



# American Attitudes Towards Arabs and Muslims

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December 5, 2017



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

American favorable attitudes of Arabs, Muslims, Arab Americans and American Muslims have risen to their highest levels in the past decade, with majorities now having favorable attitudes toward both Arab Americans and American Muslims, and a plurality positively inclined towards Arabs and Muslims. There are increases in positive ratings among every demographic and partisan group—including those who self-describe as Trump supporters. Nevertheless, there remains a deep partisan split—with Republicans still decidedly more hostile to both Arabs and Muslims than Democrats or Independents. It is clear that an environment of bigoted policies and hateful rhetoric has strengthened the persistent partisan divide in these attitudes.

The division between Democrats and Independents on the one side and Republicans on the other is even more pronounced on matters of policy affecting Arabs and Muslims. A strong plurality of Americans opposes banning Muslim or Middle Eastern immigrants or visitors from entering the US. But while Trump supporters favor banning immigrants and visitors for the Middle East, by a 60%/21% margin, only 12% of self-described Trump opponents support such a ban, with 72% opposing. When it comes to identifying the best way to resolve the issue of undocumented immigrants, overall 55% of all Americans favor allowing them to remain in the US and providing them a pathway to citizenship. The partisan split is deep. 73% of Democrats and 52% of Independents favor a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented, while 68% of Republicans are opposed.

A majority of Americans oppose allowing law enforcement to profile Arab Americans or American Muslims, and recognize there has been an increase of discrimination against both communities. The partisan split on policy is seen also through Americans' perceptions of discrimination. Once again, these numbers are the result of strong support from Democrats and Independents: over seven in ten Democrats and over one-half of Independents taking a supportive position on these issues. Meanwhile, Republicans are divided on profiling, and a slight plurality deny that growing discrimination has been a problem. While a plurality of Americans recognize there has been an increase in hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims, Americans remain divided on party lines. 60% of Democrats agree anti-Arab hate crimes are increasing, and 53% of Republicans disagree.

The most disturbing manifestation of this divide is the attitude of Republicans toward Arab Americans or American Muslims working in government - since attitudes in this area directly affect the ability of both communities to fully participate as citizens. For example, a slight majority of Americans are confident Arab Americans could carry out their responsibilities as government employees without their ethnicity influencing their decision-making, but a plurality of Republicans disagrees. Attitudes are even more negative with regard to American Muslims.

The partisan divide is reflected in foreign policy concerns as well. With regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Americans still have significantly more favorable attitudes toward Israel: 61% favorable toward Israel, 33% favorable toward the Palestinians. But among Democrats, the

gap narrows to 55% to 43%; and among younger Americans, it is an even closer 49% favorable toward Israel, and 42% toward the Palestinians.

How should the Trump Administration conduct Israeli/Palestinian policy? By more than 2 to 1, Americans say it "should strike a balance" between the two sides. Here again, there is a deep partisan split. While 58% of Democrats want balance, and only 11% say US policy should favor Israel, 41% of Republicans want Trump to favor Israel, and 37% support a balanced policy. Independent voters' attitudes in this area are similar to those of Democrats. On the sensitive matter of moving the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a slight plurality favors keeping it in Tel Aviv, but a substantial 52% have no opinion or are unsure.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Zogby Analytics was commissioned by AAI to conduct a hybrid (live interviewer telephone and online) survey of 1514 likely voters in the U.S. The survey ran between 10/19/17 – 10/25/17.

Telephone samples are randomly drawn from random telephone lists. Up to four calls are made to reach a sampled phone number. Respondents that were not available, but qualified to respond, were allowed to set appointments to be recalled within the time frame of the field work.

Using internal and trusted interactive partner resources, thousands of adults were randomly invited to participate in this interactive survey. Each invitation is password coded and secure so that one respondent can only access the survey one time.

Using information based on census data, voter registration figures, CIA fact books and exit polls, we use complex weighting techniques to best represent the demographics of the population being surveyed. Weighted variables may include age, race, gender, region, party, education, and religion.

Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error for 1514 is +/- 2.5 percentage points. This means that all other things being equal, the identical survey repeated will have results within the margin of error 95 times out of 100.

Subsets of the data have a larger margin of error than the whole data set. As a rule, we do not rely on the validity of very small subsets of the data, especially sets smaller than 50-75 respondents. At that subset, we can make estimations based on the data, but in these cases the data is more qualitative than quantitative.

Additional factors can create error, such as question wording and question order.

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Male</b>	727
<b>Female</b>	787
<b>Democratic</b>	560
<b>Republican</b>	500
<b>Independent</b>	454
<b>White</b>	1046
<b>Hispanic</b>	164
<b>African American</b>	179
<b>Asian</b>	60
<b>Other</b>	45

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Ages 18-29</b>	285
<b>Ages 65+</b>	225
<b>No College Degree</b>	752
<b>College Degree+</b>	753

## I. Attitudes toward Arab Americans and American Muslims

Please tell me your opinion of each of the following - is it very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, very unfavorable, or are you not familiar enough to make a judgment?

Arab Americans	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
Favorable	52	<b>62</b>	38	55	54	51
Unfavorable	23	16	36	18	22	24
Not Familiar	10	10	9	13	9	17
Not Sure	14	12	16	15	15	8

American Muslims	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
Favorable	51	<b>64</b>	35	53	53	49
Unfavorable	27	15	<b>43</b>	24	25	31
Not Familiar	9	9	9	11	8	13
Not Sure	13	12	13	13	14	7

Arabs	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
Favorable	42	<b>54</b>	31	41	44	40
Unfavorable	32	21	<b>45</b>	29	32	34
Not Familiar	11	11	9	13	11	16
Not Sure	15	15	15	17	14	10

1. A majority of Americans hold favorable opinions of both Arab Americans and American Muslims.
2. A deep partisan divide is apparent in the net favorable ratings. Democrats give a net 54%/21% favorable rating to Arabs and a net 58%/19% favorable rating to Muslims; while Republicans give a net 31%/45% unfavorable rating to Arabs and a net 26%/53% unfavorable rating to Muslims.

### Impact of Knowing an Arab or Muslim

	Opinion	Know an Arab or Muslim	Don't Know an Arab or Muslim
Arab Americans	Favorable	66	38
	Unfavorable	17	31
American Muslims	Favorable	65	38
	Unfavorable	21	35

Group	Response	Know an Arab or Muslim	Don't Know an Arab or Muslim
Arabs	Favorable	57	27
	Unfavorable	25	41
Muslims	Favorable	58	29
	Unfavorable	28	42

## Tracking Favorability Numbers for Arabs and Muslims

Group	Response	2010	2015	2017
Arab Americans	Favorable	49	40	52
	Unfavorable	31	30	23
American Muslims	Favorable	48	33	51
	Unfavorable	33	37	27

Group	Response	2010	2012	2014	2017
Arabs	Favorable	43	41	32	42
	Unfavorable	41	39	39	32
Muslims	Favorable	35	40	27	43
	Unfavorable	55	41	45	34

1. Tracking since 2010 shows considerable shifts in American attitudes toward Arab Americans, American Muslims, Arabs, and Muslims. These shifts likely correspond to contemporary events such as national elections, incidents of terror, and the rise of the self-proclaimed "Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant." For example, the 2015 poll above was conducted on December 7, 2015, less than a month after the coordinated ISIL attacks on the Bataclan theater and other locations in Paris on November 13, 2015.
2. Even allowing for these external factors to negatively impact the numbers, the direction of the favorability rating overall for Arab Americans and American Muslims suggests improvement.
3. For the first time since these rating have been tracked, a majority of Americans hold favorable opinions of both Arab Americans (52%) and American Muslims (51%).

Arab Americans	Trump-2015	Trump-2017	Dem-2015	Dem-2017	Rep-2015	Rep-2017	Ind-2015	Ind-2017
Favorable	26	<b>40</b>	51	<b>62</b>	34	<b>38</b>	34	<b>55</b>
Unfavorable	53	35	23	16	44	36	25	18
Not Familiar	7	11	17	10	13	9	15	13
Not Sure	14	14	10	12	9	16	25	15

American Muslims	Trump-2015	Trump-2017	Dem-2015	Dem-2017	Rep-2015	Rep-2017	Ind-2015	Ind-2017
<b>Favorable</b>	18	<b>36</b>	44	<b>64</b>	25	<b>35</b>	25	<b>53</b>
<b>Unfavorable</b>	68	44	28	15	53	43	53	24
<b>Not Familiar</b>	4	9	17	9	10	9	10	11
<b>Not Sure</b>	10	11	11	12	11	13	11	13

1. Favorability rose across all political affiliations, and for Trump supporters, from 2015 to 2017.
2. **Independents saw the biggest shift in favorability ratings.** Independents giving favorable ratings to Arab Americans rose by 21% between 2015 and 2017, while Independents giving favorable ratings to American Muslims rose by 28%.

## II. Immigration

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? - The U.S. should ban immigrants and travelers who are from the Middle East.*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	Approve of Trump	Disapprove of Trump	18-29	65+
<b>Agree</b>	33	18	<b>52</b>	31	<b>60</b>	12	26	38
<b>Disagree</b>	48	<b>66</b>	30	48	21	<b>72</b>	56	46
<b>Not Sure</b>	19	16	19	21	19	16	18	16

1. The partisan divide continues as two out of every three Democrats oppose a ban on immigrants and travelers who are from the Middle East, while a majority of Republicans support such a ban.
2. Americans that approve of Donald Trump's job as president are more likely than Republicans to support a ban on those from the Middle East. 60% of Trump supporters back the ban, whereas only 52% of Republicans do.
3. Nearly half of all Americans disagree with a ban on immigrants and travelers who are from the Middle East.

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? - The U.S. should ban immigrants and travelers who are Muslim.*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	Approve of Trump	Disapprove of Trump	18-29	65+
<b>Agree</b>	33	18	<b>52</b>	31	<b>53</b>	11	26	38
<b>Disagree</b>	48	<b>66</b>	30	48	30	<b>76</b>	56	46
<b>Not Sure</b>	19	16	19	21	17	13	18	16



1. A majority of Americans disagree with a ban on immigrants and travelers who are Muslim.
2. A strong majority of Democrats (70%) disagree with a ban on immigrants and travelers who are Muslim, while 47% of Republicans approve of such a ban.
3. As with a ban on those from the Middle East, Americans that approve of Donald Trump's job as president are more likely than Republicans to support a ban on those who are Muslim. Over half of Trump supporters (53%) support a ban on Muslim immigrants and travelers.

*In your opinion, which is the best way to resolve the issue of undocumented immigrants in the United States:*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Undocumented immigrants with no criminal record currently living in the United States should be eligible for a pathway to legal status.</b>	55	<b>73</b>	38	52	58	57
<b>Undocumented immigrants with no criminal record must first leave the United States and wait for a period of time before being eligible to apply for legal status.</b>	23	13	<b>34</b>	24	23	26
<b>Undocumented immigrants, whether or not they have a criminal record, have a family, or are working in the United States, should be deported.</b>	15	8	<b>24</b>	15	12	15
<b>Not Sure</b>	7	6	4	9	8	2

1. A majority of Americans (55%) believe undocumented immigrants with no criminal record currently living in the United States should be eligible for a pathway to legal status.
2. Republicans are split on the issue of undocumented immigrants living in the United States, with 58% believing undocumented immigrants should be deported or made to leave before applying for legal status.
3. A majority of both younger and older generations of Americans believe undocumented immigrants living in the United States should be granted the right to apply for legal status.

### III. Profiling, Discrimination and Hate Crimes

*Do you think it is justifiable for law enforcement to profile Arab Americans or American Muslims based on their appearance?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
Yes	28	16	43	28	16	32
No	59	<b>74</b>	41	<b>59</b>	<b>71</b>	58
Not Sure	13	10	16	14	13	10

1. A strong majority of Americans (59%) do not find it justifiable for law enforcement to profile Arab Americans or American Muslims based on their appearance.
2. Republicans are split on the matter, while about three-quarters of Democrats disagree with the profiling of Arab Americans and American Muslims.

*In your opinion, in the United States, has there been an increase in discrimination against Muslims, or not?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
Yes, there has been an increase	56	<b>75</b>	36	53	62	56
No, there has not been an increase	26	13	<b>40</b>	26	19	27
Not Sure	19	13	24	21	19	17

1. More than half of Americans believe there has been an increase.
2. Three-quarters of Democrats believe there has been an increase in discrimination against Muslims.
3. Republicans are the only subset that does not think there has been an increase in discrimination against Muslims. 36% say there has been an increase, while 40% say there has been no increase.

*In your opinion, in the United States, has there been an increase in discrimination against Arabs, or not?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
Yes, there has been an increase	53	<b>70</b>	33	54	62	51
No, there has not been an increase	27	15	<b>42</b>	25	17	28
Not Sure	20	15	25	22	22	21

1. A majority of Americans believe there has been an increase in discrimination against Arabs.

2. Similar to their views on discrimination against Muslims, Republicans are the only subset in which a majority do not believe there has been an increase in discrimination against Arabs.

*In your opinion, in the United States, has there been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting Muslims?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Yes, there has been an increase</b>	47	<b>68</b>	28	43	56	49
<b>No, there has not been an increase</b>	29	13	<b>48</b>	27	15	32
<b>Not Sure</b>	24	19	24	30	28	19

1. A strong majority of Democrats (68%) believe there has been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting Muslims.
2. Nearly half of all Republicans (48%) do not believe an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting Muslims has occurred.
3. A plurality of Americans (47%) believe there has been an increase.

*In your opinion, in the United States, has there been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting Arabs?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Yes, there has been an increase</b>	40	<b>60</b>	21	36	46	43
<b>No, there has not been an increase</b>	34	19	<b>53</b>	33	29	34
<b>Not Sure</b>	26	22	26	31	26	23

1. A majority of Republicans (53%) do not believe an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting Arabs has occurred.
2. Three out of every five Democrats believe there has been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting Arabs, while less than a quarter of Republicans (21%) believe there has been an increase.

*In your opinion, in the United States, has there been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting African Americans?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Yes, there has been an increase</b>	41	<b>60</b>	20	41	49	38
<b>No, there has not been an increase</b>	41	26	<b>61</b>	37	26	47
<b>Not Sure</b>	18	14	19	21	26	15

1. Americans are split in their opinions on whether there has been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting African Americans.

2. Democrats and Republicans mirror each other in their opinions, with 60% of Democrats believing there has been an increase and 61% of Republicans believing that no increase has occurred.

*In your opinion, in the United States, has there been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting American Jews?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Yes, there has been an increase</b>	31	<b>43</b>	20	28	26	36
<b>No, there has not been an increase</b>	44	36	<b>55</b>	42	45	41
<b>Not Sure</b>	25	21	25	30	30	23

1. A plurality of Americans (44%) believe there has not been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting American Jews.
2. A majority of Republicans (55%) and a plurality of Independents (42%) do not believe an increase has occurred.
3. A plurality of Democrats believes there has been an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents targeting American Jews.
4. Pluralities of both younger and older generations of Americans do not believe there has been an increase.

*In your opinion, in the United States, has there been an increase in the number of individuals and groups that identify with white supremacy?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Yes, there has been an increase</b>	50	<b>67</b>	32	50	50	53
<b>No, there has not been an increase</b>	29	15	<b>46</b>	27	25	28
<b>Not Sure</b>	21	18	23	23	26	19

1. Half of all Americans now believe there has been an increase in the number of individuals and groups that identify with white supremacy. This is an increase from 44% in July 2017.
2. Two-thirds of all Democrats believe there has been an increase in the number of individuals and groups that identify with white supremacy, compared to only 32% of Republicans.
3. Republicans are the only subset in which a plurality does not think there has been an increase in white supremacist groups and individuals, with 46% saying there has not been an increase.

## IV. Arab Americans and American Muslims Working in Government

*If an Arab American were to attain an important position of influence in the government, would you feel confident that person would be able to do the job, or would you feel that any ethnic loyalty would influence their decision-making?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Confident they could do the job</b>	51	<b>64</b>	34	55	57	48
<b>Their ethnicity would influence their decision-making</b>	28	18	<b>43</b>	24	19	35
<b>Not Sure</b>	21	18	23	21	24	17

1. A majority of Americans are confident in the ability of an Arab American to perform in an important position of influence in the government. This is an increase from the last time Americans were asked this in 2015, when only 37% said they were confident an Arab American could do the job.
2. Republicans are the only subset in which a plurality (43%) believe Arab Americans would be influenced by their ethnicity.
3. 64% of Democrats are confident an Arab American could do the job.

*If an American Muslim were to attain an important position of influence in government, would you feel confident that person would be able to do the job, or would you feel that their religion would influence their decision-making?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Confident they could do the job</b>	46	<b>62</b>	28	46	48	42
<b>Their religion would influence their decision-making</b>	34	21	<b>51</b>	32	24	43
<b>Not Sure</b>	20	17	21	22	28	16

1. For the first time since this question has been asked, a plurality of Americans (46%) feel confident in the ability of an American Muslim to perform in an important position of influence in the government. In 2015, only 31% of Americans felt they could do the job, and 46% believed they would be influenced by their religion.
2. Republicans are the only group in which a majority (51%) of respondents believe religion would influence the decision-making of an American Muslim in a government position.

## V. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Please tell me your opinion of each of the following - is it very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, very unfavorable, or are you not familiar enough to make a judgment?

Israel	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Favorable</b>	61	55	<b>69</b>	59	49	<b>74</b>
<b>Unfavorable</b>	16	17	16	16	20	10
<b>Not Familiar</b>	9	13	6	8	8	9
<b>Not Sure</b>	14	15	10	17	23	6

1. A majority of Americans (61%) hold a favorable opinion of Israel.
2. Republicans (69%) are more likely than Democrats (55%) to hold a favorable opinion of Israel.
3. Older generations of Americans (74%) are more likely to hold a favorable opinion of Israel than younger generations (49%).
4. Younger Americans are the only subset in which a majority does not hold a favorable view of Israel.

Palestinian People	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Favorable</b>	33	<b>43</b>	20	33	42	29
<b>Unfavorable</b>	33	21	<b>50</b>	31	20	38
<b>Not Familiar</b>	15	18	12	14	12	21
<b>Not Sure</b>	19	19	18	22	27	12

1. Overall, Americans are split in their views of the Palestinian People.
2. Democrats and Republicans mirror each other, with 43% of Democrats holding a favorable view of the Palestinian People and 50% of Republicans holding an unfavorable view.
3. There is also a generational divide, in which 42% of younger Americans hold a favorable view, and 38% of older Americans hold an unfavorable view.

How would you describe the current policy of the U.S. toward the Israeli/Palestinian conflict?

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>It favors the Israelis.</b>	37	36	37	39	19	44
<b>It favors the Palestinians.</b>	5	4	7	5	9	4
<b>It strikes a balance between the Israelis and Palestinians</b>	23	21	25	24	25	29
<b>Not Sure</b>	34	39	31	32	46	23

1. A plurality of Americans (37%) believe current U.S. policy favors the Israelis.
2. Pluralities of Democrats (39%) and younger Americans (46%) are unsure how to describe the current policy of the U.S. toward the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

*How do you feel the Trump Administration should handle policy toward the Israeli/Palestinian conflict?*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>It should favor the Israelis.</b>	24	11	<b>41</b>	20	15	27
<b>It should favor the Palestinians.</b>	3	5	2	3	5	<1
<b>It should strike a balance between the Israelis and Palestinians</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>58</b>	37	58	47	61
<b>Not Sure</b>	22	27	20	19	32	12

1. A majority of Americans (51%) feel the Trump Administration should strike a balance between the Israelis and Palestinians in their policy.
2. Republicans are the only group in which a plurality believe the Administration should favor the Israelis (41%).

*There has been a proposal to relocate the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem without the consent of the Palestinian Authority. The U.S. should:*

Response	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+
<b>Keep the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv</b>	28	<b>35</b>	19	31	20	34
<b>Move the Embassy to Jerusalem</b>	20	12	<b>33</b>	15	11	20
<b>Neither</b>	17	16	14	20	25	16
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>35</b>	37	34	34	44	31

1. A plurality of Americans (35%) are unsure whether or not the U.S. should move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
2. Democrats and Republicans are split on the matter. 35% of Democrats believe the U.S. should keep the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, and 33% of Republicans believe the Embassy should be moved to Jerusalem.