**Poll: How Arab Americans will vote and why**

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When they go to the polls to cast their ballot for President of the United States, 59 percent of Arab Americans say they will vote for Democratic candidate Joseph Biden with only 35 percent supporting the re-election of President Trump. This is one of the findings of a nationwide poll of 805 Arab American voters conducted by the Arab American Institute during the second week of October 2020.

Overall, Joseph Biden is viewed favourably by 74 percent of Arab American voters and unfavourably by only 25 percent, while President Trump’s favourable/unfavourable ratio is a lukewarm 48 percent to 51 percent. Even a majority (55 percent) of Arab American Republicans have a favourable view of Biden.

One of the few positive signs for Donald Trump is the fact that he has galvanised support among Arab American Republicans and brought home some of those who, during the first two decades of this century, had stopped self-identifying with the GOP. The 40 percent Democrat/33 percent Republican split among Arab American voters represents a narrowing of the gap between the two parties. The partisan divide of 40 percent to 38 percent in 2000 had grown each election cycle since then. By 2016, it had become 52 percent to 26 percent. Today’s party identification numbers are similar to 2002 and 2004 when it was 39 percent to 31 percent.

[Trump accuses Democrats of trying to 'steal' election](https://nation.com.pk/04-Nov-2020/trump-accuses-democrats-of-trying-to-steal-election)

As a result, while Biden holds a significant lead over Trump in this year’s poll, the margin is somewhat less than the gap that separated Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Back in 2016, Clintons margin over Trump was 58 percent to 25 percent, with a significant number of Arab American Republicans not voting.

In this 2020 poll, the Democratic candidate Joseph Biden wins among almost all demographic groups, but by a somewhat smaller margin than former President Barack Obama in 2008. Biden leads among Catholics (55 percent to 43 percent), Muslims (60 percent to 30 percent), and naturalized citizens (64 percent to 23 percent). Where Biden’s margins are largest are among younger Arab American voters (67 percent to 27 percent) and senior citizens (66 percent to 26 percent).

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the only foreign policy issue mentioned in the above list of overall concerns and was listed as a top priority by only 5 percent of Arab American voters. But when it comes to identifying their major issues of concern in the Middle East, 45 percent of Arab Americans said that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was one of their top concerns.

[Hockey legend Rasheed Junior passes away](https://nation.com.pk/04-Nov-2020/hockey-legend-rasheed-junior-passes-away)

This was followed by “meeting the humanitarian concerns of the Syrian people” and “addressing the ongoing political and economic crises in Lebanon.” By a margin of two to one President Trump was seen as having been more ineffective than effective in handling of each of these critical concerns. And by margin of 49 percent to 33 percent, Arab American voters said they believe that Biden would be better than the sitting president at improving US relations with the Arab world.

Turnout will be very high in this election with slightly more than 80 percent of Arab Americans saying they are very likely to vote. Most Democrats say they are either voting early in person or by mail (52 percent), while most Republicans are waiting until election day to cast their votes (62 percent). Interestingly, more Trump voters (75 percent) are concerned that their ballots might not be counted than Biden voters (63 percent).

The Arab American vote will be most critical in the key battleground states of Michigan (where they can be as much as 5 percent of the vote), and Ohio and Pennsylvania (where they are between 1.7 to 2 percent of likely voters).