ballot) with President Bush, Senator John Kerry, and Independent Ralph Nader, Kerry has expanded on his lead.

	<u>October</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>February</u>
Bush	28	31.5	24	28	27
Kerry	54	47	51	45	43
Nader	3.5	9	13	14	20
Other/Not Sure	14.5	12	12	14	10

	<u>Overall*</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>US Born</u>	<u>Immigrant</u>
Bush	28 (31.5)	10 (5)	66 (77)	17.5 (19)	31 (35)	20 (22)
Kerry	54 (47)	82 (81)	22 (8)	45 (43)	50 (47)	63 (48)
Nader	3.5 (9)	2 (6)	1 (5)	11 (21.5)	4 (7)	3.5 (16)
Other/Not Sure	14.5 (12)	6 (8)	11 (10.5)	28 (16.5)	15 (11)	14 (14)

	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Muslim</u>	<u>Florida</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Ohio</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>
Bush	40 (40)	37 (49)	11 (2)	33.5 (43)	26 (28)	29 (30)	28 (27)
Kerry	42 (44)	42 (33)	72 (65)	47 (40)	54 (46)	57 (50)	56 (53)
Nader	2 (6)	3 (8.5)	6 (15)	3 (7)	8 (11)	♦ (6)	♦ (12)
Other/Not Sure	16 (10)	18 (9)	11 (19)	16.5 (10)	12 (15)	14 (14)	16 (8)

* (September 2004)

♦ Nader not on ballot in Ohio and Pennsylvania

What Happened from September to October 2004

- A) The gains that President Bush recorded after his successful convention have been erased, while Senator Kerry has risen to his highest lead among Arab American voters. The Kerry margin is now almost 2 to 1.
- B) Bush recorded gains only among two groups. Among Democrats Bush went from 2% to 10%, and among Muslims his vote increased from 2% to 11%. In both instances, the shift appears to have come at the expense of Nader.

Bush's most significant loss came from Arab American Republicans where his percentage dropped 11 points (from 77 to 66). This put the President's support among Arab American Republicans back at its pre-convention level.

- C) Kerry recorded gains among most groups with the most significant increases coming among Arab American immigrants (from 48% to 63%), Arab American Muslims (65% to 72%), and Arab American Orthodox Christians (33% to 42%). Kerry also recorded a significant increase among Arab American Republicans (from 8% to 22%).
- D) Support for Nader collapsed—due in part to the fact that the Arab American independent will not appear on Ohio and Pennsylvania's ballot. Nevertheless the percentage of Arab Americans who remain either supporting Nader or are still undecided is a high 18%.
- E) Kerry now also leads President Bush in all four states with his lead having grown substantially in Michigan and Ohio. The biggest turn around occurred in Florida where Kerry, once virtually tied with Bush, now has a 47% - 33.5% lead.
- F) Based on analysis of the data, it appears that on election day Senator Kerry will receive about 60% of the Arab American vote. President Bush will be the choice of about 33%, with Ralph Nader and others receiving 7%. Overall, when compared with the results from 2000, these 2004 numbers represent a net shift of between 190,000 to 200,000 votes in the direction of the Democratic candidate in these four states.

B. Issues of Importance to Arab Americans and the President's Job Performance Ratings

- 1) When asked to evaluate how important each of the following issues would be in determining their choice for President, the following rank order of issues occurs:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Very Important*</u>
Economy	82 (84)
Terrorism/National Security	79 (79)
Foreign Policy	75 (72)
Iraq	74 (66)
Health Care	72 (72)
Civil Liberties	69 (64)
Taxes	69 (59)
Israel-Palestine	65 (57)

* (September 2004)

- 2) When we asked Arab American voters to rate President Bush's job performance in each issue area we received the following responses:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Excellent/Good*</u>	<u>Fair/Poor</u>
Overall	29 (31)	70 (68)
Terrorism/National Security	39 (41)	62 (58)
Taxes	34 (29.5) ♦	63 (69) ♦
Iraq	26 (27)	73 (72)
Civil Liberties	27 (23) ♦	65 (69) ♦
Foreign Policy	26 (18.5) ♦	72 (77.5) ♦
Economy	25 (25)	74 (74)
Health Care	21 (22)	75 (73)
Israel-Palestine	16 (10)	79 (82)

* (September 2004) ♦ (July 2004)

- 3) When asked which candidates for President would do the best jobs dealing with each of these issues, the results were as follows:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Kerry*</u>	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Neither</u>
Economy	60 (43)	32 (33)	5
Health Care	59 (47)	29 (26)	6
Terrorism/National Security	42 (35)	38 (41)	7
Foreign Policy	57 (43)	33 (32)	5
Iraq	48 (37)	34 (34)	11
Israel-Palestine	38 (27)	25 (22)	27
Taxes	49 (42)	38 (36)	6
Patriot Act/Civil Liberties	62 (41)	27 (24)	4

* (September 2004)

- 4) When we asked Arab American voters who indicated that they would vote for President Bush or Senator Kerry on what basis they made their choice, we received the following responses:

<u>Why Bush</u>		<u>Why Kerry</u>	
Vote Republican	12 (8)	Vote Democrat	6 (7)
Taxes and Domestic Issues	17 (16)	Taxes and Domestic Issues	24.5 (17)
Foreign Policy	21.5 (16)	Foreign Policy	12 (11)
Like him as a man	21 (20)	Like him as a man	5 (3)
Against Democrats	10 (11)	Against Republicans	43 (50)

Analysis

- A) While the order of importance of issues remains somewhat the same, the only change is a significant one. Iraq and foreign policy have jumped over health care, with Iraq, in particular, having risen 8 points in importance among Arab American voters.
- B) The President continues to receive extremely low ratings in overall job performance.
- C) Arab Americans appear to have greater confidence in Senator Kerry's ability to handle all of the issues covered in the poll. His ratings grew in every area and he is now favored 2 to 1 over the President in handling the economy, health care, foreign policy, and civil liberties. Kerry has also pulled ahead of the President in the estimate of Arab American voters of his ability to deal with terrorism/national security and taxes, two issues long held to be Bush's strong suits.

On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while Kerry is favored over Bush, 38% - 25%, a substantial 27% of Arab American voters favor neither.

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Methodology

Zogby International interviewed 500 Arab American registered voters, who indicated a likelihood to vote in November 2004. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 4.5%. The voters came from four states (Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania), reflecting the overall demographic profile of the national Arab American community.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Florida	23
Michigan	36
Ohio	18.5
Pennsylvania	23
Democrat	42
Republican	29
Independent	17
US Born	75
Immigrant	25
Roman Catholic	35
Orthodox	28
Muslim	24
Other/No Affiliation	13