



CAIR
Council on American-Islamic Relations

**AMERICAN MUSLIM VOTERS AND
THE 2012 ELECTION**
A Demographic Profile and Survey of Attitudes

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Conducted by Genesis Research Associates

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Commissioned by

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BACKGROUND

As American Muslim participation in the political process has experienced steady growth, so has the tracking of American Muslim voters. During the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, American Muslim groups mobilized to deliver presidential 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 commissioned a poll to track the views of American Muslim voters. CAIR also commissioned a national exit poll survey of Muslim voters following the 2008 presidential election.

This report presents a detailed picture of American Muslim voter demographics and explores their views on a multitude of communal concerns and public policy issues several weeks before the 2012 presidential election. The survey results are drawn from a random sample telephone survey of 500 American Muslim registered voters.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

- 91% of registered Muslim voters intend to vote in this year's presidential election.
- 25% of Muslim voters are still undecided about who to vote for in this presidential election.
- 68% of Muslim voters said they will vote to re-elect President Obama, while 7% said they will vote for Governor Mitt Romney.
- 55% of Muslim voters consider themselves moderate, while 26% consider themselves liberal, and 16% consider themselves conservative.
- The percentage of those who said they are closer to the Democratic Party grew from 49% in a similar poll taken in 2008 to 66% today.
- Affiliation with the Republican Party remained nearly the same, 8% in 2008, and 9% today.
- 49% of respondents said that the Democratic Party was friendly towards Muslims, while 12% said that the Republican Party was friendly.
- 51% of respondents said that the Republican Party was unfriendly towards Muslims, while 6% percent said that the Democratic Party was unfriendly.
- The top five important issues to American Muslim voters are jobs and the economy, education, health care policy, Medicare and Social Security, and civil rights.
- On international issues, 68% of respondents say the United States should provide support to those fighting for freedom in Syria and 76% say the United States and NATO made the right decision by intervening in the Libyan revolution.
- 35% of respondents say they have experienced religious or ethnic profiling or discrimination post-9/11. 35% of respondents also say they experienced kind treatment by neighbors or coworkers in that period.
- Half of those polled attend a mosque at least once a month.
- 70% of respondents say they have a four-year or graduate degree, compared to 34% of the general voting population.
- 65% of respondents identified the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) as the organization that best represents the interests of American Muslims.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 500 respondents was drawn through a randomization procedure from a database of nearly 500,000 American Muslim voters.

The American Muslim voter database was developed by matching state records of registered voters with an extensive list of some 45,000 traditionally Muslim 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.

Although it is the largest such list compiled to date, this pool of Muslim voters does not include Muslims with uncommon names, nor those who do not have traditionally Muslim names. Also excluded are Muslims with names (such as Sarah or Adam) that are also common in other communities.

CAIR commissioned an independent polling company, Genesis Research Associates of Descanso, California, which conducted the poll via telephone interviews.

Calls were made during the first two weeks of October 2012. Respondents included 314 men and 186 women from across the nation. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 5%.

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

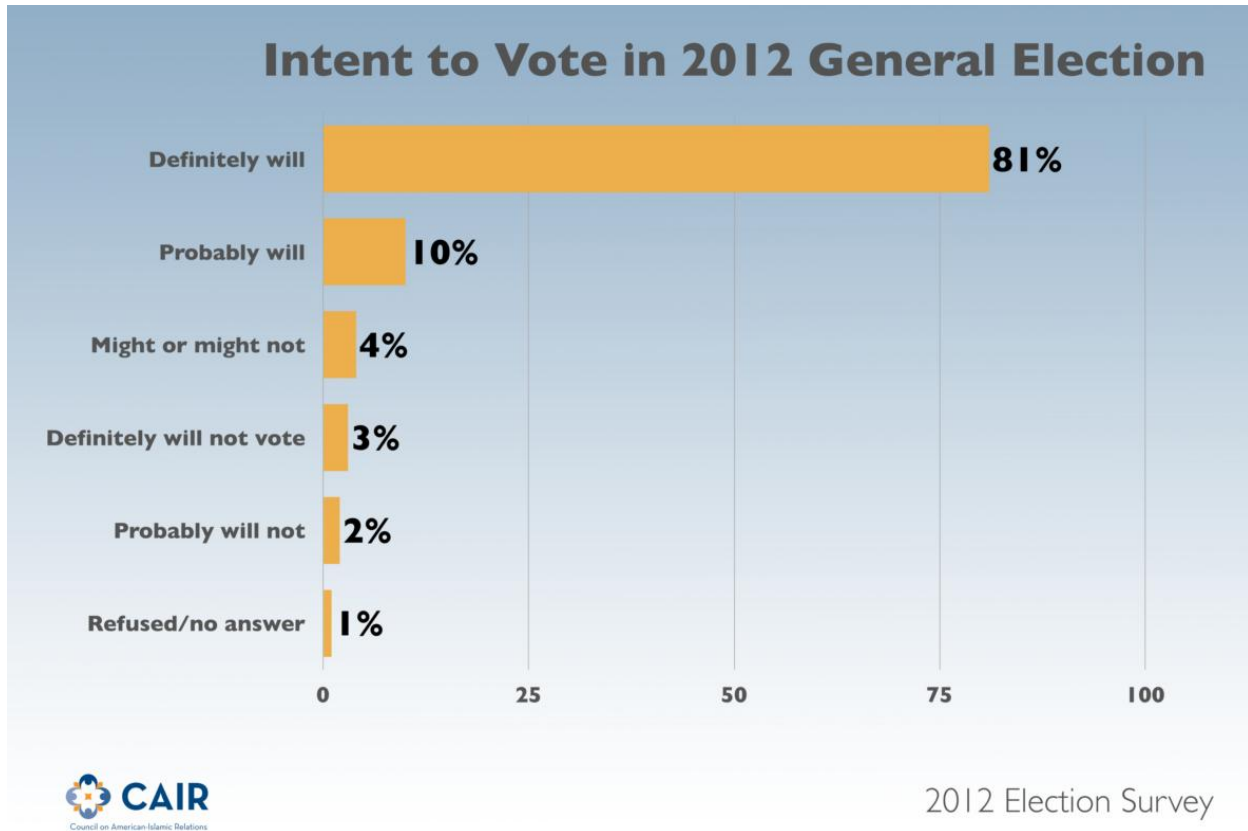
To reach a deeper understanding of this sample in its larger American and Muslim contexts, this report compares the findings of this poll to U.S. Census data.

CIVIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

Intent to Vote in the 2012 General Election

How likely is it that you will vote in the 2012 General election?

(Based on total respondents)



When asked about their intentions to vote in the 2012 general election, 91% of Muslim voters said that they plan to vote, with 81% saying that they “definitely will” and another 10% saying that they “probably will.” Only 5% responded that they will not or are unlikely to vote.

Importance of Issues in Candidate Selection

How important are each of the following issues in terms of their influence on which candidate you will vote for?

(Based on respondents likely to vote)

Importance of Issues in Candidate Selection		
	Total Important	Very Important
Jobs and the economy	98%	87%
Education	97%	89%
Health care policy	97%	79%
Medicare and social security	96%	76%
Civil rights	96%	79%
International relations	92%	73%
Tax policy	92%	65%
Terrorism and national security	91%	71%
Social welfare programs	88%	55%
The environment	87%	60%
The minimum wage	85%	50%
Immigration reform	85%	51%
The Israel - Palestine conflict	83%	61%
The possibility of war Iran	81%	67%
The uprising in Syria	78%	49%
Abortion	73%	44%

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

Overall, Muslim voters prioritized domestic issues over international issues. The top five issues were domestic policy related: jobs and the economy, education, health care policy, Medicare and social security policy, and civil rights.

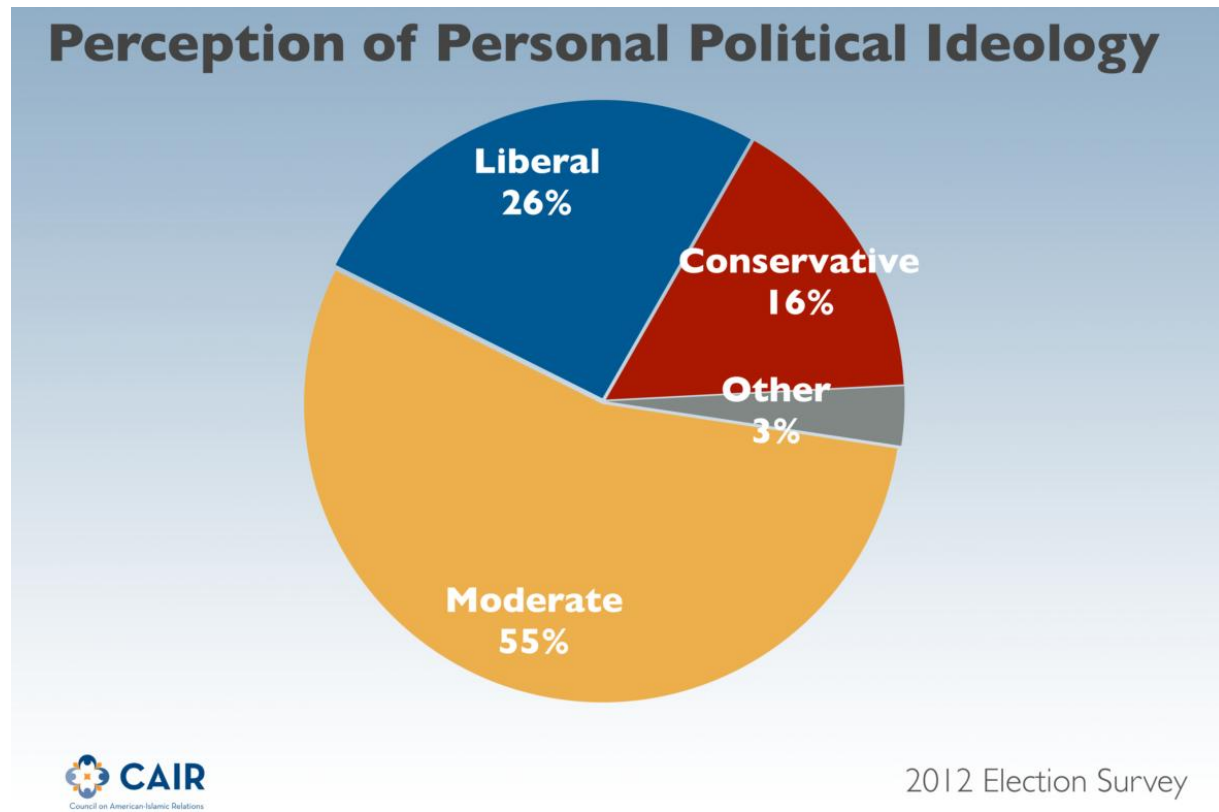
Seventy-three percent of respondents rated "international relations" as "very important." Another 20% rated the issue "somewhat important."

Two-thirds of respondents rated "the Israel – Palestine" conflict and "the possibility of war Iran" as "very important." Half of respondents rated "the uprising in Syria" as "very important" by about half of respondents. Abortion placed at the bottom of the issue pyramid. Forty-four percent rated this issue as "very important" and 29% rated it "somewhat important."

Perception of Personal Political Ideology

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a conservative, liberal, moderate, or another classification?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)

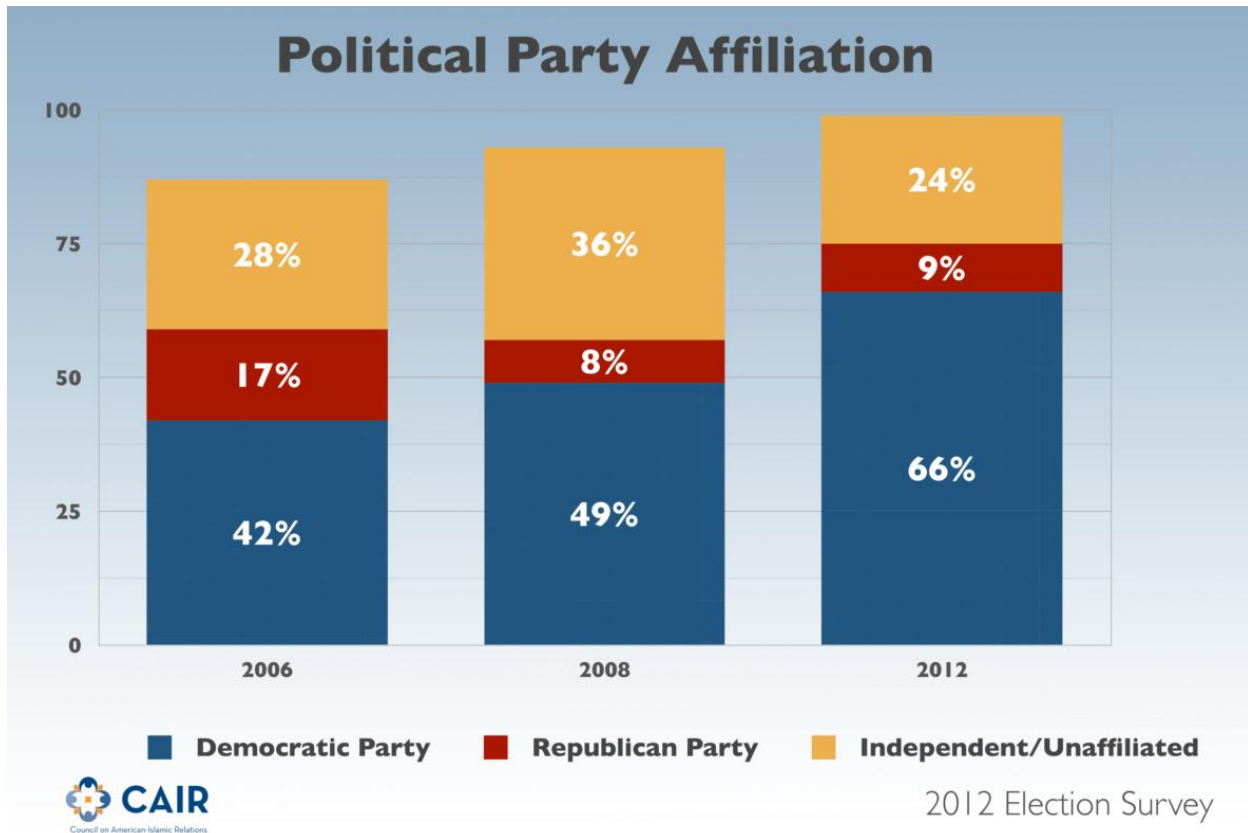


This poll indicates that the majority of Muslim voters, regardless of political party affiliation, consider their personal political ideology to be moderate (55%), followed by liberal (26%), conservative (16%), and then other (3%).

Political Party Affiliation

Do you consider yourself closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)



Note: 2006 data sourced from previous mid-term election survey sample commissioned by CAIR in 2006.

Note: 2008 data sourced from previous general election survey sample commissioned by CAIR in January, 2008.

Note: 2012 data sourced from current survey sample.

This poll suggests that Muslim voters are increasingly aligning with the Democratic Party.

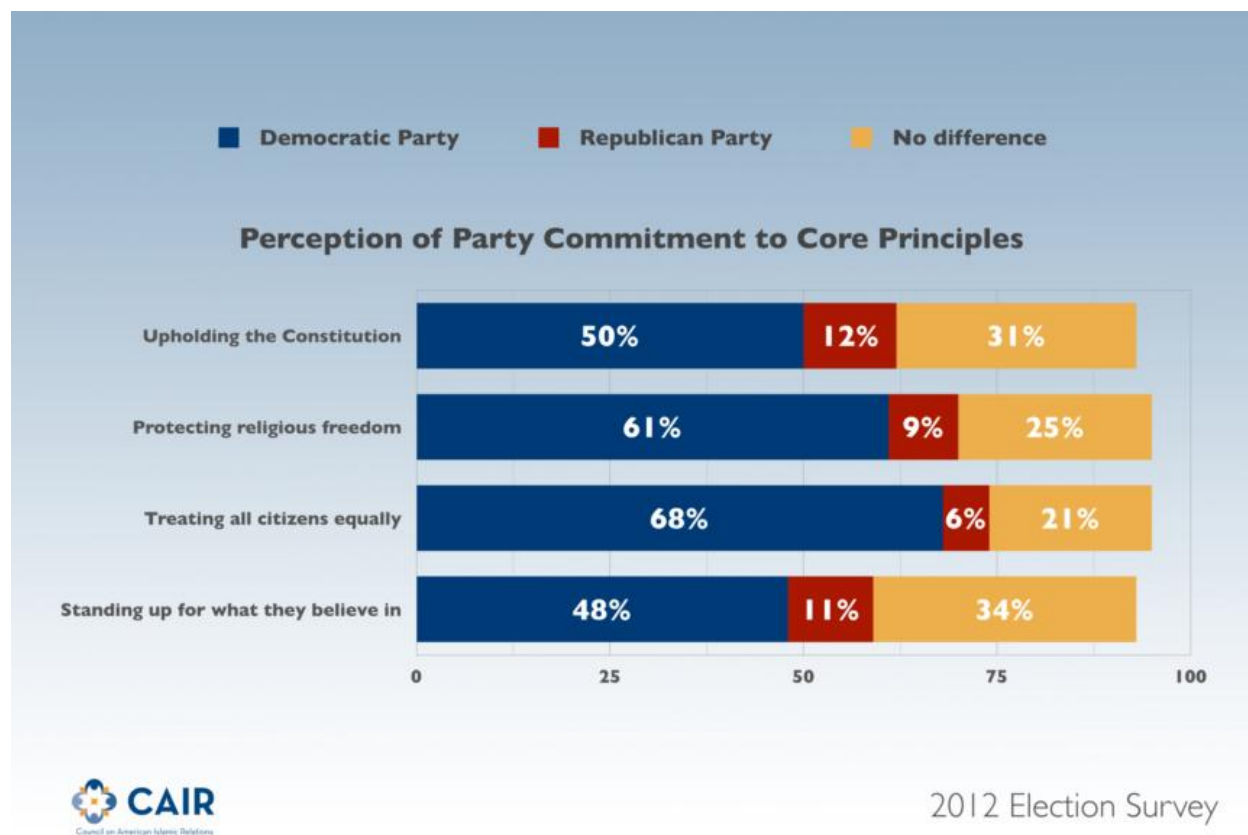
- Sixty-six percent said they consider themselves members of the Democratic Party (up from 49% in 2008 and 42% in 2006).
- Those who reported being Republican, 9% today, remained nearly the same from 8% in 2008. Such consistency may signal the end of a trend in the decline of Muslim voters who reported being Republican (down from 17% in 2006).
- Nearly one in four respondents were not willing to say that they “felt closer to” either party. However, the proportion of unaffiliated Muslims decreased, from 36% in 2008 to 24% in 2012.

Perception of Party Commitment to Core Principles

Thinking about the two major political parties in this country, which one would you say is most concerned with _____, the Republicans or the Democrats?

Categories include: protecting religious freedom; upholding the U.S. Constitution; treating all citizens equally; and, standing up for what they believe in.

(Based on respondents likely to vote)



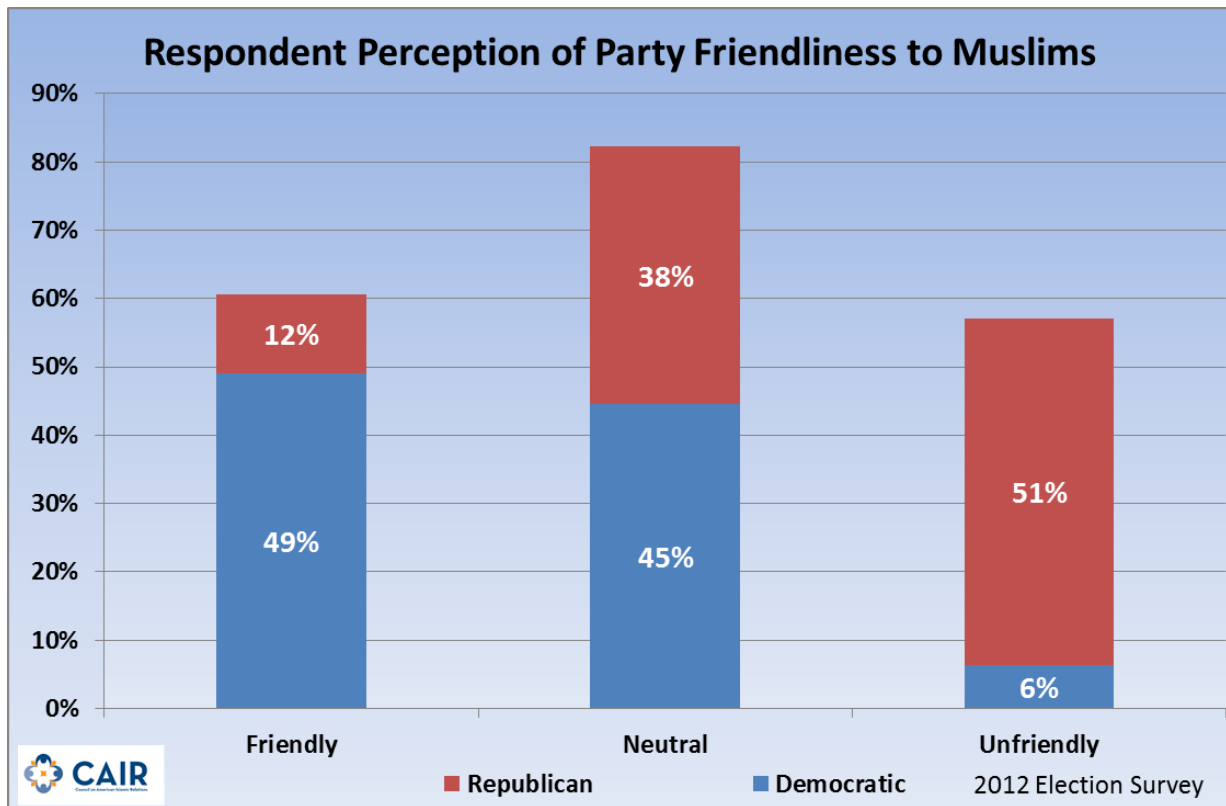
With respect to perception of political party commitment to core principles:

- Fifty percent believe that Democrats are more likely to uphold the U.S. Constitution (little change in perception versus 51% in 2008).
- Sixty-one percent feel that Democrats are more concerned with protecting religious freedom (up versus 53% in 2008).
- Sixty-eight percent said that Democrats are more likely to treat all people equally (up versus 59% in 2008).
- Forty-eight percent said Democrats stand up for what they believe in (up versus 43% in 2008).
- By contrast, no more than 12% of Muslim voters evaluated Republicans favorably on any of these issues.

Respondent Perception of Party Friendliness to Muslims

Do you feel that the Democratic Party / Republican Party is generally friendly toward Muslims, neutral toward Muslims, or unfriendly toward Muslims?

(Based on respondents likely to vote)

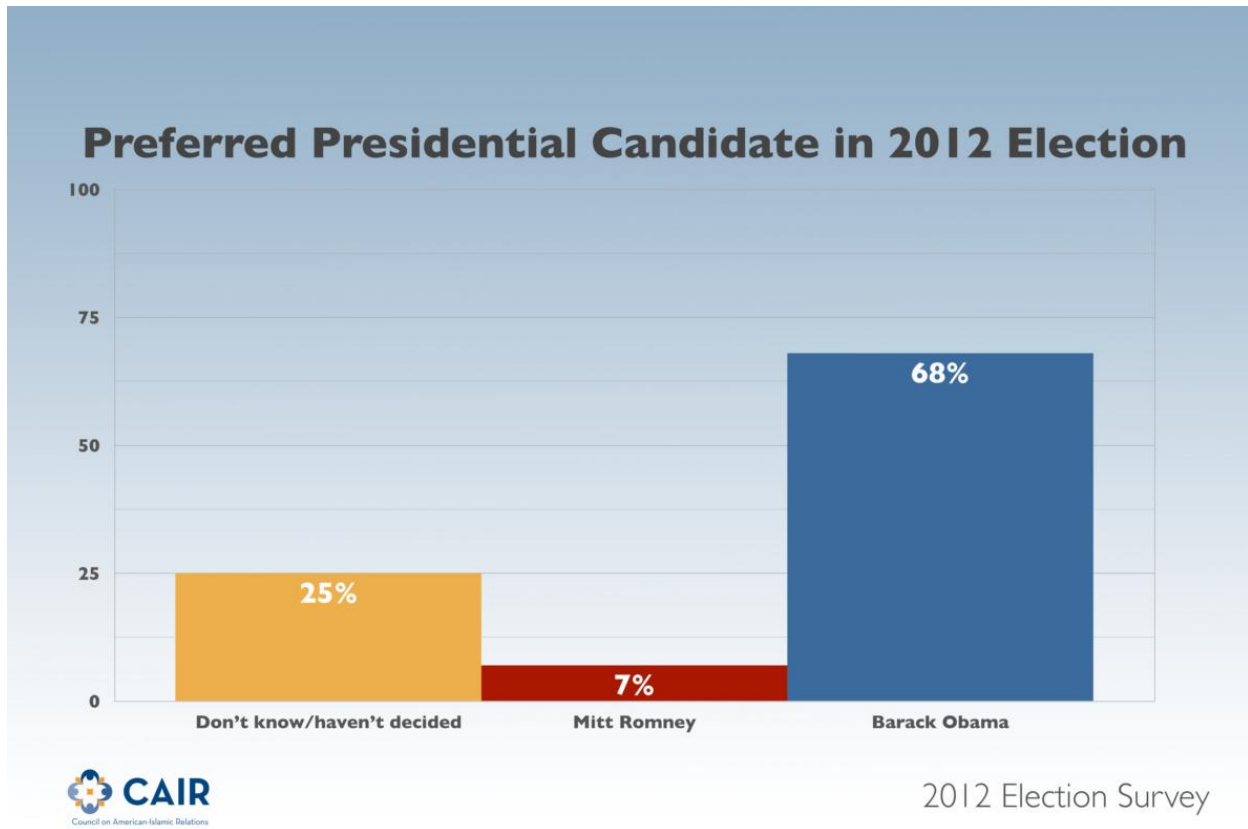


Each of the parties was evaluated by respondents on “friendliness to Muslims.” Forty-nine percent of respondents said that the Democratic Party was friendly towards Muslims, while 12% said that the Republican Party was friendly. By contrast, 51% of respondents said that the Republican Party was unfriendly towards Muslims, while 6% percent said that the Democratic Party was unfriendly.

Preferred Candidate in 2012 Election

Who do you expect to vote for in the 2012 Presidential Election?

(Based on respondents likely to vote)



In a choice between presidential candidates from all major political parties (Democratic Party, Republican Party, Libertarian Party, Green Party, and Constitution Party), those who said they planned to vote in the presidential election were asked to name their preferred candidate.

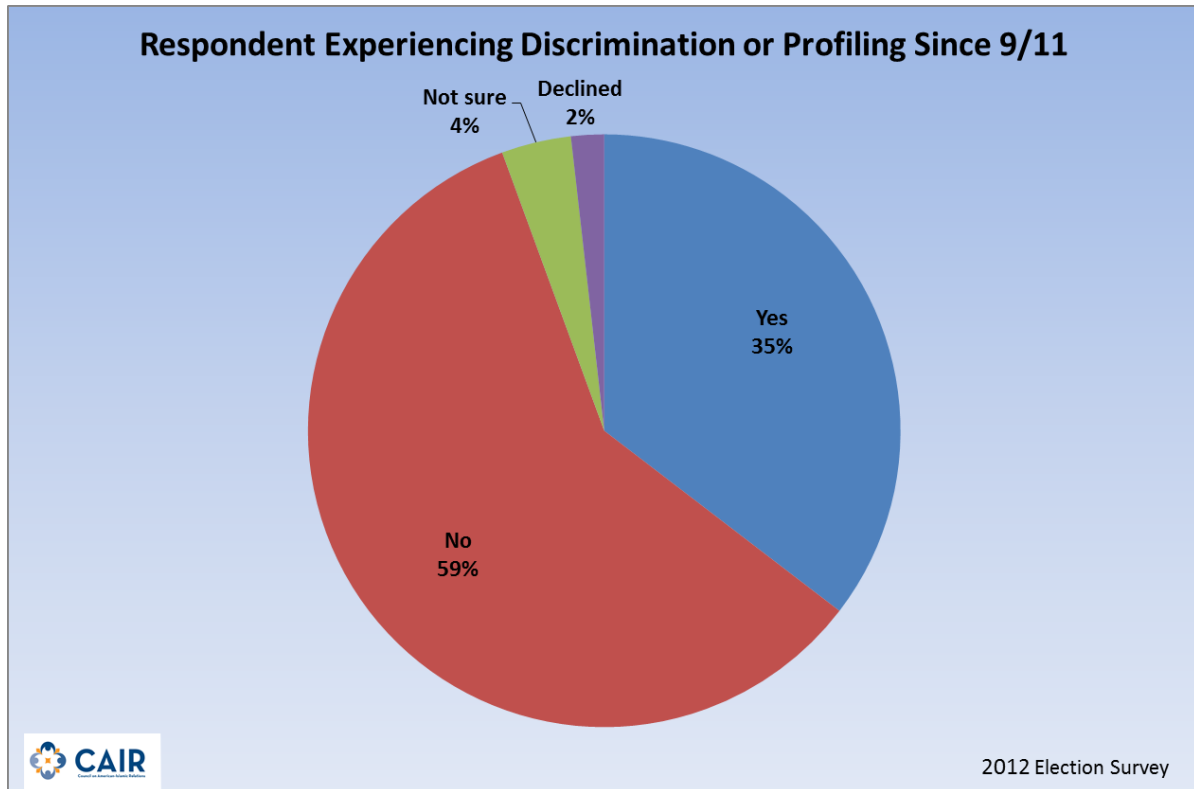
- Twenty-five percent of Muslim voters remain undecided.
- A majority of Muslim voters (68%) plan to vote for the Democratic Party candidate, President Barack Obama (down from the 89% who cast their ballots for President Obama in 2008*).
- Only 7% of Muslim voters plan to vote for the Republican Party candidate Governor Mitt Romney (up versus the 2% who cast their ballots for Senator John McCain in 2008).
- Muslim voters do not plan to support presidential candidates from the Libertarian Party, Green Party, or Constitution Party.

*See: CAIR's *Post Election Survey Report*, November 7, 2008

Respondent Experiencing Discrimination or Profiling Since September 11, 2001

Since 9/11, have you ever felt discriminated against, or do you feel that you have been profiled, anywhere in the United States because of your religious or ethnic background?

(Based on total respondents)

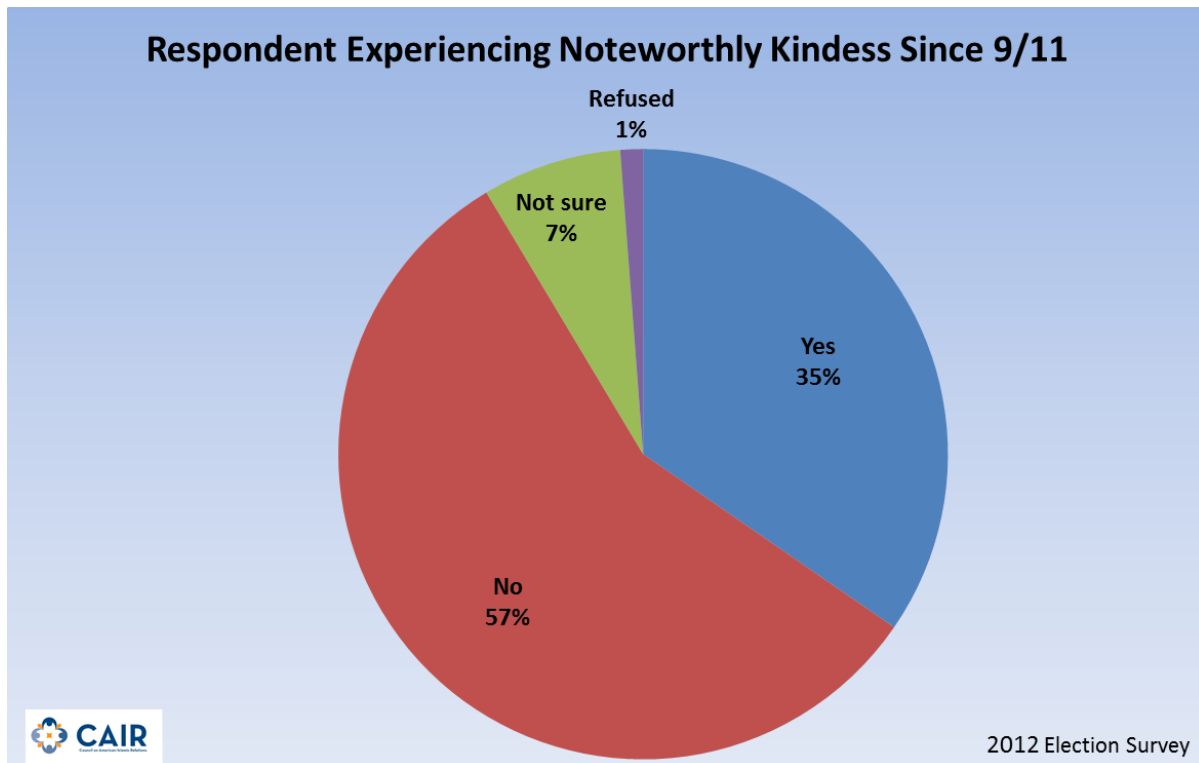


Thirty-five percent of respondents say they have experienced discrimination or profiling in the United States because of their religious or ethnic background. Conversely, 59% of respondents did not feel as though they have been discriminated against or profiled since September 11, 2001.

Respondent Experiencing Noteworthy Kindness Since September 11, 2001

On the other hand, since 9/11, have you experienced any noteworthy kind treatment by neighbors or co-workers who thought that you might be discriminated against because of your religious or ethnic background?

(Based on total respondents)

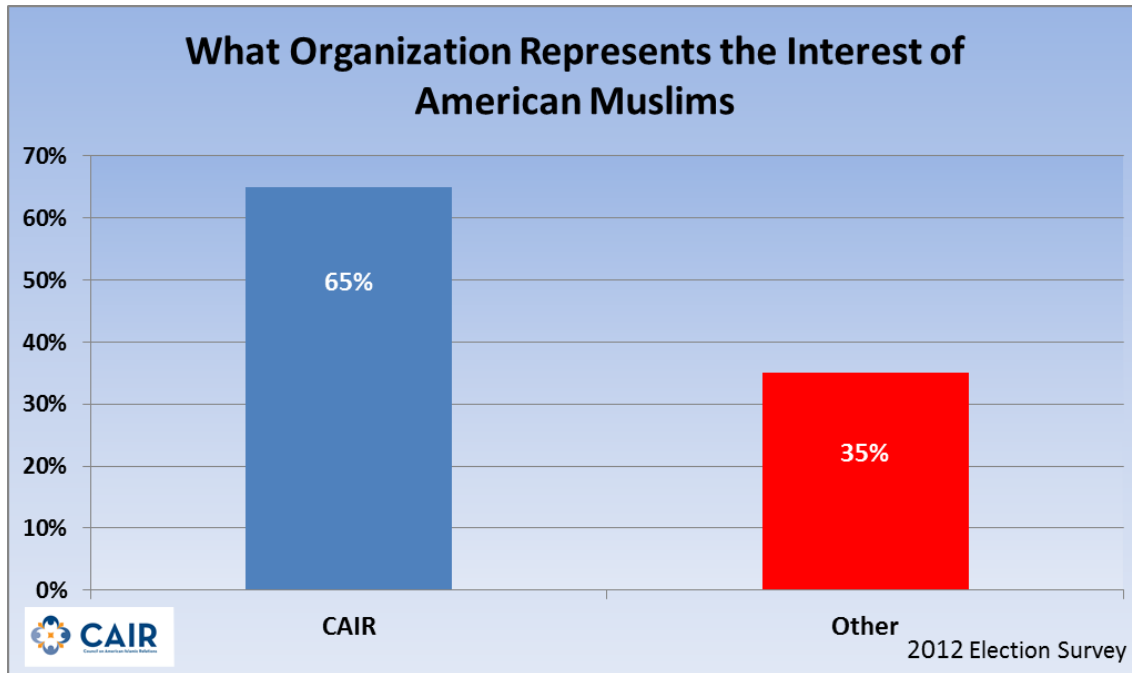


Thirty-five percent of respondents say they have experienced noteworthy kind treatment by their neighbors or co-workers who perceived that they were being discriminated against or profiled because of their religion or ethnic background since September 11, 2001.

What Organizations Represent the Interests of American Muslims?

When you think of organizations that represent the interests of American Muslims, what organizations come to mind?

(Based on only those who answered the question / Question was open ended)



Note: At the beginning of the poll, surveyors explained to respondents that the survey was being conducted on behalf of CAIR.

In an open-ended question, Muslim voters were asked to name organizations that represent the interests of American Muslims. Out of the respondents that answered the question, 65% named the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Thirty-five percent mentioned the names of other Muslim organizations.

FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS

How Much Support Did the US Provide to the Arab Spring?

Do you think that the United States provided enough support or not enough support to the past year's democratic uprisings throughout the Middle East, also known as the Arab Spring?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)

How Much Support Did the US Provide to the Arab Spring?	
Enough support	48.5%
Not enough support	51.5%

Within the margin of error: American Muslim voters are about equally divided on whether or not the U.S. provided enough support for the Arab Spring. While Muslim voters acknowledge U.S. support, about half think it was not enough.

Did the US and NATO Make the Right Decision When Choosing to Intervene in Libya

Do you think that the U.S. and NATO made the right decision or the wrong decision to intervene in Libya?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)

Did the US and NATO Make the Right Decision When Choosing to Intervene in Libya	
Right decision	76%
Wrong decision	24%

Seventy-six percent of Muslim voters said that the U.S. and NATO made the right decision when they chose to intervene in Libya in March 2011.

Would the US Make the Right Decision by Providing Support to the Syrian People's Uprising Against the Assad Government

Do you think that the U.S. would be making the right decision or the wrong decision by providing support to the Syrian people in their uprising against the Assad government?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)

Would the US Make the Right Decision by Providing Support to the Syrian People's Uprising Against the Assad Government	
Right decision	68%
Wrong decision	32%

A plurality of Muslim voters (68%) said that the U.S. would be making the right decision should it commit to providing support to the Syrian people in their uprising against the Assad regime.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PROFILE

Mosque Attendance for Friday Pray

On average, how often do you attend the mosque for Friday Prayer?

Mosque Attendance for Friday Pray	
About once a week	34%
Less than once a week	4%
Once or twice a month	16%
A few times a year	10%
Seldom	10%
Never	26%

Involvement in Mosque's Non Prayer Activities

Not including prayer, how involved are you in activities at the mosque?

Involvement in Mosque's Non Prayer Activities	
Very involved	11%
Somewhat involved	24%
Not very involved	25%
Not at all involved	40%

Religious Denomination

Do you consider yourself to be . . .

Religious Denomination	
Sunni	43%
Shia	9%
Just a Muslim	31%
Other	8%
Refused	9%

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender

What is your gender?

Gender	
Male	63%
Female	37%

Age

Which of the following categories includes your age?

Age Distribution Compared to all U.S. Voters		
	U.S.*	Respondents
18-24	9%	5%
25-29	7%	4%
30-34	8%	9%
35-39	8%	8%
40-54	29%	31%
55-69	25%	32%
70 or older	14%	12%

*U.S. Census Bureau, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2010. See: http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2010/Table1_2010.xls

Educational Attainment

What is the highest level of education that you had the opportunity to complete?

Educational Level Compared to all U.S. Voters		
	U.S.*	Respondents
Some high school or less	7%	3%
Graduated high school	28%	11%
Some college or two-year degree**	31%	17%
Four year degree	22%	35%
Masters or Doctorate	12%	35%

*U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, November 2010*. See: http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2010/Table5-1_2010.xls
 **This category appears as "Some college or associate degree" in the U.S. Census Bureau statistics

American Muslim voters enjoy a substantial educational advantage over other members of the American electorate. Of all American voters, 34% have obtained either a four-year or more advance degree. Among this sample of Muslim voters, the proportion of college-educated individuals is (70%) is

more than double the overall population figure.

It can be noted that 57% of American Muslim female voters hold at least a bachelor's degree versus 30% of general voting population.

Annual Household Income

Which of the following categories includes your total annual household income before taxes?

Annual Household Income Compared to all U.S. Voters		
	U.S.*	Respondents
Less than 15K	5%	12%
\$15K-\$49.9K	26%	27%
\$50K-\$74.9K	18%	17%
\$75K-\$99.9K	13%	15%
Over \$100K	22%	30%

*US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2010. See:
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2010/Table7_2010.xls

Survey respondents mostly enjoy an income level that is at parity with, or even higher than, the general voting public. The exception being surveyed households that earn incomes under \$15,000 per year, as compared to all U.S. registered voters.

Nearly half (45%) of all Muslim households, versus 35% 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 (30% versus 22% for Muslims versus the general population, respectively).

Marital Status

What is your marital status?

Marital Status	
Single	14%
Married	78%
Divorced, widowed, or separated	9%

Seventy-eight percent of respondents are married, 14% are single, and 9% of respondents are divorced.

Respondent Employment Status

Are you currently employed?

Respondent Employment Status	
Employed	65%
Not Employed	35%

Sixty-five percent of respondents are currently employed, and 35% of respondents are not.

Occupational Profile

Which of the following categories best describes your occupation?

(Based on those who are employed)

Occupational Profile	
Engineer	17%
Teacher or professor	13%
Professional or technical	13%
Business owner	11%
Managerial	9%
Physician or dentist	8%
Salesperson	8%
Construction or manufacturing worker	3%
Secretarial or administrative	2%
Lawyer	2%
Other	9%
Refused	6%

More than half of the respondents, 62%, are employed in white-collar occupations: 17% are engineers, followed by teachers or professors, 13%; those engaged in professional or technical fields, 13%; managerial, 9%; physicians or dentist, 8%; and, lawyers, 2% of the total sample. Another 11%, of respondents are business owners. Ten percent hold pink-collar or blue-collar jobs: 8% are employed as sales persons and 2% as administrative roles. Three percent hold construction or manufacturing jobs.

PLACE OF BIRTH AND ETHNICITY

Country of Birth

Were you born overseas?

Country of Birth	
US	26%
Other	71%
Refused	3%

Years of U.S. Residency

For how long have you been living in the United States?

(Based to those born overseas)

Years of U.S. Residency (Foreign-Born Respondents)	
Less than 10 years	6%
10-19 years	23%
20 years or longer	70%
Refused	1%

Ancestry by Region

What geographic region did your ancestors come from?

Ancestry by Region	
South & South East Asia	43%
The Arab World	21%
Europe	8%
Iran	6%
Africa	6%
Somewhere else	3%
Turkey	3%
Central or South America	< 1%
The Caribbean	< 1%
Refused	9%

About 71% of the study respondents were born overseas; 26% were born in the U.S. Among foreign-born respondents, more than two-thirds have lived in the U.S. for 20 years or longer. Only 6% 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 those who have attained American citizenship.

When asked about their ancestral background, a little less than half (43%) indicated that their forebears were from South Asia and South East Asia. Those with roots in the Arab world comprise 21% of survey respondents. Of the remaining respondents, 8% are from Europe, 6% from Iran, 6% from Africa, 3% from Turkey. Three percent came from somewhere else and 9% declined to answer.