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# THE ARAB AMERICAN VOTE 2012

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September 27, 2012



## Executive Summary

*New polling on Arab American voters in 2012\* shows a continuing shift away from the Republican Party, a 15% drop in support for President Obama from 2008 voters, and a growing independent base.*

### **Political Concerns**

Though party identification for both parties has decreased since 2008, Arab American Democrats still outnumber Republicans by a 2-1 margin (46% to 22%), continuing a steady migration away from the GOP since 2002. A majority of Arab Americans support Barack Obama for the presidency, primarily because of his economy policy and other domestic issues, but also for reasons of party identification, personal charisma, and a dislike of his opponents. Romney supporters, currently 28% of the community, overwhelmingly cite their support of his domestic policies and their dislike of Obama as motivations.

15% of Arab Americans who voted for Obama in 2008 have not declared their support for the President in this election.

Independents, who are evenly split between both candidates, lean toward Obama for his handling of health care, civil liberties, and Arab/Muslim outreach, but are split between the candidates on the economy and tax policy. One in five Arab American independents is still undecided.

All sides agree that jobs and the economy are a primary issue of concern in this election, though Republicans are more likely to also cite the budget, while Democrats are more likely to be concerned with foreign policy.

Arab American Muslims support Obama overwhelmingly (75% to 8%), while Orthodox/Protestants support Romney by a 16% margin.

### **Identity and Personal Concerns**

A majority of all subgroups identify as Arab American and by country of origin, or as Arab American alone, with over 40% identifying only as Arab American. One in five, however, identify by neither country of origin nor as Arab American. Republicans, Seniors 65+, and Christians are least likely to identify as Arab American, while nearly all Arab American Muslims identify by their country of origin, as Arab American, or both.

A strong plurality of Arab Americans feels very secure in their current jobs, but independents report the lowest levels of current job security. Most Arab Americans are confident that their children will lead better lives, but nearly half the community is concerned about facing discrimination because of their origin, particularly within the Arab American Muslim community.

*\*JZ Analytics conducted a survey of 400 Arab American voters between 9/8/12 and 9/14/12. Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error for 400 is +/- 5 percentage points.*

# I. Political Concerns

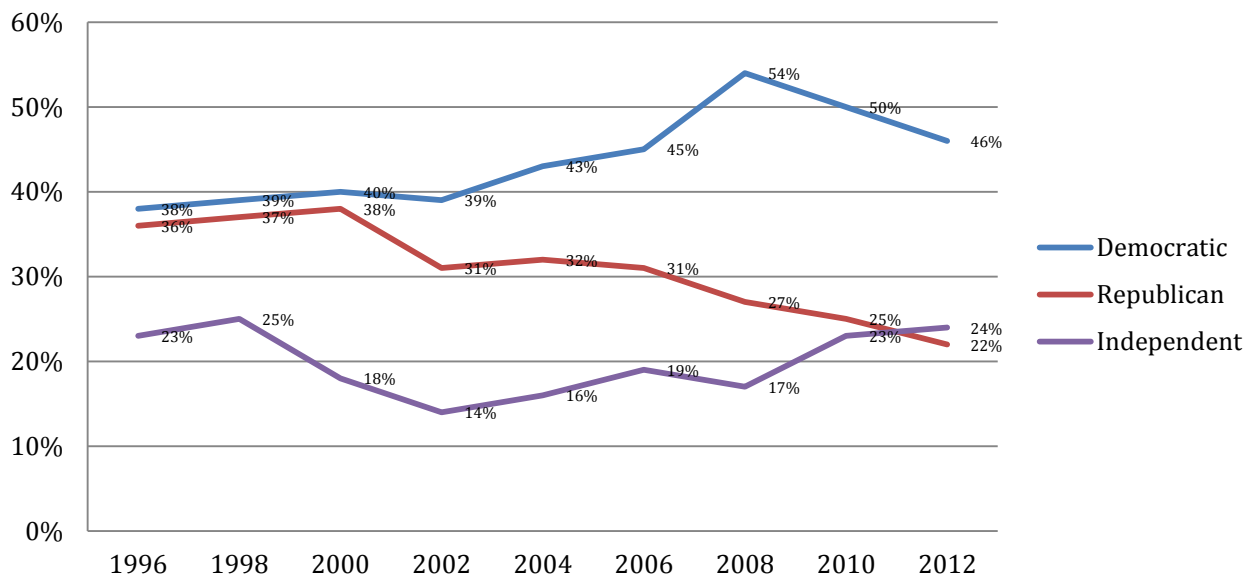
1. In which party are you registered to vote or do you consider yourself a member?

Party	Total %
Democratic	46
Republican	22
Independent	24
Other/Minor party	2
Not Sure	6

- The percentage of Arab Americans registered with either party has declined significantly since 2008.
- Identification with the Republican Party is at an all-time low in the Arab American community.
- Though down from a 2008 high of 54%, identification with the Democratic Party has increased over time from a low of 38% in 1996.
- Independent affiliation has increased steadily since 2002.

Party	2012	2010	2008	2006	2004	2002	2000	1996
Democratic	46	50	54	45	43	39	40	38
Republican	22	25	27	31	32	31	38	36
Independent	24	23	17	19	16	14	18	23

## Party Identification Trends

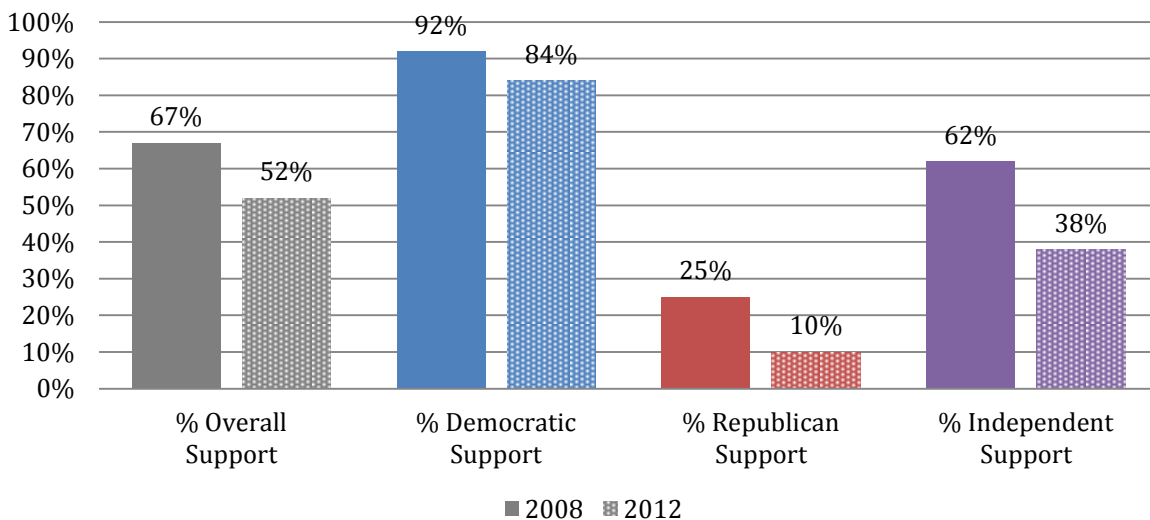


2. If the election for President of the United States were held today, for whom would you vote if the candidates were...?

Candidate	Total %	Men	Women	Democratic	Republican	Independent
Democrat Barack Obama	52	44	63	84	10	38
Republican Mitt Romney	28	37	15	7	78	35
Someone else	5	4	5	1	1	10
Not sure	16	15	17	9	11	17

- The majority of Arab Americans support Barack Obama for the presidency, and more than a quarter of Arab Americans support Mitt Romney.
- Over 1/5 of Arab Americans are unsure or plan to vote for a third party.
- Women are significantly more likely to support Obama than men, though both genders have equal numbers of undecided voters.
- Nearly 1 in 10 Democrats and Republicans are still undecided on who to vote for.
- Independents are equally split between Obama and Romney, with almost 1/5 undecided.
- Approximately 15% of Obama voters in 2008 have not chosen to declare their support for him.

### Obama Voters: 2008 vs. 2012



3. If the election for President of the United States were held today, for whom would you vote if the candidates were...?

Candidate	Total %	Catholic	Orthodox /Protestant	Muslim
Obama	52	50	34	75
Romney	28	36	40	8
Someone else	5	3	6	5
Not sure	16	11	21	12

- 3/4 of Arab American Muslims support Obama, with less than 10% supporting Romney.
- Pluralities of all subgroups except Orthodox/Protestant support Obama.
- A majority of Catholics support Obama.

4. Which of the following reasons best explains why you are voting for Mitt Romney?

Reason	Total %
Because I vote Republican	4
I like his stand on the economy and other domestic issues	49
I like his foreign policy	13
I like him as a man	2
I am voting against Obama and the Democrats	25
Other	3
Not sure	4

- Half of Arab Americans supporting Romney cite domestic policies as a primary consideration.
- A quarter of Romney supporters claim that their primary motivation is to vote against Obama/Democrats.
- Almost no Romney supporters claim that their primary motivation is that they like Romney as a man.

5. Which of the following reasons best explains why you are voting for Barack Obama?

Reason	Total %
Because I vote Democrat	15
I like his stand on the economy and other domestic issues	29
I like his foreign policy	14
I like him as a man	17
I am voting against Romney and the Republicans	19
Other	3
Not sure	3

- A plurality of Arab Americans supporting Obama cite his domestic policies as a primary consideration.
- Nearly 1 in 5 Obama supporters claim that their primary motivation is to vote against Romney/Republicans.
- Nearly 1 in 5 Obama supporters claim that their primary motivation is liking Obama as a man.

6. Overall, how would you rate President Obama's job performance?

Rating	Total %
Excellent/Good	51
Fair/Poor	48
Not sure	1

- Arab Americans appear to be equally divided in their opinion of Obama's job performance
- Almost no Arab Americans have no opinion on his performance.

7. What are the top **two** issues facing the U.S.?

Issues	Total %	Democratic	Republican	Independent
Jobs and the economy	82	81	87	86
Foreign policy	27	34	23	27
Health care	15	15	10	14
Budget	10	4	23	9
Taxes	8	10	9	3
Education	6	7	3	8
Politics	6	6	1	7
Not sure	4	5	2	4
Morality	3	1	9	4
Terrorism	3	4	2	5
Immigration	3	4	3	2
Environment	3	2	0	6
Crime	2	1	0	3
Welfare	2	2	0	2
Utility/Gas prices	2	2	1	0
Social Security	1	1	3	1
Palestine	1	1	1	0
Lebanon	0	0	1	0
Other	11	10	9	9

- Jobs and the economy are far and away the most cited issue of importance to Arab Americans.
- Foreign policy is the second most cited issue, though it is cited by fewer Republicans than Democrats or Independents.
- Arab American Republicans are far more inclined to be concerned about the budget.
- Independents are less concerned about taxes than either Democrats or Republicans.

8. For each of the following issues, please tell me how important each will be in your vote for President:

Economy	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very important	89	87	96	89
Somewhat important	9	11	3	11
Not very important	1	1	1	0
Not at all important	1	0	0	0
Not sure	0	1	0	0

Health Care	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very important	71	81	53	63
Somewhat important	22	16	36	27
Not very important	3	3	4	6
Not at all important	2	0	8	2
Not sure	1	0	0	2

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very important	57	60	54	60
Somewhat important	26	26	32	20
Not very important	7	6	3	13
Not at all important	5	5	5	3
Not sure	4	2	6	5

Taxes	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very important	61	57	70	60
Somewhat important	29	35	21	26
Not very important	6	7	6	8
Not at all important	2	1	3	4
Not sure	1	1	0	2

Civil Liberties	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very important	63	63	60	73
Somewhat important	26	28	27	18
Not very important	5	5	10	1
Not at all important	3	2	2	4
Not sure	4	2	2	4

U.S. Outreach to the Arab and Muslim Worlds	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very important	54	61	46	53
Somewhat important	27	25	39	19
Not very important	10	7	8	16
Not at all important	5	4	4	6
Not sure	5	3	4	7

- Nearly all Arab American voters rate the economy as an important issue in their vote.
- At least 80% of each subgroup considers the Israeli-Palestinian conflict important to their vote.
- Republicans are far less likely to consider health care “very important” in determining their vote, and nearly 1 in 10 consider health care to be not at all important in determining their vote.
- Independents are more likely to consider civil liberties “very important.”
- Democrats are more likely than Republicans or independents to consider U.S. outreach to the Arab and Muslim worlds as “very important” in determining their vote.

9. Please tell me who you think will do a better job on each of the following issues:

Economy	Total %	Democratic	Republican	Independent
Romney	33	10	82	44
Obama	55	86	9	48
Both	1	0	0	3
Neither	3	0	4	1
Not sure	8	4	5	5

Health Care	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Romney	27	10	70	26
Obama	61	85	21	55
Both	1	0	1	3
Neither	4	1	6	7
Not sure	8	5	2	10

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Romney	28	10	70	29
Obama	50	76	12	38
Both	1	0	1	1
Neither	12	8	12	19
Not sure	9	5	5	12

Taxes	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Romney	31	8	81	40
Obama	55	86	11	39
Both	1	2	0	3
Neither	4	1	0	9
Not sure	8	3	8	10

Civil liberties	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Romney	26	6	70	30
Obama	57	84	18	48
Both	2	1	1	3
Neither	6	3	1	13
Not sure	9	6	10	6

U.S. Outreach to the Arab and Muslim worlds	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Romney	21	7	63	19
Obama	59	83	19	55
Both	1	1	1	1
Neither	9	6	8	16
Not sure	9	5	10	9

- Democrats give Obama highest marks for his handling of the economy and taxes, and lowest marks for his handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Republicans are most confident in Romney's ability to handle the economy and taxes, and least confident in his ability to outreach to the Arab and Muslim worlds.
- Independents lean toward Obama for his handling of health care, civil liberties, and Arab/Muslim outreach, and are split between the candidates on the economy and taxes.



## 10. Which party would you rather have controlling Congress - Democrats or Republicans?

Party	Total %	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Democrats	51	86	3	44
Republicans	32	9	89	33
Neither	13	5	6	20
Not sure	5	0	2	4

- A majority of Arab Americans prefer to see Democrats in control of Congress, though 13% would prefer neither party to have control.
- A plurality of independents would prefer Democrats to have control, and 1 in 5 would prefer neither party.

## II. Identity and Personal Concerns

### 1. How are you most likely to describe yourself?

Self Description	Total %	Native-Born	Foreign-Born	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	Catholic	Orthodox/Protestant	Muslim
Country of origin	18	18	18	18	15	13	18	23	23	16	17
Arab American	46	44	51	50	41	55	55	45	45	44	53
By both	15	15	17	17	5	19	18	9	11	12	24
Neither	19	22	11	13	37	14	9	19	22	26	5
Not sure	2	2	2	3	2	0	0	4	0	2	2

- Arab American identification (identifying as Arab American and by country of origin, or as Arab American alone) totals 61%. This is a significant increase from the 47% who identified in the late 1990's. Majorities of all groups except for Republicans now identify as Arab American.

### 2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'not at all proud' and 5 being 'extremely proud,' how proud are you of your ethnic heritage?

Ethnic Pride	Total %	Native-Born	Foreign-Born	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	Catholic	Orthodox/Protestant	Muslim
Not proud	8	9	4	5	12	10	5	8	6	13	1
Proud	82	78	88	83	75	77	82	82	79	75	93

- Arab American Muslims are most likely to be proud of their ethnic heritage, and Orthodox/Protestants are least likely.
- 1 in 10 Republicans and Orthodox/Protestants are not proud of their ethnic heritage.

### 3. How secure do you feel in your current job?

Job Security	Total %	Native-Born	Foreign-Born	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very	43	41	49	53	49	26
Fairly	17	17	17	13	12	19
Not very	7	7	7	5	6	8
Not at all	11	10	14	7	12	20

- A strong plurality of Arab Americans feels very secure in their current jobs.
- Independents are least likely to feel secure in their current jobs.

### 4. How confident are you that your children will have a better life than you?

Level of Confidence	Total %	Native-Born	Foreign-Born	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very	30	25	43	35	28	24
Fairly	26	27	22	32	22	22
Not very	17	17	16	9	20	28
Not at all	6	5	7	2	15	6
I don't have children	19	24	7	19	14	17

- A majority of Arab Americans are fairly or very confident that their children will lead better lives than they did.
- Foreign-born Arab Americans are most likely to be very confident, and Independents are least likely.
- 15% of Arab American Republicans are not at all confident that their children will lead better lives, more than double any other demographic.

### 5. Have you personally experienced discrimination in the past because of your ethnicity or country of origin?

Faced Ethnic Discrimination	Total %	Native-Born	Foreign-Born	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	Catholic	Orthodox/Protestant	Muslim
Yes	40	40	40	43	32	43	55	30	30	42	55
No	59	60	57	56	68	56	46	69	69	57	45

- 40% of Arab Americans have personally experienced ethnic discrimination, up from 30% who reported discrimination in the 1990's.
- Muslims and youth 18-29 are most likely to report experiencing discrimination, and Republicans, Seniors 65+, and Catholics are least likely.

6. How concerned are you about facing discrimination in the future because of your ethnicity or country of origin?

Fear of Ethnic Discrimination	Total %	Native-Born	Foreign-Born	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	Catholic	Orthodox/Protestant	Muslim
Concerned	43	38	55	45	26	46	62	30	29	37	71
Not concerned	56	62	43	55	71	52	38	67	70	61	29

- Nearly ¾ of Arab American Muslims are concerned about facing discrimination.
- A majority of native-born Arab Americans, Seniors 65+, and Christians are not concerned about facing discrimination.

### Concerned About Discrimination

