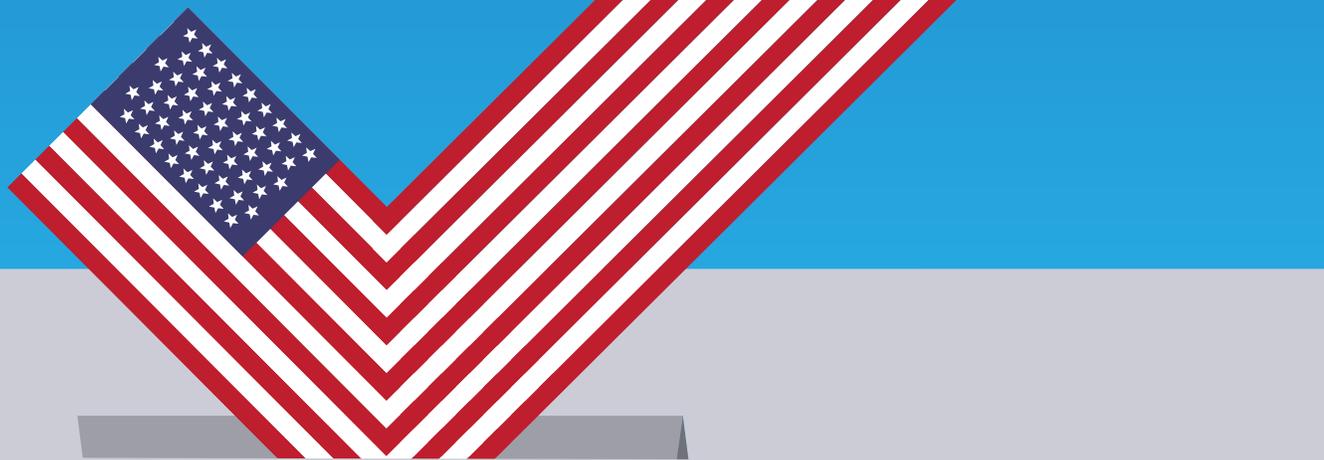




# AMERICAN MUSLIM VOTERS

AND THE 2020 ELECTION

A Post Presidential Debate  
Survey of Political  
Attitudes and Affiliations



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## Background

This report presents a detailed picture of political positions and attitudes held by American Muslim voters the day after the first presidential debate took place on September 29, 2020 between the two major party candidates, President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden.

The results shared here are based on an automated telephone survey of 846 American Muslims regarding their preferred presidential candidate, as well as their positions on a wide range of social and policy issues.

As American Muslim participation in the political process has experienced steady growth in the past several decades, interest in better understanding Muslim voting behavior has increased as well. CAIR regularly monitors American Muslim voter attitudes, most recently through a nationwide Super Tuesday poll on March 5, 2020 and another survey on February 3, 2020, the eve of the Iowa Caucuses.

CAIR also commissioned a 2018 Midterm Election poll, and has tracked American Muslim voting habits in various forms since 2000.

The interconnectedness of the American Muslim community and its more than one million registered voters makes Muslims a strong and increasingly critical voice in American politics.

In the lead up to the 2020 General Election, presidential campaigns have made active and public efforts to court the American Muslim vote, with some even hiring dedicated staffers to develop ties with this growing constituency.

American Muslims have also begun to run for office in unprecedented numbers as outlined in the CAIR, Jetpac, and MPower Change 2018 report, “The Rise of American Muslim Changemakers.”

A follow-up report on American Muslim candidates running for office is planned to be released after the November 3, 2020 General Election.

## Methodology

Survey participants were drawn from a database of more than 146,320 Muslim voter households. Calls were conducted on the evening of Wednesday, September 30. Respondents included 449 men, 325 women, and 72 individuals who preferred not to answer from across the nation. The poll's margin of error is +/-3.3%, with a confidence level of 95%.

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 or those who do not have traditionally Muslim names. Also excluded are Muslims with names that are also common in other communities (such as Sarah or Adam).

## Highlights of Findings

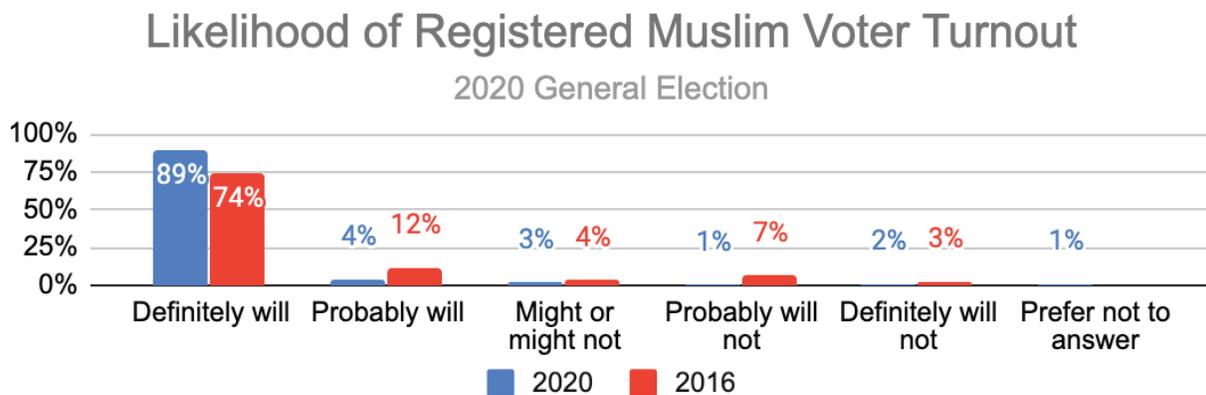
- 89.2% of registered Muslim voters intend to vote in the 2020 Presidential General Election, while 4.8% are still undecided if they will vote.
- The percentage of registered Muslim voters who most closely identify with the Democratic Party decreased from CAIR's previous poll in 2018, from 78% to 66.4% today.
- Affiliation with the Republican Party increased, at 18.7 % today compared to 17% in a similar CAIR poll from 2018.
- 71.2% of registered Muslim voters say they would vote for Joe Biden if the election was today, while 18.2% say they would vote for Donald Trump.
- 58.9% of Muslim voters believe that Joe Biden won last night's debate, while 14.4% think that Donald Trump won it.
- 42.2% of registered Muslims voters consider themselves liberal-leaning on social issues, while 34.4% consider themselves conservative.
- 42.2% of those who responded to the CAIR survey say they consider themselves to be fiscally conservative, while 37.2% consider themselves to be fiscally liberal.
- 64.7% of Muslim voters believe that Democrats are most concerned with protecting religious freedoms, while 18.6% believe that Republicans are the most concerned.
- 67% of Muslim voters believe that Democrats are most concerned with addressing racial inequality, while 15.5% believe that Republicans are the most concerned.
- 72.2% of Muslim voters believe that Democrats are the most concerned with providing accessible healthcare, while 14.9% believe that Republicans are the most concerned.
- 71.6% of Muslim voters believe that Democrats are the most concerned with treating all immigrants equally, while 15.1% believe that Republicans are the most concerned.
- Of the registered Muslim voters that participated in CAIR's survey, 41.5% feel that the Democratic Party is generally friendly toward Muslims, followed by 44.3% who feel that it is neutral toward Muslims, and 14.2% who feel that it is unfriendly toward Muslims.
- 60.6% of registered Muslim voters feel that the Republican Party is unfriendly toward Muslims, 23.9% feel that the Republican Party is neutral toward Muslims, and 15.5% feel that the Republican Party is friendly toward Muslims.
- 66.9% of registered Muslim voters think Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. has increased in the past four years. 15.1% of registered Muslim voters think Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. has decreased in the past four years, and 18% of registered Muslim voters preferred not to answer.

## Top Line Survey Results

### Q1. Likelihood of Registered Muslim Voter Turnout

#### Q. How likely is it that you will vote in the 2020 Presidential Election?

- Definitely will: 89.2% (755 respondents)
- Probably will: 4.4% (37 respondents)
- Might or might not: 2.6% (22 respondents)
- Probably will not: 0.9% (8 respondents)
- Or, definitely will not vote in the 2020 Presidential election: 1.5% (13 respondents)
- Prefer not to answer: 1.3% (11 respondents)



When asked about their intentions to vote in the 2020 general election, 93.6% of registered Muslim voters said that they plan to vote, with 89.2% saying that they definitely will and another 4.4% saying that they probably will. Only 2.6% responded that they might or might not, 0.9% probably will not, and 1.5% definitely will not vote. In comparison to CAIR 2016 pre-election survey of Muslim voters, Muslim voters in 2020 are more likely to definitely vote.

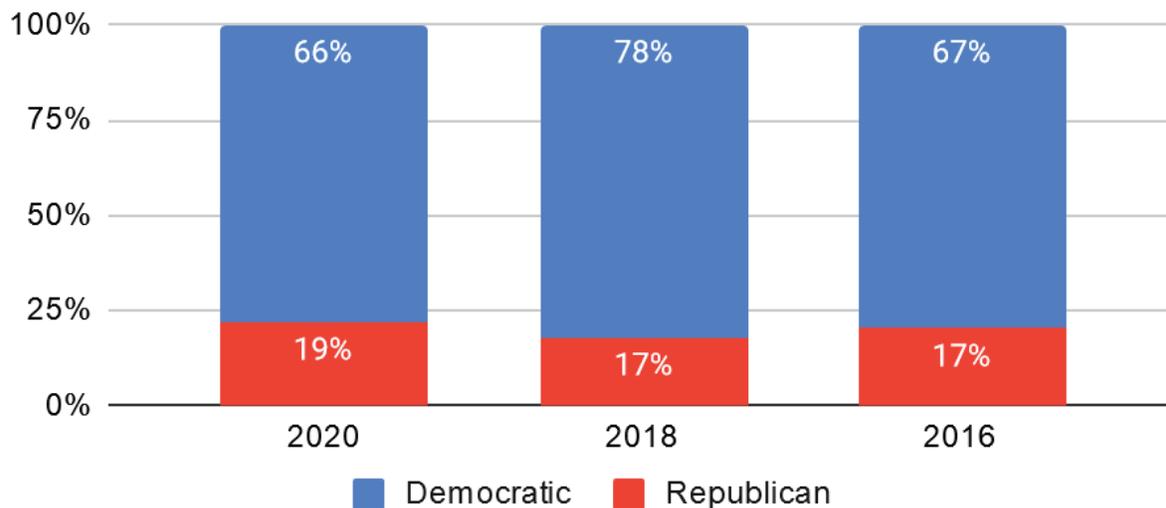
## Q2. Muslim Voter Political Party Affiliation

Q. Which national political party do you primarily vote for?

- Republican Party: 18.7% (148 respondents)
- Democratic Party: 66.4% (526 respondents)
- Green Party: 0.8% (6 respondents)
- Libertarian Party: 0.6% (5 respondents)
- Neither: 8.3% (66 respondents)
- Prefer not to answer: 5.2% (41 respondents)

### Which Major National Political Party Do Muslim Voters Primarily Vote For?

2020 General Election



Sixty-six-point-four percent of registered Muslim voters reported in 2020 that they primarily voting for the the Democratic party. This is a decrease from CAIR’s previous pre-election survey in 2018, where 78% said they primarily support the Democratic Party. Conversely, 18.7% expressed primarily voting for the Republican Party, an increase from the 17% found in CAIR’s 2018 and 2016 pre-election surveys.

CAIR notes that 66% reported supporting the Democratic Party in 2012, after increasing from 49% in 2008. Likewise 9% reported supporting the Republican Party in 2008, after decreasing from 17% in 2006.

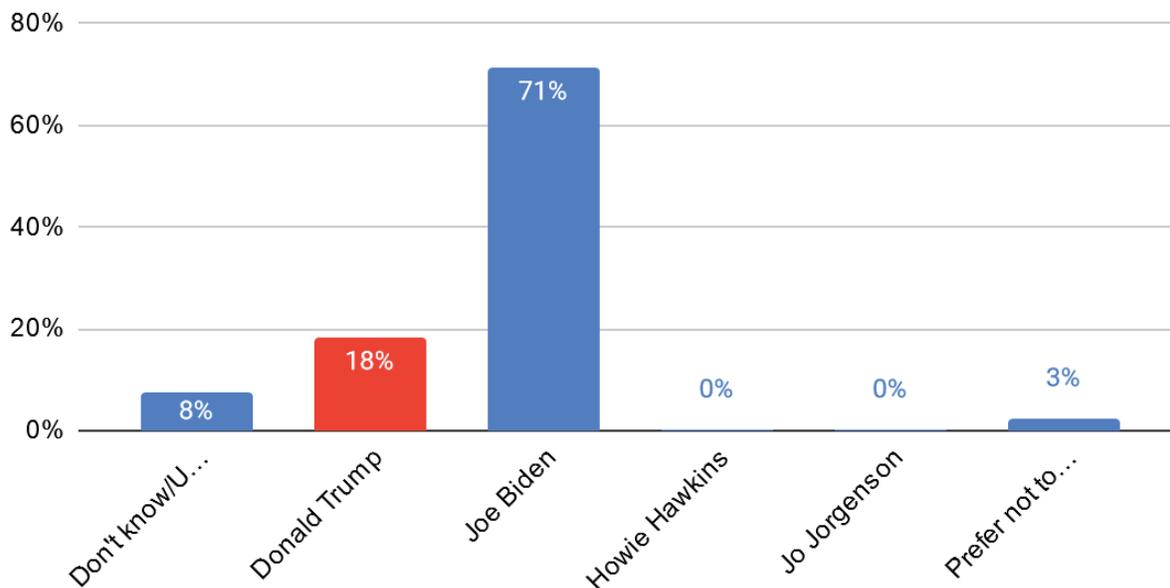
### Q3. Muslim Voter Preferred Presidential Candidate in the 2020 Election:

Q. If the election were today who would you vote for in the 2020 Presidential Election?

- Donald Trump (Republican): 18.2% (144 respondents)
- Joe Biden (Democratic): 71.2% (564 respondents)
- Howie Hawkins (Green Party): 0.3% (2 respondents)
- Jo Jorgensen (Libertarian): 0.3% (2 respondents)
- Don't know/haven't decided: 7.6% (60 respondents)
- Prefer not to answer: 2.5% (20 respondents)

### Which Presidential Candidates Do Muslim Voters Support?

2020 General Election



Seventy-one-point-two percent of registered Muslim voters say they would vote for Joe Biden if the election was today, while 18.2% say they would vote for Donald Trump. Moreover, only 0.3% would vote for Howie Hawkins, and 0.3% for Jo Jorgensen.

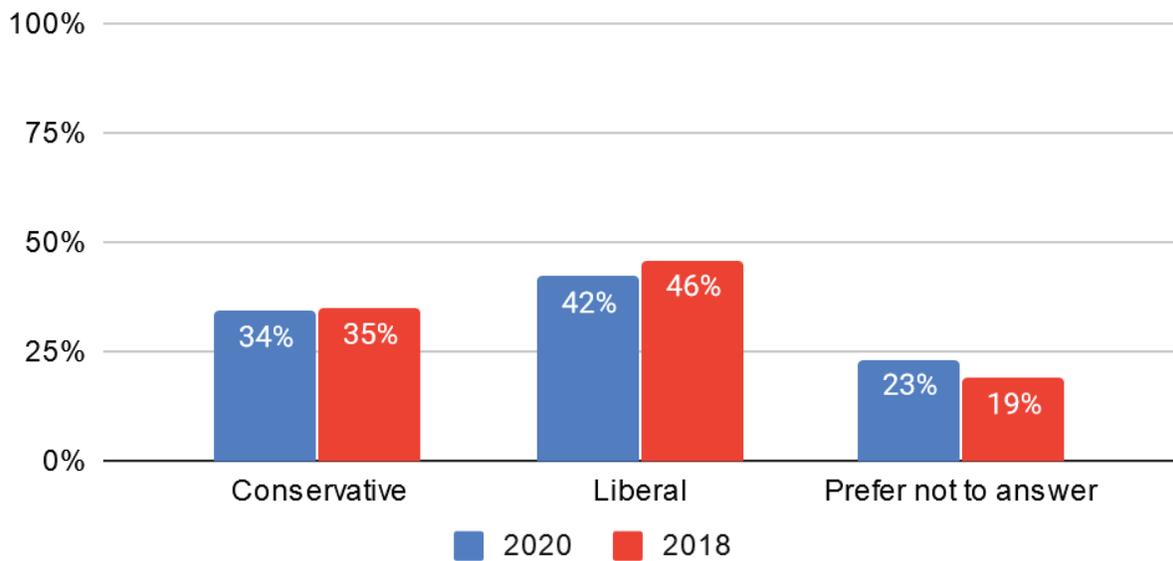
#### Q4. Muslim Voter Political Leanings on Social Issues:

Q. Generally, do you lean more conservative or liberal on social issues?

- Conservative: 34.4% (291 respondents)
- Liberal: 42.2% (357 respondents)
- Prefer not to answer: 23.4% (198 respondents)

### Muslim Voter Political Leanings on Social Issues

2020 General Election

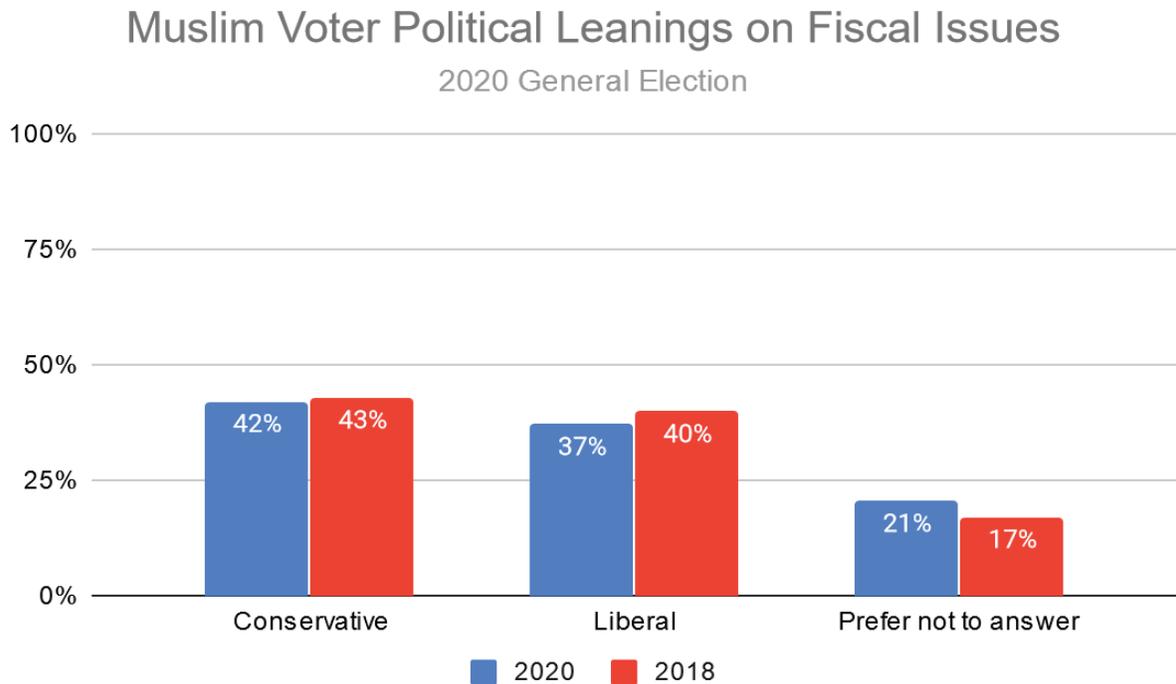


Forty-two-point two percent of registered Muslims voters consider themselves liberal-leaning on social issues, while 34.4% consider themselves conservative.

## Q5. Muslim Voter Political Leanings on Fiscal Issues:

Q. Generally, do you consider yourself to be fiscally conservative or fiscally liberal?

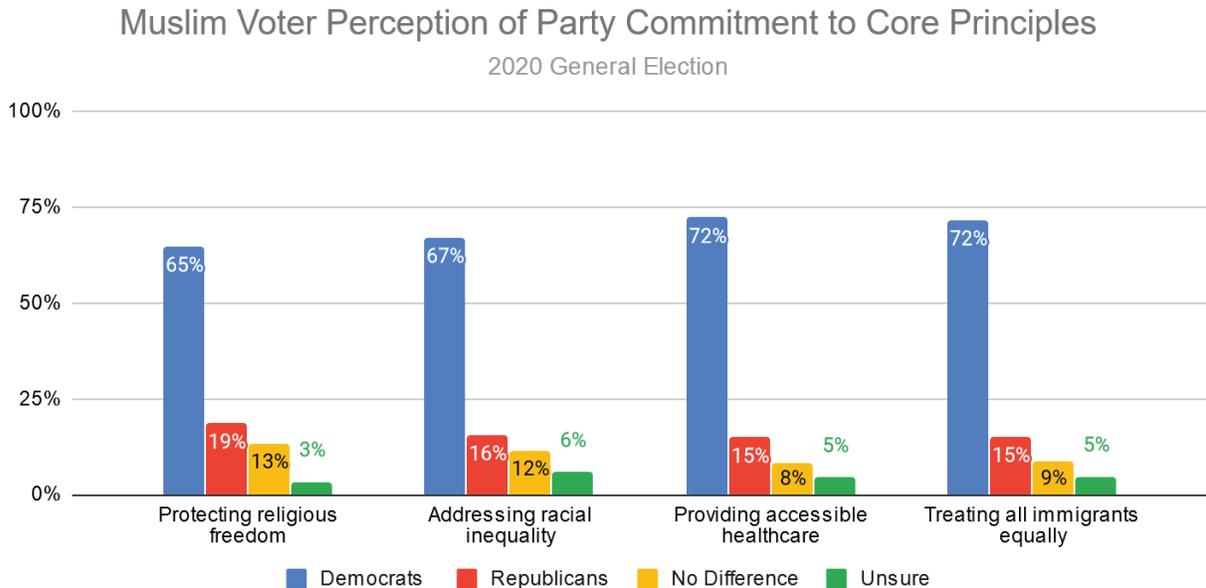
- Conservative: 42.2% (357 respondents)
- Liberal: 37.2% (315 respondents)
- Prefer not to answer: 20.6% (174 respondents)



Forty-two-point-two percent of those Muslim voters who responded to the CAIR survey say they consider themselves fiscally conservative, while 37.2% consider themselves fiscally liberal.

## Q6. Muslim Voter Perception of Party Commitment to Core Principles:

Q. Thinking about the two major political parties in this country, which [party] would you say is most concerned with \_\_\_\_, the Republican or the Democratic Parties? Categories include: “Protecting religious freedom,” “Addressing racial inequality,” “Providing accessible healthcare,” and “Treating all immigrants equally.”



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

- 64.7% of Muslim voters believe that Democrats are most concerned with protecting religious freedoms, while 18.6% believe that Republicans are the most concerned.
- 67% of Muslim voters believe that Democrats are most concerned with addressing racial inequality, while 15.5% believe that Republicans are the most concerned.
- 72.2% of Muslim voters believe that Democrats are the most concerned with providing accessible healthcare, while 14.9% believe that Republicans are the most concerned.
- 71.6% of Muslim voters believe that Democrats are the most concerned with treating all immigrants equally, while 15.1% believe that Republicans are the most concerned.

## Q7. Who Won The First 2020 Presidential Debate

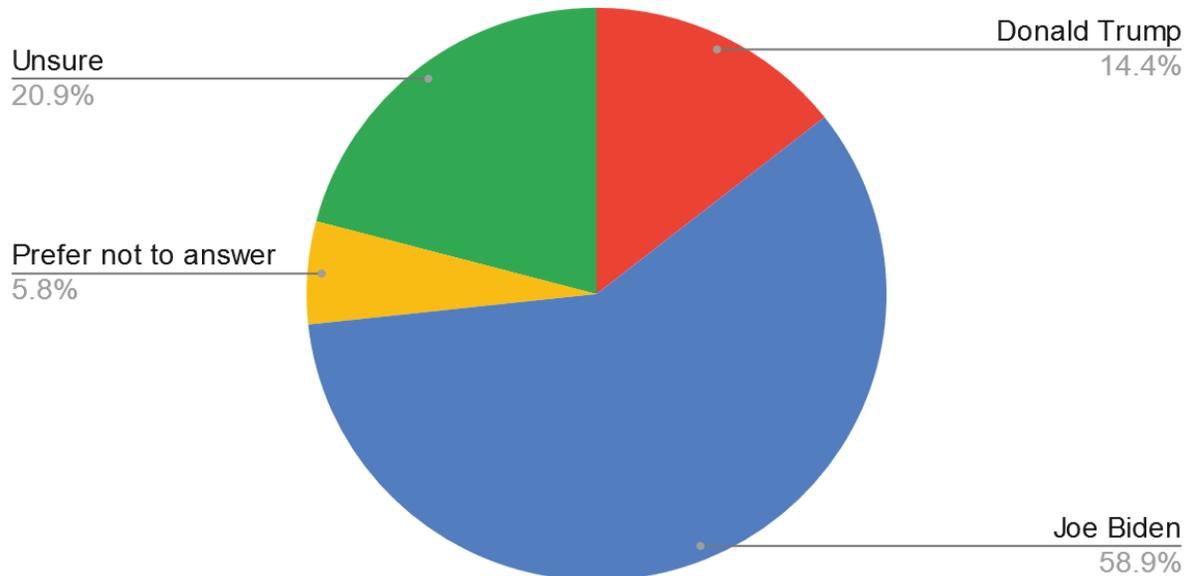
### Q. Who do you think won last night's Presidential Debate?

- Donald Trump: 14.4% (122 respondents)
- Joe Biden: 58.9% (498 respondents)
- Unsure: 20.9% (177 respondents)
- Prefer not to answer: 5.8% (49 respondents)

**NOTE:** The survey was conducted on September 30, one day after the first presidential debate between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden.

### Who Muslim Voters Think Won The First Presidential Debate

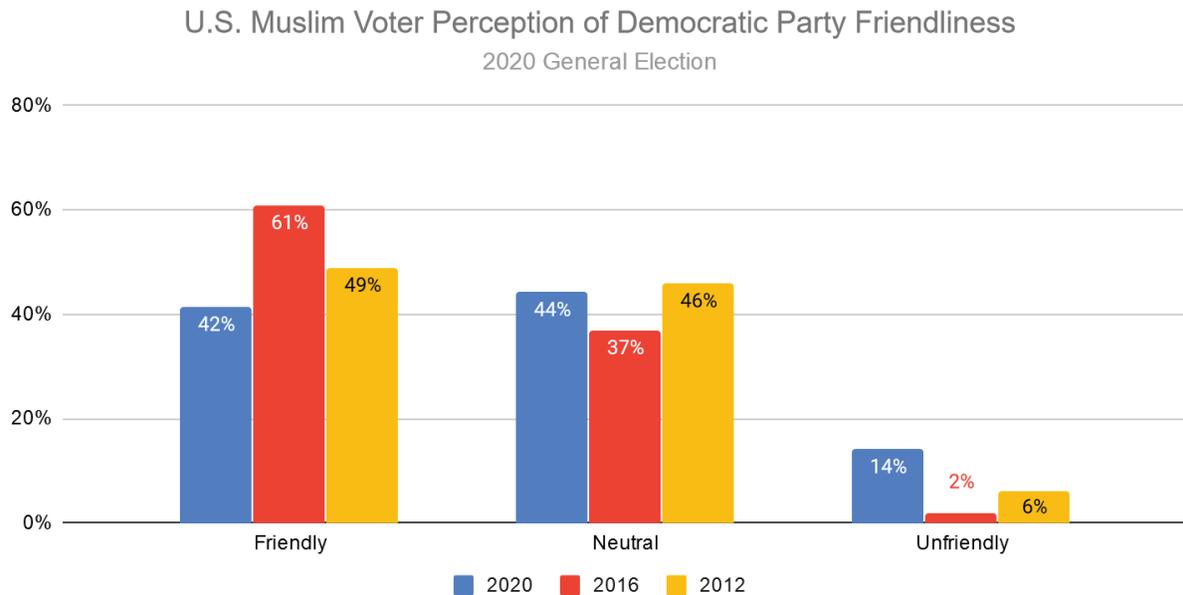
2020 General Election



Fifty-eight-point-nine percent of Muslim voters believe that Joe Biden won the first presidential debate, while 14.4% think that Donald Trump won it. Due to the first presidential debate being so chaotic, many Muslim voters were left unsure who won the debate.

## Q8. Muslim Voter Perception of the Democratic Party's Disposition Towards Muslims

Q. Do you feel that the Democratic Party is generally friendly toward Muslims, neutral toward Muslims, or unfriendly toward Muslims? For...



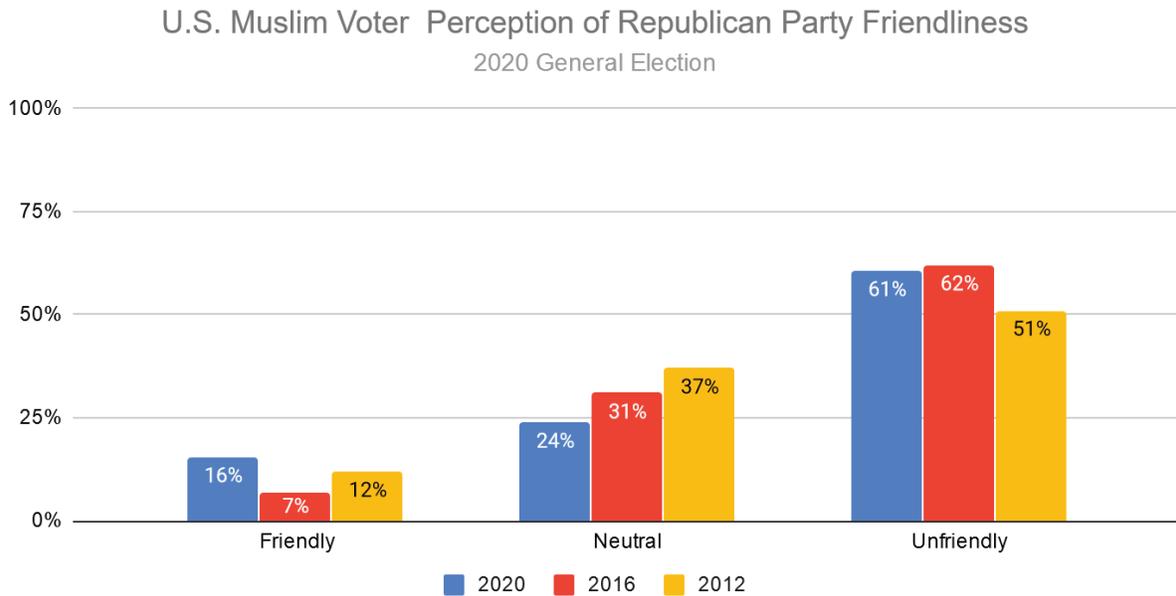
Each of the parties was evaluated by respondents on “friendliness to Muslims.” Of the registered Muslim voters that participated in CAIR’s survey, 41.5% feel that the Democratic Party is generally friendly toward Muslims, followed by 44.3% who feel that it is neutral toward Muslims, and 14.2% who feel that it is unfriendly toward Muslims.

CAIR notes that over the past two years 20% less Muslim voters view the Democratic Party as being friendly towards Muslims and 10% more Muslim voters viewed the party as being unfriendly. CAIR speculates this could stem from a wide range of incidents including :

- Democratic members of Congress attacking the first two Muslim women elected to Congress due to their support of Palestinian freedom.
- The recent attacks on a prominent Muslim community activist by the Democratic presidential campaign during the Democratic National Convention.
- Lack of prime time Muslim representation at the Democratic National Convention in comparison to the 2016 convention.

## Q9. Muslim Voter Perception of the Republican Party's Disposition Towards Muslims

Q. Do you feel that the Republican Party is generally friendly toward Muslims, neutral toward Muslims, or unfriendly toward Muslims? For...

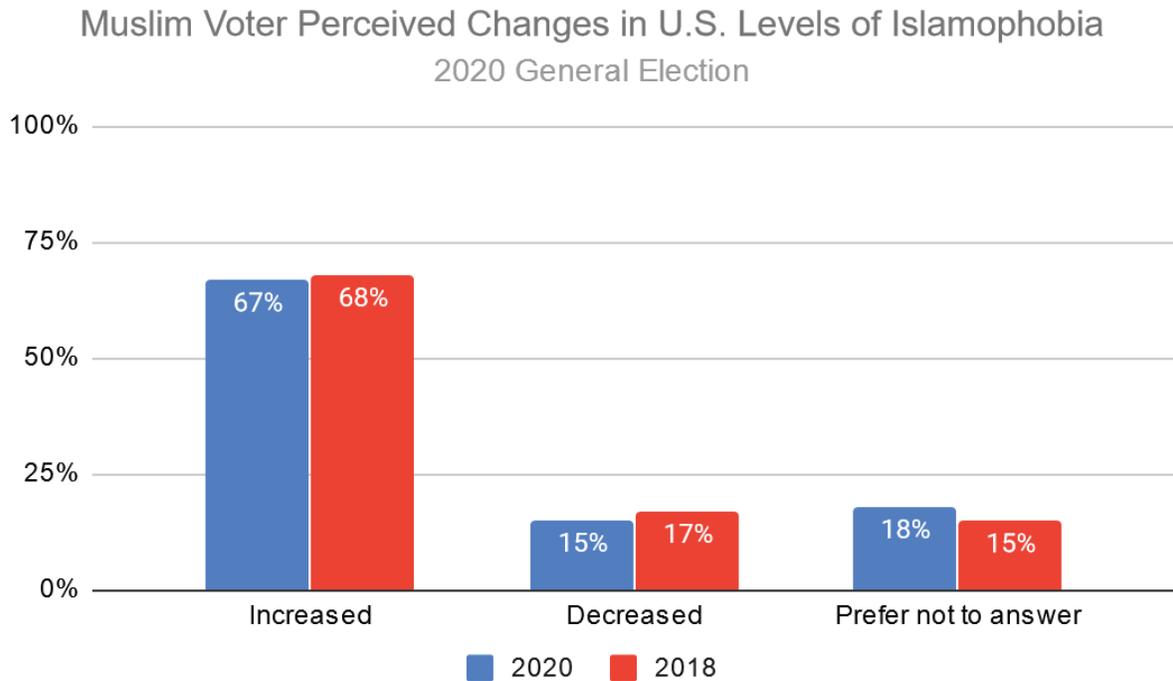


Sixty-point-six percent of registered Muslim voters feel that the Republican Party is unfriendly toward Muslims, 23.9% feel that the Republican Party is neutral toward Muslims, and 15.5% feel that the Republican Party is friendly toward Muslims.

Overall, the majority of Muslim voters continue to perceive the Republican Party as being unfriendly towards them, in part due to frequent support for anti-Muslim initiatives like anti-foreign law legislation at the state level and adoption of the Muslim Ban at the federal level.

## Q10: Perception of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim Sentiment in the U.S.

Q. Do you think Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. has increased or decreased in the past four years?



Sixty-Six-point-nine percent of registered Muslim voters think Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. has increased in the past four years. Fifteen-point-one percent of registered Muslim voters think Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. has decreased in the past four years, and 18% of registered Muslim voters preferred not to answer.

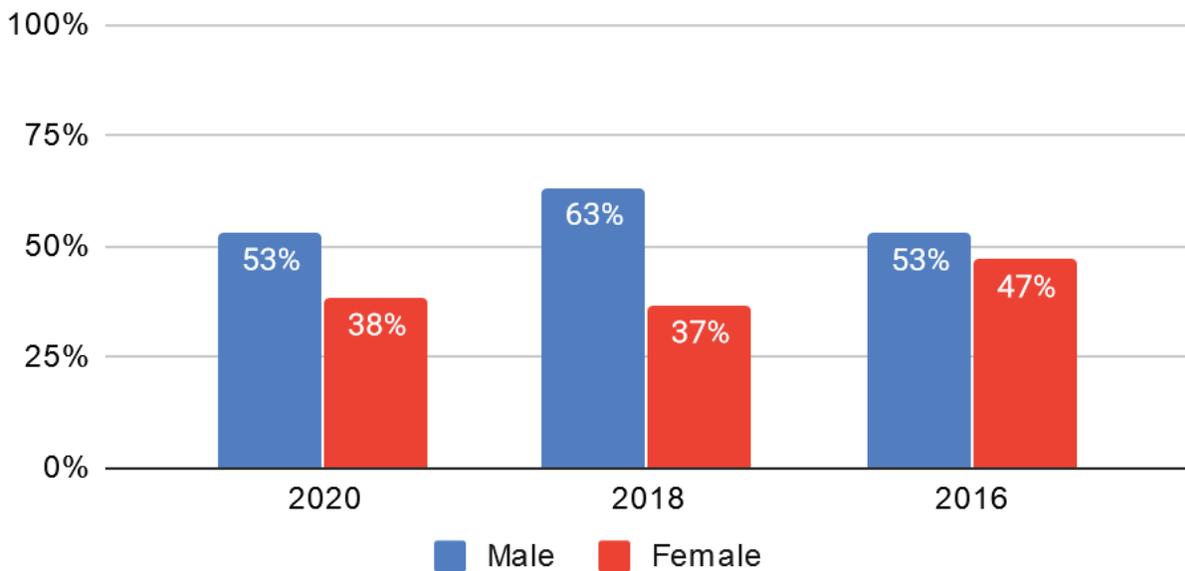
## Demographics

### Q11. What is your gender?

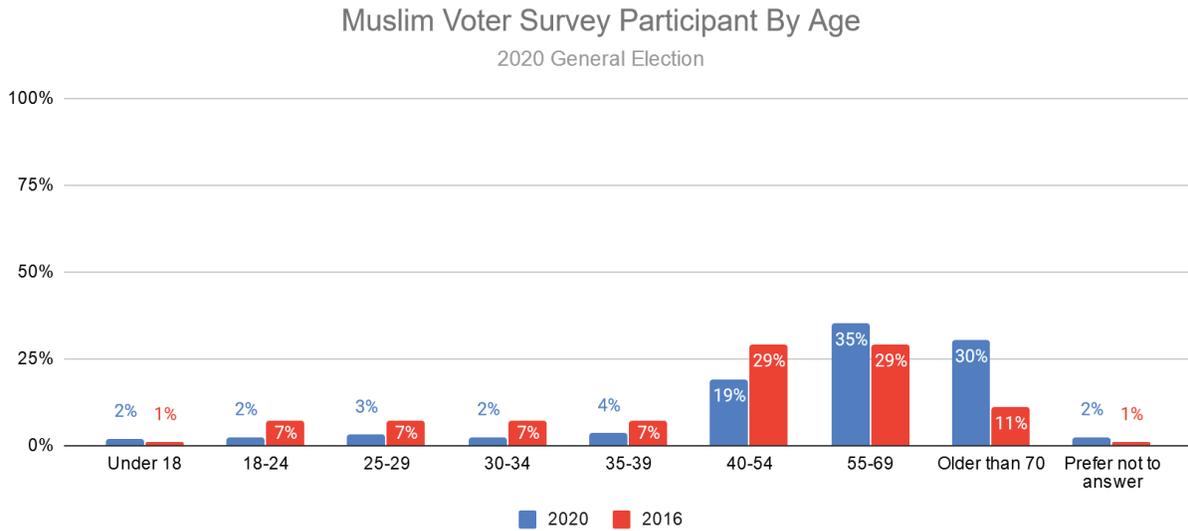
- Female: 38.4% (325 respondents)
- Male: 53.1% (449 respondents)
- Prefer not to answer: 8.5% (72 respondents)

## Muslim Voter Survey Participant By Gender

2020 General Election



## Q12. What is your age?



- Under 18: 1.9% (16 respondents)
- 18-24: 24% (20 respondents)
- 25-29: 3.1% (26 respondents)
- 30-34: 2.4% (20 respondents)
- 35-39: 3.5% (30 respondents)
- 40-54: 19% (161 respondents)
- 55-69: 35.1% (297 respondents)
- 70 or older: 30% (256 respondents)
- Prefer not to answer: 2.4% (20 respondents)



