
Defining the Arab American Vote

Our Voice. Our Future. Yalla Vote 2008



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I. Results and Analysis

Table 1: Arab American Party Identification

	2007	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Democrat	39	41	35	39	39	42	42	36
Republican	26	10	20	26	23	27	31	19
Independent	28	32	28	28	28	25	22	33

A plurality of Arab Americans identify as Democrats (39%) while over a quarter identify as Republicans (26%), and 28% say they are independent. The Democratic Party receives a plurality of support across all demographic subgroups, especially young, Catholic, and Orthodox voters.

Table 2: Arab American Party Identification Over Time

	2007	2006	2004	2002	2000	1996
Democrat	39	43	43	39	40	38
Republican	26	32	32	31	38	36
Independent	28	16	16	14	22	23

For over ten years, the Democratic Party has retained a base of approximately four in ten Arab American voters.

While in 2007 a quarter of Arab Americans still consider themselves Republicans, support for the Republican Party has decreased by 10% over a ten-year period. After an increase in 2004 and 2006, Democrats settled back to 39%.

Half of Arab American voters who have switched their party affiliation now consider themselves independent.

3. How would you rate President Bush's performance in office – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Table 3: President Bush Job Approval

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Excellent	8	4	21	5	4	10	8	8	9	11	2
Good	10	3	20	8	3	5	10	9	12	11	5
Positive	18	7	41	13	7	15	18	17	21	22	7
Fair	16	10	24	17	14	18	16	14	18	18	10
Poor	63	81	31	67	73	63	64	59	59	55	78
Negative	79	91	55	84	87	81	80	73	77	73	88
Not Sure	4	2	5	3	6	4	2	9	2	4	5

Almost eight in ten Arab Americans rate President George W. Bush's job performance negatively. The president polls best among Republican voters (41% positive), although even this group gives him a net negative rating.

4. The Democratic candidates for President in 2008 are Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, Chris Dodd, John Edwards, Mike Gravel, Dennis Kucinich, Barack Obama, and Bill Richardson. If the primary were held today, for whom would you vote?

Table 4: Democratic Primary Candidates

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Obama	37	33	--	43	54	27	38	35	31	28	50
Clinton	33	39	--	25	43	27	33	36	33	39	38
Edwards	12	14	--	10	4	16	13	12	18	11	5
Richardson	10	8	--	13	--	13	11	4	12	16	2
Kucinich	3	3	--	3	--	6	2	7	1	2	2
Biden	2	1	--	3	--	4	1	2	3	1	1
Dodd	1	1	--	--	--	3	1	--	--	--	--
Gravel	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Someone Else	3	2	--	4	--	3	2	4	2	3	1

Only four Democratic presidential candidates receive double digit support from Democratic and independent Arab American voters: Barack Obama (37%), Hillary Clinton (33%), John Edwards (12%), and Bill Richardson (10%). Obama does best among Independent, U.S. born, and Muslim voters. Clinton wins among Democratic, foreign born, Catholic, and Orthodox voters.

5. The Republican candidates for President in 2008 are Sam Brownback, John Cox, Jim Gilmore, Rudy Giuliani, Mike Huckabee, Duncan Hunter, John McCain, Ron Paul, Mitt Romney, Tom Tancredo, and Tommy Thompson*. If the primary were held today, for whom would you vote?

Table 5: Republican Primary Candidates

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Giuliani	32	--	39	23	40	17	34	25	32	38	27
McCain	28	--	32	21	6	28	25	37	29	25	18
Romney	16	--	13	21	18	28	16	18	12	16	22
T. Thompson	5	--	4	7	--	7	6	3	8	3	3
Paul	3	--	1	7	--	1	3	8	1	4	3
Brownback	3	--	--	4	--	3	2	--	--	5	--
Tancredo	1	--	2	--	--	--	1	--	--	3	--
Huckabee	1	--	--	2	--	3	1	--	--	2	--
Cox	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Someone Else	12		10	15	--	14	13	8	19	4	23

* *The poll was conducted before Fred Thompson formed a presidential exploratory committee.*

Only three Republican presidential candidates receive significant support among Republican and independent Arab American voters: Rudy Giuliani (32%), John McCain (28%), and Mitt Romney (16%). Giuliani wins the vote of Republican, Independent, young, and U.S. born voters as well as both Christian and Muslim Arab Americans. McCain is most popular among foreign born Arab American voters.

6. Of the following characteristics, which TWO are most important in your choice of a presidential candidate?

Table 6: Desired Characteristics of Presidential Candidates

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Honesty	63	61	66	60	69	65	62	66	61	65	70
Moral Character	33	31	29	41	68	30	38	19	27	39	33
Strong Leader	33	36	43	25	20	33	36	26	33	37	22
Brings People Together	25	24	23	30	17	16	24	27	28	15	32
Makes Me Proud to be American	15	19	14	10	4	20	13	22	15	14	15
Experience	12	12	11	13	10	14	10	18	11	14	11
Consistency	5	8	3	2	4	5	5	6	6	3	7
Elect-ability	4	5	6	4	--	6	5	3	4	8	1
Other	2	1	--	5	2	5	2	2	3	3	1
Not Sure	1	<1	<1	3	--	1	1	2	3	<1	1

* Percentages total more than 100% as respondents were asked to select 2 characteristics.

Almost two-thirds of Arab American voters say "honesty" is one of the two most important characteristics in their choice of a presidential candidate. One-third of Arab Americans chose "moral character" and "strong leadership," and one quarter value the ability to "bring people together."

7. Of the following issues which will be the three most important in determining your vote for president? (Open Ended)

Table 7: Top Issues In Presidential Campaign

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	55+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Iraq War	61	59	56	70	69	60	62	57	60	62	60
Jobs/Econ	31	32	23	35	41	25	30	37	32	22	49
Immigration	13	12	24	8	11	17	17	4	15	13	10
Health Care	13	18	5	12	12	8	12	16	16	12	12
Education	8	10	3	6	10	9	7	9	9	7	11
Environment	7	7	10	8	14	4	9	4	4	11	4
Gas Prices	7	7	11	6	--	7	6	10	6	9	7
Terror/Security	7	5	9	5	--	8	5	12	8	8	4
Corruption	6	7	5	3	7	7	6	7	3	7	10
Budget	4	5	3	6	--	2	4	3	5	4	2
Taxes	3	3	8	2	1	4	4	2	5	3	1
Welfare/Poverty	3	4	3	3	9	1	4	2	1	5	1
Palestine	3	6	--	2	2	6	3	3	4	3	2
Morality	3	<1	7	3	--	6	3	2	5	<1	1
Crime/Drugs	2	2	1	4	1	3	2	3	5	--	2
Lebanon	2	--	2	5	4	--	3	1	--	<1	5
Social Security	1	1	1	3	--	2	1	2	2	1	1
Other	15	17	13	12	7	22	15	14	18	13	9
Not Sure	2	1	4	1	4	<1	1	4	<1	<1	3

* Percentages total more than 100% as respondents were asked to select 3 issues.

When asked which three issues would be most important in determining their vote for president, the Iraq war registered as a top concern among 61% of Arab American voters. While no other issue registers a comparable level of concern, other issues which will determine the Arab American vote are: jobs and the economy (31%), immigration (13%), health care (13%), and education (8%).

8. Are you more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate for president, the Republican candidate for president, an independent candidate, or will it depend on the candidate?

Table 8: Vote for Presidential Candidates by Party

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Democrat	36	62	11	31	42	31	36	38	35	31	51
Republican	14	4	45	3	5	20	16	9	20	14	9
Independent	1	2	--	2	--	4	2	1	3	1	--
Depends on Candidate	46	32	42	65	49	44	45	49	42	49	36
Not Sure	3	--	3	--	4	2	2	4	1	5	3

When asked if they are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate, the Republican candidate, an independent candidate, or if it would depend on the candidate for president, almost half of Arab American voters said it would depend on the candidate.

Democrats fare especially well among Muslim and young Arab Americans. Over half of Muslims (51%) and 42% of young voters pledged support for the Democratic candidate.

While 62% of Democrats said they would vote for the Democratic candidate, there is a near collapse of certain Republican voters with over half (53%) saying either that they would vote for the Democrat (11%) or that it would depend on the candidate (42%). There is even indecision among older and Catholic voters—two subgroups which have in recent years favored Republican presidential candidates.

9. Media reports speculate that Nebraska Senator Chuck Hagel and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who are both independent minded Republicans*, may form an independent ticket. Would a ticket including Hagel and Bloomberg change your support for your preferred candidate?

Table 9: Potential Hagel/Bloomberg Ticket

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Yes	13	5	15	16	19	12	12	15	11	14	12
No	69	79	68	62	66	72	73	55	67	76	65
Not Sure	19	16	17	22	16	16	15	30	22	10	25

* The poll was conducted before New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg registered as an independent.

At this time, the possibility of a Hagel/Bloomberg ticket does not significantly change support among Arab American voters for their preferred presidential candidate.

10. In your opinion, when should the United States leave Iraq?

Table 10: Withdrawal from Iraq

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Phased Withdrawal	53	53	47	56	57	47	54	49	55	53	52
Leave Immediately	29	37	18	30	34	33	27	34	23	27	39
Stay Until Victory	10	7	23	5	5	11	11	7	13	10	2
Permanent Presence	4	2	11	4	--	5	4	5	4	7	2
Other	3	2	2	4	3	4	2	3	4	2	1
Not Sure	1	--	1	1	2	1	1	2	--	1	5

There is support for a phased withdrawal from Iraq from over half of Arab American voters (53%). This consensus is shared among all subgroups, including Republicans (47%).

The position advocated by the president to remain in Iraq until victory is supported by less than one quarter (23%) of Arab American Republicans.

11. Do you personally know someone from Iraq or an American service member who has served in Iraq?

Table 11: Personal Connection to Iraq War

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
Someone From Iraq	24	19	26	28	36	19	24	27	23	23	26
Amer. Ser. Member	25	24	25	29	27	17	28	16	27	25	22
Both	16	21	20	8	15	8	17	13	18	21	11
Neither	34	36	30	35	22	55	31	44	32	3-	42
Not Sure	<1	1	--	--	--	1	<1	1	--	1	--

The Iraq war uniquely impacts the Arab American community with four in ten Arab Americans answering that they personally know someone from Iraq, four in ten answering that they know an American service member, and 16% saying they know both an Iraqi and an American service member.

12. If a presidential candidate promised to take an active role in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate in November 2008, or would it make no difference in your vote?

Table 12: 2008 Candidates on Peace Process (Israel/Palestine)

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
More Likely	64	69	64	59	60	59	63	69	61	62	71
Less Likely	3	6	1	3	6	1	4	1	3	6	1
No Difference	28	22	30	30	25	32	28	27	32	25	26
Not Sure	5	3	5	8	9	8	5	3	4	8	2

Almost two-thirds of Arab American voters said they would be more likely to vote for a presidential candidate who promised to take an active role in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Support for this position exists across all demographic subgroups.

13. If a presidential candidate promised to support peace negotiations between Israel and Syria, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate in November 2008, or would it make no difference in your vote?

Table 13: 2008 Candidates on Peace Process (Israel/Syria)

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Orth	Muslim
More Likely	58	63	59	50	49	62	57	62	64	56	52
Less Likely	3	3	4	1	--	2	2	<1	1	4	1
No Difference	34	29	34	39	37	26	34	31	29	30	45
Not Sure	6	5	3	10	15	9	7	3	6	10	2

Over half of respondents said they would be more likely to vote for a presidential candidate who promised to support peace negotiations between Israel and Syria. This support exists across all demographic groups.

III. Methodology and Sample Characteristics

Methodology:

Survey Methodology Arab Americans 05/22/07 thru 05/26/07

This is a telephone survey of Arab Americans nationwide conducted by Zogby International. The target sample is 501 interviews with approximately 38 questions asked. Samples are randomly drawn over national Congressional Districts using Zogby International's list of Arab surnames. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. Up to six calls are made to reach a sampled phone number. Cooperation rates are calculated using one of AAPOR's approved methodologies¹ and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies.² Weighting by country of origin, religion, born in US, age and gender is used to adjust for non-response. The margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Zogby International's sampling and weighting procedures also have been validated through its political polling: more than 95% of the firm's polls have come within 1% of actual election-day outcomes.

¹ See COOP4 (p.38) in *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates of Surveys*. The American Association for Public Opinion Research, (2000).

² *Cooperation Tracking Study: April 2003 Update*, Jane M. Sheppard and Shelly Haas. The Council for Marketing & Opinion Research (CMOR). Cincinnati, Ohio (2003).

Sample Characteristics

Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Sample Size	501	--
East	186	37
South	107	21
Central/Great Lakes	140	28
West	68	14
Did not answer region	--	--
Very Likely to Vote	442	93
Somewhat Likely to Vote	25	5
Democrat	180	40
Republican	120	26
Independent	131	28
18-29	66	14
30-49	162	33
50-64	140	29
65+	122	25
18-24	47	10
25-34	48	10
35-54	202	41
55-69	106	22
70+	88	18
Did not respond age	11	--
Large City	219	44
Small City	100	20
Suburbs	154	31
Rural	24	5
Did not respond location	4	--

* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.

Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Progressive	42	9
Liberal	103	21
Moderate	199	41
Conservative	102	21
Very Conservative	24	5
Libertarian	12	3
Did not respond ideology	20	--
Catholic	173	35
Orthodox	76	15
Jewish	--	--
Muslim	119	24
Eastern Orthodox	62	13
Other/None	64	13
Did not respond Religion	7	--
Born Again	30	6
Not Born Again	47	9
Did not respond Born Again	--	--
Children <17	159	32
No Children <17	342	68
Did not respond Children <17	--	--
Married	296	59
Single	134	27
Divorced/Widowed/Single	63	13
Civil Union	8	2
Did not respond status	--	--
< \$25,000	50	12
\$25-35K	47	11
\$35-50K	45	11
\$50-75K	59	14
\$75-100K	84	20
\$100K+	140	33
Did not respond Income	77	--
Male	251	50
Female	250	50
Did not respond Gender	--	--

***Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100**

Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Less than High School	4	1
High School Graduate	69	14
Some College	124	25
College	304	61
Did Not Respond Education	--	--
Attend Religious Service > Weekly	57	11
Attend Weekly	150	30
Attend 1-2 Times per Month	78	16
Attend on holidays only	73	15
Attend rarely	93	19
Never Attend	46	9
Did not respond Religious Attendance	5	--
Shi'a	29	26**
Sunni	59	52
Other	24	22
Did not respond Sect	--	--
Lebanon	281	56
Syria	70	14
Egypt	55	11
Palestine	50	10
Jordan	20	4
Iraq	10	2
Other Arab	15	3
Born in U.S.	376	75
Born Overseas	125	25
English at Home	380	76
Other Language at Home	28	6
Evenly Divided	93	19

*** Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100**

****Represents Percentage Among Those Responding Muslim**