



AMERICAN MUSLIM VOTERS AND THE 2008 ELECTION

A Demographic Profile and Survey of Attitudes

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As American Muslim participation in the political process has witnessed steady growth, so has the tracking of American Muslim voters. In 2000 and 2004, American Muslim groups mobilized to deliver presidential election endorsements that received national attention. In 2006, CAIR issued its first-ever random sample poll of likely Muslim voters. Months ahead of the increasingly heated 2008 presidential election campaign, CAIR has commissioned a poll to continue tracking American Muslim voter views.

This report presents the first wave of the 2008 survey results, drawn from a random sample telephone survey of 1000 American Muslim registered voters. The poll provides a detailed picture of American Muslim voter demographics and views on a multitude of communal concerns and public policy issues.

Study Findings

American voters are:

- **Young**: About 78% are 30-54 years old; another 16% are younger.
- **Americanized**: 75% were either born in the U.S. or have lived here for over 20 years.
- **Highly educated**: 65% have obtained a bachelors degree or higher.
- **Professional**: About 50% are professionals.
- **Middle class**: 43% have a household income of \$50,000 or higher.
- **Family-oriented**: 77% are married.
- **Religiously diverse**: 48% attend a mosque once or more per week; 34% attend infrequently (less than once a year) or never. While 46% consider themselves

“Sunni,” 38% said they are “just Muslims.” Only 10% identified themselves as “Shia” and 2% as “Sufi.”

With respect to civic life and politics, American Muslims are:

- **Involved in civic life:** 87% said they vote regularly; 83% claimed to celebrate the Fourth of July; 62% said they fly the U.S. flag; and 45% had recently volunteered for an institution that serves the general public (not a religious institution).
- **Democrats or unaffiliated:** About half (49%) consider themselves Democrats; another 36% said they are independent. Only 8% are Republicans.
- **Undecided about the 2008 Presidential field:** When asked (on an unaided basis) about their preferred candidate, nearly 45% said they “don’t know” or “haven’t decided.” Among those who declared a preference, all serious contenders are Democrats. About one in four intended to vote for Clinton, 20% for Obama, and 4% for John Edwards. By contrast, aggregate total mentions of Giuliani, Huckabee, or McCain were only 2%! Republican Ron Paul, who is regarded by many Muslims as fair-minded, was mentioned by 2%, more than any other Republican hopeful.

Clear majorities share views on a variety of issues

- 93% feel that “women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government organizations.”
- 86% said that attacks on civilians are “never justified.” Fewer than 2% feel that they are “often justified.”
- 80% said American Muslim leaders should “Support peace and reconciliation” between the warring factions in Iraq.
- 76% agree that “Anti-Americanism in the Muslim world is a serious problem” and that “Anti-Muslim prejudice is a threat to American Muslims.”

- 75% believe that “Brokering a just Israeli-Palestinian resolution would improve America’s reputation in the Muslim world.”
- 74% disagree that “Simulated drowning is an acceptable method when interrogating a prisoner about terrorist activities.”
- Asked about issues that will have the most influence on their voting decision, 89% said the candidates’ views on education are very important. This was followed by civil rights (86%), health care policy (85%), jobs and the economy (85%), and relations with the Muslim world (85%).

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 1,000 respondents was drawn through a randomization procedure from a database of nearly 400,000 American Muslim voters.

The American Muslim voter database was developed by matching state records of registered voters with an extensive list of about 45,000 Muslim-sounding first and last names. In compiling this list, common names prevalent among Muslims across the world's Muslim-majority ethnic groups were identified and verified by well-informed members of these ethnic groups.

Though the largest ever, this pool of Muslim voters does not include Muslims with uncommon Muslim names, nor those who do not have Muslim-sounding names—especially converts who have not changed their legal names. Also excluded are Muslims with names (such as Sarah or Adam) that are common in both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Efforts were also made to eliminate entries (such as Tanisha and Shamika) that are in general use among the non-Muslim black population.

CAIR commissioned an independent polling company, Genesis Research Associates of Descanso, California, which conducted the poll via telephone interviews. Calls were made between November 9 and December 3, 2007. Respondents included 621 men and 380 women in 35 states and the District of Columbia. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3%.

The interview explored the following topics:

1. Basic demographic indicators, including age, gender, education, income, and occupation.
2. Social and religious life, including marital status, religious affiliation, and religiosity.
3. Integration into American society.

4. Political behavior and voting intentions.
5. Views on public issues.

To reach a deeper understanding of this sample in its larger American and Muslim contexts, this report compares the findings of this poll to other surveys of public opinion and U.S. Census data.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

As previous surveys have shown over the years, there is a clustering pattern in the geographical distribution of American Muslim voters. In this survey, ten states accounted for 72% of the sample. The remaining 40 states were each home to 0-2% of survey respondents.

Regionally, the greatest concentration of Muslim voters is in the South (32%). Within that region, Muslim voters are distributed fairly evenly across the three sub-regions (South Central, Mid-South, and Deep South each account for between 9-13% of the sample).

The West, Midwest, and Northeast regions each account for 22-23% of the sample. In these areas, the clustering is very apparent at the sub-region level – virtually all live in the Southwest, Great Lakes, and Mid-Atlantic sub-regions, and almost none in the New England, Upper Plains, and Northwest sub-regions.

Top Ten States of Residence	
California	19%
New York	13%
Illinois	10%
Texas	9%
Virginia	7%
Michigan	6%
Florida	6%
Maryland	5%
Pennsylvania	4%
Ohio	3%

Regional Distribution	
South (Total)	32%
South Central (TX,MO,KS,AR,OK)	13%
Mid-South (VA,NC,TN,KY,SC)	10%
Deep South (FL,GA,LA,MS,AL)	9%
West (Total)	23%
Southwest (CA,AZ,CO,NV,UT,NM)	21%
Northwest (WA,AK,OR,WY,ID,MT)	2%
Midwest (Total)	23%
Great Lakes (IL,MI,OH,IN,WI)	21%
Upper Plains (MN,IA,NE,ND,SD)	2%
Northeast (Total)	22%
Mid-Atlantic (NY,MD,PA,DC,WV, DE)	22%
New England (CT,ME,MA,NH,RI,VT)	0%

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Age

As a subset of American registered voters, Muslims are somewhat younger than the general population. Respondents under age 55 accounted for 77% of the survey sample, versus 65% of the general voting public (as of the 2004 census).

Age Distribution Compared to all U.S. Voters		
	U.S.*	Respondents
18-24	10%	8%
25-34	15%	17%
35-54	40%	52%
55-69	21%	17%
70 or older	13%	2%

*Based on U.S. Census Bureau, November 2004 record of 142 million registered voters. See: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting/cps2004.html>

Education

American Muslim voters enjoy a substantial educational advantage over other members of the American electorate. Of all American voters, 30% have obtained either a four-year or more advanced degree. Among this sample of Muslim voters, the proportion of college-educated

Educational Level Compared to all U.S. Voters		
	U.S.*	Respondents
Less than 12 th grade	10%	2%
Graduated high school	30%	7%
Some college or two-year degree**	31%	22%
Four-year degree	20%	30%
Masters or doctorate	10%	35%

*U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2004. See: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/cps2004/tab05-1.xls>
 **This category appears as "Some college or associate degree" in the U.S. Census Bureau statistics.

individuals (65%) is more than double the overall population figure. Perhaps this is due to the large numbers of immigrants who have come to America specifically to attend institutions of higher education.

American Muslim female voters compare very favorably versus all registered voters, with 58% of Muslim female voters holding at least a bachelor's degree versus 30% of the general voting public. But Muslim female voters have a significantly lower level of education than their Muslim male counterparts, 69% of whom have earned an undergraduate or graduate university degree.

Income

Survey respondents enjoy an income level that is at parity with, or even higher than, the general voting public.

Smaller proportions of Muslim voters than of American voters as a whole belong to the lower income brackets. For example, only half as many survey respondents have household incomes under \$15,000 per year, as compared to all U.S. registered voters.¹

Annual Household Income Compared to all U.S. Voters		
	U.S.*	Respondents
Less than \$15K	7%	3%
\$15K-49.9K	34%	27%
\$50-74.9K	24%	23%
\$75-99.9K	15%	21%
Over \$100K	21%	26%

*U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2004. See: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/cps2004/tab09-1.xls>.

Nearly half (47%) of all Muslim households, versus 36% of all U.S. registered voters, have incomes over \$75,000 per year. And more Muslim households are very affluent, with incomes over \$100,000 per year (26% versus 21% for Muslims versus the general population, respectively).

Occupation

About half of the respondents are employed in white-collar occupations: 17% are engaged in professional or technical careers. Engineers comprise 12%; professors or teachers, 11%; and physicians or dentists, 8% of the total sample. Another 12% of respondents are business owners. Less than 10% work in pink-collar or blue-collar jobs: 5% are employed as secretaries /

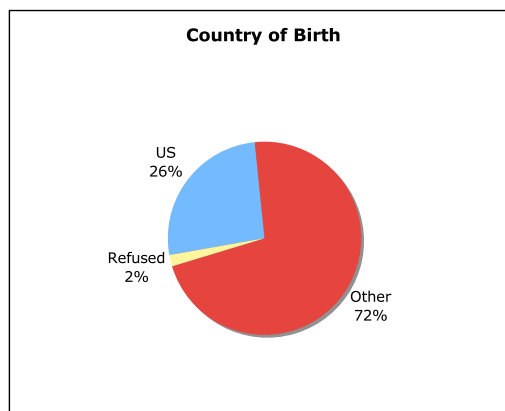
Occupational Profile	
Professional or Technical	17%
Engineer	12%
Business Owner	12%
Teacher or Professor	11%
Managerial	8%
Physician or Dentist	8%
Salesperson	6%
Secretarial or Administrative	5%
Construction or manufacturing worker	3%
Lawyer	1%
Other	11%
Refused	6%

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2004. See: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/cps2004/tab09-1.xls>.

administrative workers and 3% hold construction or manufacturing jobs.

Place of Birth and Ethnicity

About 72% of the study respondents were born overseas; 26% are native Americans. Among the foreign-born, two-thirds have lived in the U.S. for twenty years or longer. Only 4% are recent immigrants who have lived here less than ten years. It is important to note that this survey is not representative of all Muslim American residents, but only of those who have attained American citizenship.



When asked about their ancestral background, about half (52%) indicated that their forebears were from Southeast Asia (Pakistan, India or Bangladesh). The Arab world accounted for only 21% of survey respondents. This finding represents a statistical anomaly; previous surveys have shown South Asian and Middle Eastern Muslims in much-closer-to-equal proportions.²

Years of U.S. Residency	Percentage
Less than 10 Years	6%
10-19 Years	28%
20 Years or Longer	66%

As for the rest, 7% came from Africa, 4% from Iran, and 3% from Europe. More than 7% of the respondents said their ancestors came from somewhere else.

Region	Percentage
Southeast Asia	52%
Arab World	21%
Africa	7%
Iran	4%
Europe	3%
Turkey	1%
The Caribbean	<1%
Somewhere else	7%
Refused	4%

² A Poll conducted by Zogby International in October 2004 for ProjectMaps found 34% of a national Muslim sample to have ancestry in Southeast Asia, and 26% in the Arab world. In the Zogby sample, however, 17% of the respondents were not registered to vote. Also, the Zogby sample included African-Americans who comprised 20% of all respondents. CAIR commissioned a poll in 2006 that found 40% of the respondents originating in Arab world while 33% came from South Asia. See CAIR, American Muslim Voters: A Demographic Profile and Survey of Attitudes, Washington, DC, 2006, http://www.cair.com/pdf/American_Muslim_Voter_Survey_2006.pdf, January 8, 2008.

Marriage Patterns

Marriage is a dominant social pattern in America; 54% of all Americans older than 15 report being married. Among survey respondents (who are all 18 or older), 77% are married; nearly 1½ times the general population figure.

Family life among Muslims appears to be stable. Similar to the 2006 survey, only 4% of Muslim voters are divorced, widowed or separated, as compared to 19% in the general U.S. adult population.

Marital Status Compared to U.S. Population		
	U.S.*	Respondents
Single	27%	16%
Married	54%	77%
Divorced, widowed or separated	19%	4%
*U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000. Note the following discrepancy in this comparison: The Muslim voter column reflects people older than 18 while the U.S. figures represent people older than 15.		

RELIGIOUS PROFILE

When asked to state their denomination/school of Islamic thought, the largest segment of respondents said they consider themselves “Sunni.” Another 38% claimed to be “just Muslim,” while 10% self-identified as Shia.

Some of those in the “Just a Muslim” category may be Muslims who are tired of sectarian divisions in the community and prefer to regard themselves as denominationally neutral. Indeed, this position is particularly prevalent among African American Muslims. For example, Imam Warith Deen Mohammed is known to eschew such religious labels as Sunni and Shia.

About 2% of respondents said they are Sufi (a mystical tradition), and less than 1% chose “Other” as

Religious Denomination	
Sunni	46%
Shia	10%
Sufi	2%
Just a Muslim	38%
Other	1%
Refused	3%

Frequency of Mosque Attendance	
More than once a week	22%
About once a week	26%
Once or twice a month	15%
A few times a year	13%
Seldom	11%
Never	10%
Refused	3%

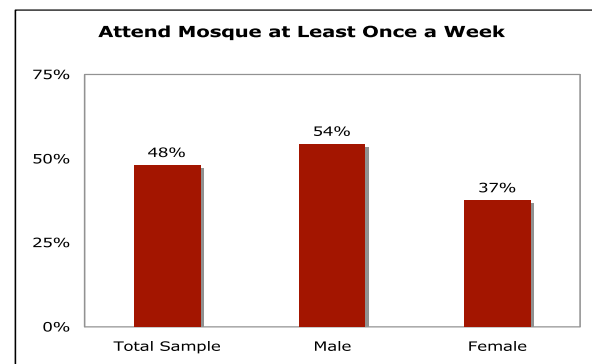
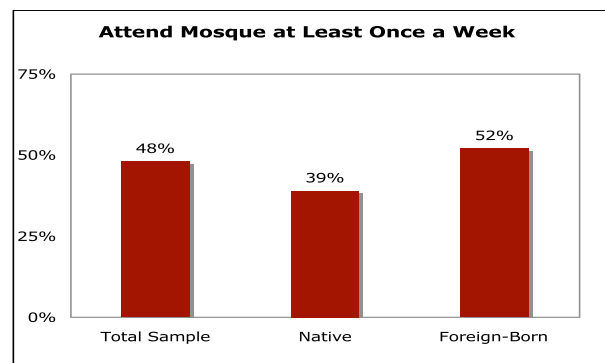
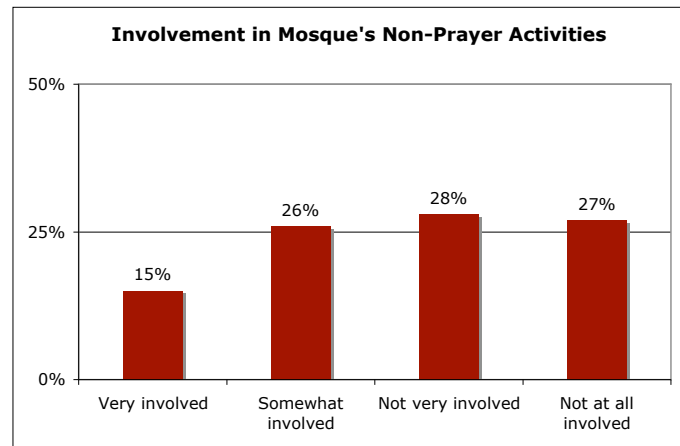
their affiliation.

Asked how frequently they attend mosque for prayer, 48% said they do so at least once a week; 15% go once or twice a month; 34% attend either a few times a year (13%), or rarely (11%), or never go (10%). Most (55%) are relatively uninvolved in mosque activities aside from prayer, while 41% said they are “very” or “somewhat” involved in non-prayer activities.

A correlation test found a significant relationship between mosque attendance and country of birth (US vs. Other), as shown below. Half (51%) of foreign-born Muslim voters reported that they go to mosque at least once a week. A significantly smaller proportion (39%) of American-born respondents reported this frequency of attendance.

The discrepancy is even stronger across gender lines: 54% of males vs. only 37% of females reported going to mosque once or more each week for prayer.

Interestingly, the pattern is reversed along lines of gender and place of birth with respect to the level of involvement in other (non-prayer) mosque activities: 45% versus 39% for females vs. males, respectively; and 49% versus 40% for U.S.-born vs. foreign-born respondents, respectively.



CIVIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

The findings of this poll confirm previous polls showing a substantial level of engagement in civic life:

- 87% of respondents said they vote regularly; quite similar to the 2004 comparable general population figure of 88%.³
- 83% said they celebrate the Fourth of July, slightly lower than the level reported in CAIR's 2006 survey (86%).
- 62% said they fly the U.S. flag on occasion (versus 64% in 2006).
- 45% said they volunteer for institutions serving the public (up slightly from 42% in 2006). By contrast, federal government data shows that only 29% of all American adults volunteered in 2005.⁴ A more recent figure by the Department of Labor suggests that the proportion of all Americans who volunteered for an organization at least once between September 2006 and September 2007 fell to 26%.⁵

This survey indicates that both perceptions of acceptance and fear of prejudice have intensified since 2006.

- Half of the respondents (50%) answered affirmatively when asked, "Since 9/11, have you ever felt discriminated against or profiled?" (a substantial increase versus 43% in 2006).
- On the other hand, 43% indicated that they have "experienced noteworthy kind treatment by neighbors or co-workers who thought you might be discriminated against?" This measure also is up versus 2006 (from 40%).

³ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2004. See: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/cps2004/tab02-1.xls>.

⁴ U.S. Freedom Corps, *Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings*, released June 12, 2006. See at: http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/about_usafc/newsroom/announcements_dynamic.asp?ID=1350

⁵ <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>.

Party Identification:

This poll suggests clearly that Muslim voters continue to move closer to the Democratic Party.

- 49% said they consider themselves members of the Democratic Party (up versus 42% in 2006);
- Those who reported being Republican declined from 17% in 2006 to only 8% in this poll; and
- The proportion of unaffiliated Muslims increased from 28% in 2006 to 36% in 2008.

	2006*	2008**
Democrat	42%	49%
Republican	17%	8%
Independent/Unaffiliated	28%	36%

*Previous mid-term election survey sample commissioned by CAIR in 2006.
**Current survey sample.

One in four respondents were not even willing to say that they “felt closer to” either party. In total, 64% either consider themselves Democrats or “feel closer to” the Democratic Party. Only 10% either consider themselves Republicans or “feel closer to” that party.

The flight from the Republican camp is impressive, but not surprising. In 2000, American Muslims endorsed and voted for Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush, because of his pledge to discontinue use of secret evidence. Muslims generally feel that he did not honor his commitment, especially after 9/11.

With respect to issues, about half (51%) believe that Democrats are more likely to uphold the US Constitution; just over

	Democrats	Republicans	No difference
Upholding the Constitution	51%	6%	35%
Treating all citizens equally	59%	5%	29%
Protecting freedom of religion	53%	6%	33%
Standing up for what they believe	43%	11%	37%

half (53%) feel that Democrats are more concerned with protecting freedom of religion, and 59% said that Democrats are more likely to treat all people equally. However,

Democrats did receive a substantially lower score on “standing up for what they believe in” (43%).

By contrast, only 11% or fewer Muslim voters evaluate Republicans favorably on any of these issues.

Each of the parties was evaluated by respondents on “friendliness to Muslims.” The Democrats were much more likely to be rated as “friendly to Muslims;” 37%

Respondent Perception of Party Friendliness to Muslims		
	Democratic Party	Republican Party
Friendly	37%	8%
Neutral	44%	34%
Unfriendly	9%	48%
Refused/ no answer/ don't know	10%	10%
Total	100	100

versus 8% for Democrats versus Republicans, respectively. By contrast, 48% rated the Republican Party as “unfriendly to Muslims” versus 9% saying the same about the Democratic Party.

Views on the Issues

Islam and Modernity

While most respondents (66%) do not think there is a natural conflict between Islam and modernity; one-fourth (25%) do. This finding requires further examination.

Two logical variables that could explain this finding are religiosity (measured through frequency of mosque attendance) and social experience of discrimination, especially since most respondents (63%) believe that life has become more difficult after 9/11. These factors could have created an exaggerated impression of a clash between

modern American values and Islamic

View of Islam and Modernity by Perception of Discrimination		
	Have felt discriminated against	
	Yes	No
Natural conflict between Islam and modern society	29%	22%
No conflict	64%	70%

teachings.

Perceptions of discrimination by attitude about Islam and modernity show some relationship, but not a very strong one—29% of those who feel they have experienced discrimination or profiling believe there is a natural conflict versus 22% of those who haven't felt

discriminated

against.

The pattern

is stronger when

the modernity and Islam variable is tabulated against the view of the difficulty of life after 9/11. Those who said it has become more difficult to be a Muslim in the U.S. are significantly more likely to say there is conflict between Islam and modernity than those who said life has not changed since 9/11 (30% vs. 18%).

View of Islam and Modernity by Perceived Difficulty of Life Since 9/11		
	Life is more difficult	
	Yes	No
Natural conflict between Islam and modern society	30%	18%
No conflict	63%	73%

Devout Muslims (as measured by frequency of mosque attendance) are less likely to agree

that Islam is

incompatible

with living in a

modern society

versus those who seldom or never attend

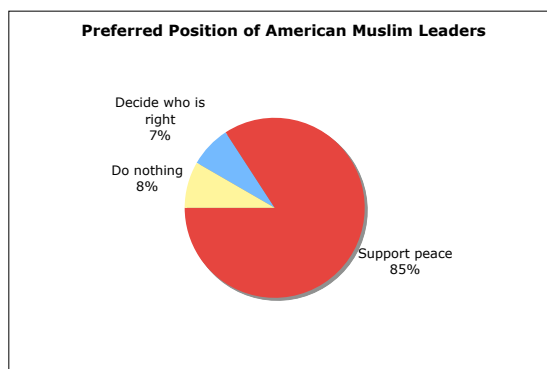
mosque (22% vs. 34%).

View of Islam and Modernity by Devoutness		
	Mosque Attendance for Prayer	
	1+ per week	Seldom or never
Natural conflict between Islam and modern society	22%	34%
No conflict	71%	54%

Shia-Sunni Violence

When respondents were asked what American Muslim leaders should do about the Shia-Sunni violence in Iraq, 80% said the right approach would be to

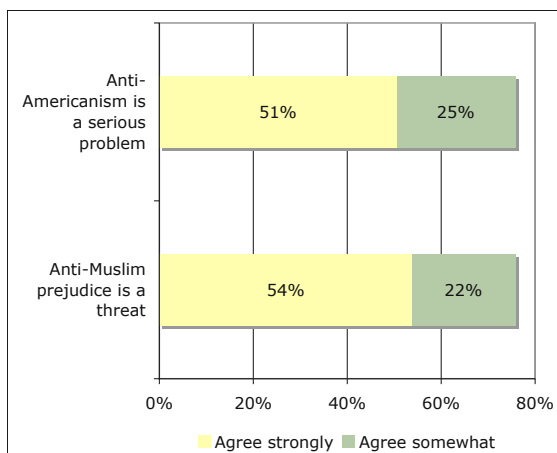
“support peace and reconciliation,” while 7% preferred taking sides (“decide which side



is right and support it”); 8% felt that American Muslim leaders should take no action at all.

Islamophobia and Anti-Americanism

Three out of four respondents (77%) believe both that “Anti-Americanism in the Muslim world is a serious problem” and that “Anti-Muslim prejudice is a threat to American Muslims.”

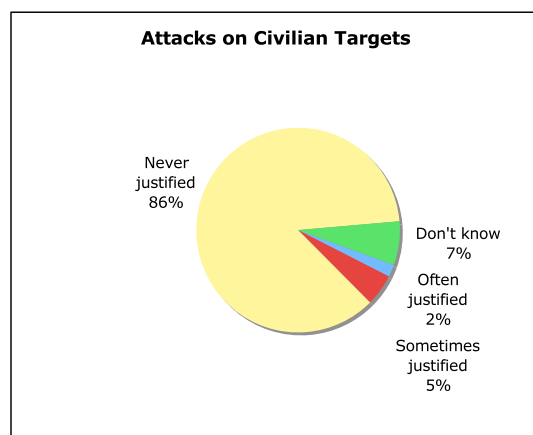


Attacks on Civilians and Homeland Security

When asked whether “a proper interpretation of Islam” could justify attacks on civilian targets, the vast majority of respondents (86%) said such behavior “never” could be justified. Only 2% believe that such acts are “often” justified.

This overwhelming rejection of attacks on civilians does not translate into agreement with current U.S. policy on homeland security and the war on terror.

A majority of 56% disagreed that the current policy is making America safer (33% supported current policy). And 74% disagreed that “racial or religious profiling is a good way to identify individuals planning criminal or terrorist activities” (vs. 18% who agreed). To shed light on the complexity of Muslim voter views of U.S. policy, pertinent questions were asked about pressing domestic and foreign policy issues.



U.S. Relations with the Muslim World

It appears that Muslim American voters favor increased U.S. involvement in the Muslim world, but in a framework designed to reduce hostilities and to support conflict resolution. For example, 68% of the respondents feel that the government should take a more active role in ending the Darfur conflict; 75% believe that the U.S. should broker a just Israeli-Palestinian resolution (up from 69% in 2006); and 83% want America to normalize relations with Iran (up from 66% in 2006).

A similar proportion (75%) opposes the use of the military to spread democracy (down from 90% in 2006); and 74% feel that a religiously-based political party that wins in free and fair elections should be treated by the US government as the legitimate representative of that country’s people.

Civil and Human Rights

Respondents are very sensitive to human and civil rights concerns. Nearly 93% agree that “women should have an equal role in running business, industry and government organizations.” But this is an area of public policy that particularly worries most respondents: most (69%) believe that Muslim women are particularly vulnerable, saying they are very worried or somewhat worried that “women who wear the hijab in public will be treated poorly because the head-covering identifies them as Muslim;” 58% said they are worried that their “telephone calls or emails might be monitored by the government” because of their religion; and more than half (53%) are concerned about their own job security, fearing “not being hired for a job or not being promoted” because of their religion.

Worries about Civil Rights		
	Worried	Not Worried
Hijab related mistreatment	69%	27%
Wiretapping	58%	39%
Workplace hiring or promotion	53%	45%

Survey respondents are even more concerned about the adverse effects of U.S. government policies on America’s international human rights record: 80% said the U.S.

should follow the Geneva Conventions on detainees; 74% reject simulated drowning as an interrogation method.

Indeed, nearly two-thirds (63%) of the respondents believe it has become more difficult to be Muslim in the United States since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. One can understand the heightened level of apprehension when considering that 76% of the respondents believe that “the coverage of Islam and Muslims by American news organizations” is generally unfair. Still, Muslim voters have strong views on other major policy debates.

Universal Health Care

An overwhelming majority (83%) supports the idea that the U.S. government should “guarantee health insurance for all citizens, even if it means raising taxes.”

Environmental Concerns

A significant majority of American Muslim voters (84%) are receptive to a pro-environment message. Two-thirds (64%) agree strongly that “the U.S. government should be more aggressive in efforts to combat climate change,” and another 20% “agree somewhat” with this statement.

Immigration

Most of the survey respondents disagree with proposals that reduce immigration or make citizenship applications more cumbersome. More than 70% believe that delaying citizenship applications is unfair. Such delays have impacted all immigrant groups, particularly those of Middle Eastern or South Asian origins, since 9/11.

Campaign Finance Reform

More than two-thirds of the respondents agree that public financing of elections will decrease corruption and increase accountability in government. Only 17% disagree.

Tax Policy

Survey results on tax policy reveal a mix of emotions regarding tax breaks to the rich. While most (53%) do not believe that tax breaks will improve the economy, a substantial minority (34%) think that these tax reductions are good economic policy.

Breaking down the responses by income shows that personal wealth has a surprising negative correlation with attitude on this issue. Those in the higher income brackets, who would stand to gain personally from “further tax reductions for corporations and wealthy Americans,” are somewhat more likely to reject this approach.

Among those with household incomes under \$35,000, 50% oppose further tax reductions for the rich; the proportion of tax-reduction opponents is substantially higher (64%) among those with annual incomes above \$100,000. This is in keeping with the teachings of Islam: the Qur’an instructs that the rich are responsible for the welfare of the needy.

Assessing Candidates: A Pyramid of Issues

American Muslim voters have similar attitudes to the general public in terms of what issues are very important to them.

Respondents were asked about the importance of the candidates’ views on a wide range of issues.

Four of the top five issues dealt with domestic policy touching their daily lives: education, civil rights, health care and jobs.

Importance of Issues in Candidate Selection		
	Total Important	Very Important
Education	98%	89%
Civil rights	98%	86%
Health care policy	98%	85%
Jobs and the economy	98%	85%
Relations with the Muslim World	97%	85%
The environment	97%	80%
Medicare and Social Security	96%	79%
War in Iraq	90%	78%
Terrorism and national security	94%	74%
Israeli-Palestinian conflict	90%	71%
Tax policy	94%	67%
Social welfare programs	92%	65%
War in Afghanistan	87%	64%
Restoring habeus corpus	86%	63%
Immigration reform	92%	61%
The minimum wage	93%	60%
Stem cell research	79%	48%

“Relations with the Muslim world” was rated “very important” by 85% of respondents; another 12% rated this issue as somewhat important.

Surprisingly, restoration of habeus corpus was rated “very important” by less than 2/3rds of survey respondents. Stem cell research placed at the bottom of the issue pyramid. Still, 79% rated this issue as at least “somewhat” important.

The 2008 Primaries

Asked about their intention to vote in the 2008 primaries, 64% said they “definitely will” and another 15% said they “probably will.” By contrast, a total of only 13% expect not to cast a ballot.

In an open-ended question, those who said they planned to vote in the primaries were asked to name their preferred candidate. A plurality of 45% said they were undecided. Half (50%) named Democratic presidential hopefuls. The remainder (4%) mentioned one of the Republican candidates. This finding is perhaps the strongest indication of the severity of damage in the relationship between the GOP and Muslim voters.

Clinton was mentioned by 24% of likely voters, followed closely by Obama, who was named by 20% of these respondents. It is not clear why more Muslim voters would choose Clinton over Obama, except perhaps that she was leading in public opinion polls when this survey was conducted, suggesting the influence of dominant trends in public opinion on Muslim voters. John Edwards was the choice of 4% of Muslim likely voters.

Intent to Vote in 2008 Primary	
Definitely will	64%
Probably will	15%
Might or might not	7%
Probably will not	4%
Definitely will not	9%
Don't know/no answer	2%

Preferred Candidate in 2008 Primary	
Hillary Clinton	24%
Barak Obama	20%
John Edwards	4%
Ron Paul	2%
Dennis Kucinich	2%
Rudy Giuliani	1%
John McCain	<1%
Mitt Romney	<1%
Don't know/haven't decided	45%

Among the Republican candidates, Ron Paul received the highest number of mentions (2%). In aggregate, Giuliani, McCain, and Romney were named by only 2% of these voters.

CONCLUSION

Findings of this survey illustrate that American Muslim voters have done well in America. Their relative youth, educational profile, and economic prosperity bode well for the future of their political influence.

Like the rest of the American population, American Muslims are diverse with respect to social class, denomination, religiosity, and ethnicity. However, clear majorities feel integrated into American society, and share attitudes and opinions on important public policy issues.

The overwhelming majority of American Muslim voters are in favor of participation in American civic and political life. They are keen on expressing their American Muslim identity through voting, volunteering, celebrating national holidays and symbols. They are equally concerned about Islamophobia and anti-Americanism, hoping for rapprochement between the U.S. and the Muslim world.

A substantial proportion of American Muslim voters are not currently affiliated with any political party; but the Democratic Party is clearly more appealing to many. Relatively few consider themselves Republicans.

Most are committed to the environment; support immigrant rights; favor universal health care (even if it means increased taxes); support the enforcement of civil liberties and international human rights; favor the public financing of political campaigns; and oppose tax breaks for corporations.