

**Tracking Poll #4**  
**Report on Arab American Battleground States Poll**  
**September 9-12, 2004**

**Conducted by Zogby International**  
**for**  
**The Arab American Institute**

**Analysis by Dr. James J. Zogby**

## Introduction

From September 9 to September 12, 2004 the Arab American Institute polled 502 Arab American voters in four states: Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida.

This is the fourth in a series of six polls of Arab American voters in these four states. 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 2004 poll 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 (September 2004) we sought to determine Arab American voter preference at the traditional post-Labor Day start of the final round of the presidential contest.

The results for the September poll follow. Where relevant, for purposes of comparison, the April and July 2004 results appear in parentheses ( ).

## Results of Fourth Arab American Battleground State Tracking Poll

### A. Bush Performance and Reelection

Our September 2004 poll shows that President Bush's job performance rating scores a slight uptick among Arab American voters. While the Presidential rating had slipped below 30% in July, his approval is now back to its April 2004 level.

1) How would you rate President Bush's performance on the job?

|                | <u>September</u> | <u>July</u> | <u>April</u> | <u>February</u> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Excellent/Good | <b>31</b>        | 27.5        | 30           | 32              |
| Fair/Poor      | <b>68</b>        | 71.5        | 67           | 67              |

2) The percentage of Arab Americans who feel that the President deserves to be reelected has also risen. At 31.5% Bush's reelect numbers are at the highest since we began polling in February 2004 (the reelect question was not asked in April 2004).

|             | <u>September</u> | <u>July</u> | <u>February</u> |  |  |  |
|-------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Reelect     | <b>31.5</b>      | 24.5        | 28              |  |  |  |
| Someone New | <b>62</b>        | 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      | <b>31.5</b> (24.5) | 6 (6)           | 76 (62)           | 19 (19)            | 35.5 (27)      | 20.5 (18)        | 39 (34.5)             | 48.5 (33)       | 5 (6)         |
| Someone Else | <b>62</b> (69)     | 90.5 (89.5)     | 19.5 (30)         | 69 (72)            | 58 (67.5)      | 73 (73.5)        | 52 (60)               | 47 (59)         | 91 (91)       |
| Not Sure     | <b>6.5</b> (6.5)   | 3 (5)           | 4.5 (8)           | 12 (8)             | 6.5 (5.5)      | 6.5 (8.5)        | 9 (5.5)               | 4.5 (8)         | 4 (3)         |

\* (July 2004)

3) When matched against Senator John Kerry, the Democratic nominee, Bush's Arab American support has also risen while Senator Kerry's numbers have slipped back to his April 2004 level.

|                | <u>September</u> | <u>July</u> | <u>April</u> | <u>February</u> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Bush           | <b>31.5</b>      | 24.5        | 30           | 30              |
| Kerry          | <b>49</b>        | 54          | 49           | 54              |
| Other/Not Sure | <b>20</b>        | 21.5        | 21           | 16              |

|                | <u>Overall*</u>    | <u>Democrat</u> | <u>Republican</u> | <u>Independent</u> | <u>US Born</u> | <u>Immigrant</u> |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Bush           | <b>31.5</b> (24.5) | 6 (7)           | 75.5 (60)         | 18.5 (17)          | 34 (26)        | 25 (19)          |
| Kerry          | <b>49</b> (54)     | 82 (82)         | 8 (17)            | 45.5 (46)          | 48 (53)        | 51.5 (55.5)      |
| Other/Not Sure | <b>20</b> (21.5)   | 12 (11)         | 16.5 (23)         | 36 (37)            | 18 (20)        | 24 (25.5)        |

|                | <u>Roman Catholic</u> | <u>Orthodox</u> | <u>Muslim</u> | <u>Florida</u> | <u>Michigan</u> | <u>Ohio</u> | <u>Pennsylvania</u> |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Bush           | 40 (36)               | 50 (31)         | 3 (6)         | 41 (43)        | 30 (22)         | 30 (23)     | 26 (21)             |
| Kerry          | 46 (47)               | 31 (42)         | 70 (73)       | 42 (47.5)      | 50 (53)         | 54 (56)     | 50.5 (59)           |
| Other/Not Sure | 14 (17)               | 19 (27)         | 27 (21)       | 17.5 (19.5)    | 20 (24)         | 16 (21)     | 24 (20)             |

\*(July 2004)

4) In the 3-way race with President Bush, Senator John Kerry, and Independent Ralph Nader, Kerry continues to hold the lead, but it has narrowed since July.

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

|                | <u>Overall*</u>  | <u>Democrat</u> | <u>Republican</u> | <u>Independent</u> | <u>US Born</u> | <u>Immigrant</u> |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Bush           | <b>31.5</b> (24) | 5 (7)           | 77 (62)           | 19 (17)            | 35 (26)        | 22 (18)          |
| Kerry          | <b>47</b> (51)   | 81 (78)         | 8 (17.5)          | 43 (47)            | 47 (51)        | 48 (50)          |
| Nader          | <b>9</b> (13)    | 6 (8)           | 5 (11.5)          | 21.5 (20)          | 7 (12)         | 16 (16)          |
| Other/Not Sure | <b>12</b> (12)   | 8 (7)           | 10.5 (9)          | 16.5 (16)          | 11 (10)        | 14 (16)          |

|                | <u>Roman Catholic</u> | <u>Orthodox</u> | <u>Muslim</u> | <u>Florida</u> | <u>Michigan</u> | <u>Ohio</u> | <u>Pennsylvania</u> |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Bush           | 40 (35.5)             | 49 (32)         | 2 (6)         | 43 (30)        | 28 (22)         | 30 (22.5)   | 27 (24)             |
| Kerry          | 44 (44.5)             | 33 (40.5)       | 65 (65.5)     | 40 (48)        | 46 (51)         | 50 (49)     | 53 (56)             |
| Nader          | 6 (10)                | 8.5 (15.5)      | 15 (19)       | 7 (13)         | 11 (12)         | 6 (12)      | 12 (17)             |
| Other/Not Sure | 10 (11)               | 9 (12)          | 19 (9.5)      | 10 (9)         | 15 (15)         | 14 (17)     | 8 (3)               |

\*(July 2004)

## **What Happened from July to September 2004**

- A) In the two-way race, President Bush's 8 point increase coupled with Senator Kerry's 5 point decline has cut Kerry's near 30 point lead over the incumbent to just 17 points.

The same pattern in the three-way race has resulted in cutting Kerry's July 2004 lead of 27 points to 15.5 points.

Also significant is the continued decline of Arab American voter support for independent candidate Ralph Nader. Nader, who polled 20% in February 2004, has continued to lose support so that he now has only 9%.

- B) Overall, the most significant factor accounting for the change in President Bush's numbers is the consolidation of his support among Arab Americans who identify themselves as Republicans.

In earlier polling only about 60% of Republicans supported Bush's reelection. Now, between 75% to 77% of self-identified Republicans indicate support for the President.

Bush's recovery among his Republican base shows up mainly in two other sub-groups: US-born Arab Americans and Protestant/Orthodox Christians.

- C) While the tightening of the two-way and three-way races can be seen in the overall numbers, they are also reflected in the results from each of the four states. The most significant shift can be seen in the three-way race in Florida, where Bush now holds a slight, though statistically negligible, lead over Kerry among Arab American voters.
- D) While Nader's decline is substantial, the overall percentage of Arab American voters who either support his candidacy or who are still uncertain remains a high 20%.
- E) In this September poll, 43% of Arab American voters identify themselves as Democrats as compared with 32% who self-identify as Republicans. Both are up slightly from July where the split was 42% Democrat and 27% Republican.
- F) It appears that the President's upswing and Senator Kerry's slight decline can be attributed to the same factors that moved the rest of the US electorate: Bush's post-convention bounce and Senator Kerry's stalled campaign.

**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                     | <b>84</b> (81)         |
| Terrorism/National Security | <b>79</b> (74)         |
| Health Care                 | <b>72</b> (70.5)       |
| Foreign Policy              | <b>72</b> (65)         |
| Iraq                        | <b>66</b> (66)         |
| Civil Liberties             | <b>64</b> (63.5)       |
| Taxes                       | <b>59</b> (63)         |
| Israel-Palestine            | <b>57</b> (57.5)       |

\* (July 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                     | <b>31</b> (27.5)       | <b>68</b> (71.5) |
| Terrorism/National Security | <b>41</b> (31)         | <b>58</b> (65.5) |
| Iraq                        | <b>27</b> (23.5)       | <b>72</b> (75.5) |
| Economy                     | <b>25</b> (23)         | <b>74</b> (76)   |
| Health Care                 | <b>22</b> (18)         | <b>73</b> (77.5) |
| Israel-Palestine            | <b>10</b> (9)          | <b>82</b> (86)   |

\* (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>Nader</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Economy                     | <b>43</b> (44) | 33 (27)        | 15 (14)      |
| Health Care                 | <b>47</b> (43) | 26 (22)        | 15 (15)      |
| Terrorism/National Security | 35 (30)        | <b>41</b> (39) | 13 (12)      |
| Foreign Policy              | <b>43</b> (37) | 32 (26)        | 16 (17)      |
| Iraq                        | <b>37</b> (36) | 34 (29)        | 16 (13)      |
| Israel-Palestine            | <b>27</b> (28) | 22 (19)        | 25 (21)      |
| Taxes                       | <b>42</b> (36) | 36 (37)        | 13 (12)      |
| Patriot Act/Civil Liberties | <b>41</b> (31) | 24 (20)        | 25 (26)      |

\* (April 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           | <b>8</b> (10)    | Vote Democrat             | <b>7</b> (10)    |
| Taxes and Domestic Issues | <b>16</b> (25)   | Taxes and Domestic Issues | <b>17</b> (14.5) |
| Foreign Policy            | <b>16</b> (10)   | Foreign Policy            | <b>11</b> (5)    |
| Like him as a man         | <b>20</b> (25)   | Like him as a man         | <b>3</b> (8.5)   |
| Against Democrats         | <b>11</b> (10.5) | Against Republicans       | <b>50</b> (52)   |

### Analysis

- A) The rank order of issue concerns for Arab American voters appears to be no different than it is for other US voters, with the economy, terrorism/national security, health care and foreign policy topping the list of concerns.
- B) Though slightly higher than July, the President's job performance rating continues to be quite low. This is true of the overall rating and on all of the issues covered in the poll.

The President recorded a substantial increase in his approval rating in only one area—terrorism/national security. But even here, Bush's rating is only 41% positive and 58% negative.

- C) When the candidates are compared, Senator Kerry beats President Bush in all areas except terrorism/national security. The two are virtually tied on Iraq war policy and perceived ability to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The extremely low ratings given to both Bush and Kerry on this last issue reflects the continuing lack of confidence Arab American voters have in both candidate's abilities to deal with this conflict.

Ralph Nader outperforms President Bush among Arab American voters in two areas: handling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and dealing with the Patriot Act/civil liberties.

- D) Arab American support for President Bush, though higher than it was in July is still quite soft. A total of 60% of Bush supporters indicate that he is their preferred candidate because they like him as a man, they like his policies or because they support the Republican Party. This is down from 70% in July.

Senator Kerry, though still leading over President Bush, has even softer support. As in July, only 38% of Arab American voters indicate that they support Kerry because they like him as a man, like his positions on issues or identify with the Democratic Party. Fully one-half of Kerry supporters still say that their vote for Kerry is motivated by anti-Bush sentiments.

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## Conclusions

- A) The stage is now set for the November elections. Among Arab American voters, the driving force in this election still appears to be frustration and alienation with the Bush White House and its policies.

While the President may have hit bottom with his July 2004 24% reelect and his 24% of the vote in the two-way race, his current 32% rating may reflect his ceiling among Arab American voters.

- B) Maybe the most significant observation to be made in analyzing our polling data since February 2004, is the failure of Senator Kerry's campaign to take advantage of Arab American's disaffection with the Bush White House.

The apparent failure of the Kerry campaign to do outreach to Arab American voters and to define their candidate and his positions, has resulted in Kerry's inability to gain ground with a constituency which, as the polling data demonstrates, was clearly ready for a change. While Kerry might have secured as much as two-thirds of the Arab American vote, he remains at less than one-half.

- C) In just the four states covered in this poll, Kerry's slide from July to September translates to a loss of more than 65,000 actual turnout votes on election day.

- D) The relatively high 20% of Arab American voters who are either undecided or who are supporting other candidates remain a potential source of support for the Democratic candidate.

As we observed in our July 2004 poll, when this group ranged between 22% to 25%, a small number indicated that they might be persuaded to shift to support President Bush, while 2/3's indicated that they still could be persuaded to move towards Kerry. This September poll shows that Bush has captured some of his share of this group (in particular among Republicans who were still undecided). Many of those Arab Americans who remain undecided are from sub-groups that Kerry can still win.

## **Methodology**

Zogby International interviewed 502 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.

| <b>Category</b>      | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Florida              | 23                |
| Michigan             | 36                |
| Ohio                 | 18.5              |
| Pennsylvania         | 23                |
| Democrat             | 43                |
| Republican           | 32                |
| Independent          | 15.5              |
| US Born              | 75                |
| Immigrant            | 25                |
| Roman Catholic       | 35                |
| Orthodox             | 28                |
| Muslim               | 24                |
| Other/No Affiliation | 13                |