

# **American Muslims and the 2008 Election**

## **A Post Election Survey Report**

November 7, 2008

This survey was commissioned by the American Muslim Taskforce on Civil Rights and Elections, a coalition of prominent national Muslim groups. The survey was conducted by Genesis Research Associates, an independent polling and market research firm. The data was analyzed by Mohamed Nimer, Assistant Professor at the Washington Semester Program, American University.

### **Survey Methodology:**

- Random digit dialing phone interviews, using a randomly generated calling list of 32,696 voters from a large American Muslim voter database.
- Interviews with 637 respondents were conducted November 5 - 6, 2008.
- The margin of error is 3.87 percent.

### **Survey Findings:**

- Most of the respondents, or 78 percent, reside in ten states. These are: Illinois, New York, Virginia, Michigan, California, Texas, New Jersey, Maryland, Florida, and Pennsylvania.
- The sample was 55 percent female and 45 percent male.
- Of the total number of respondents, 603, or 95 percent, said they voted in the presidential election, either at the polls or by absentee ballot. This is the highest American Muslim voter turnout ever reported. The last poll of American Muslim voters showed that almost 89 percent vote on a regular basis.
- Of those who voted, 13.6 percent said they did so for the first time. One-fourth said they volunteered for or donated money to a political campaign in this election.
- Of those who voted, 89 percent cast their ballots for Barack Obama. Just two percent voted for John McCain. Third party candidates received far fewer Muslim votes and did much worse than in 2004.
- American Muslim voters are increasingly identifying themselves with the Democratic Party. More than two-thirds said they consider themselves Democrats. Twenty-nine percent still consider themselves independent. Only four percent say they are Republicans.
- Almost two-thirds, 63 percent, said the economy was the most important issue that affected their voting decision. This was followed by 16 percent who said the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were the most important. (In January, a sample of 1000 Muslim voters rated education and civil rights as the top issues.)
- Respondents whose household income is more than \$200,000, the income bracket that may receive a tax increase during the Obama presidency, still voted overwhelmingly (87 percent) for Obama.

## Survey Data Tables

### “Which presidential candidate did you vote for?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Barack Obama	536	88.9	88.9	88.9
	Don't know/ declined	42	7.0	7.0	95.9
	John McCain	13	2.2	2.2	98.0
	Someone else	5	.8	.8	98.8
	Ralph Nader	4	.7	.7	99.5
	Bob Barr	2	.3	.3	99.8
	Cynthia McKinney	1	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	603	100.0	100.0	

### “Was this the first presidential election that you voted in?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Have voted before	518	85.9	85.9	85.9
	First time	82	13.6	13.6	99.5
	Declined	3	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	603	100.0	100.0	

### “Which of the following was the most important issue that affected your choice?”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	The economy	382	63.3	63.3	63.3
	The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan	97	16.1	16.1	79.4
	Something else	46	7.6	7.6	87.1
	Education	30	5.0	5.0	92.0
	Civil rights	25	4.1	4.1	96.2
	National security	23	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	603	100.0	100.0	

**“Do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Democrat	380	63.0	63.0	63.0
	Independent	173	28.7	28.7	91.7
	Republican	25	4.1	4.1	95.9
	Declined	16	2.7	2.7	98.5
	Other	9	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	603	100.0	100.0	

**“Which of the following categories includes your household income?”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Declined	128	21.2	21.2	21.2
	\$50,000 - < \$75,000	84	13.9	13.9	35.2
	\$75,000 - < \$100,000	78	12.9	12.9	48.1
	\$100,000 - < \$200,000	74	12.3	12.3	60.4
	\$35,000 - < \$50,000	73	12.1	12.1	72.5
	< \$15,000	50	8.3	8.3	80.8
	\$15,000 - < \$25,000	40	6.6	6.6	87.4
	> \$200,000	39	6.5	6.5	93.9
	\$25,000 - < \$35,000	37	6.1	6.1	100.0
	Total	603	100.0	100.0	