

Tracking Poll #3
Report on Arab American Battleground States Poll
July 9-11, 2004

Conducted by Zogby International
for
The Arab American Institute

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Introduction

From July 9 to July 11, 2004 the Arab American Institute polled 500 Arab American voters in four states: Florida, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

This is the third in a series of six polls of Arab American voters in these four states. Because these states will be among those to be hotly contested in the 2004 election, and because they also contain sizable Arab American communities, we believed that it was useful to track the attitudes of Arab American voters in these “battleground states.”

The four states covered in our study all rank among the top ten in Arab American population. Together they include more than 1.1 million persons. Given the propensity of Arab Americans to vote in somewhat larger numbers than the overall population, Arab Americans in these four states represent **a likely voter turnout of more than 510,000 voters** (235,000 in Michigan, 120,000 in Florida, 85,000 in Ohio, and 75,000 in Pennsylvania.) The Arab American vote represents slightly more than 5% of the overall vote in Michigan, 2% in Florida, just under 2% in Ohio, and more than 1.5% of all Pennsylvania voters.

In 2000, Gore won Michigan and Pennsylvania by slightly more than 200,000 votes in each state. Bush won Ohio by 165,000 and the two virtually tied in Florida.

In February 2004, we conducted our first poll in this series. In that poll we established a benchmark for President Bush’s job performance and reelection in a two-way and three-way race.

In April 2004 we conducted the second poll in this series. In that poll we evaluated the importance that Arab American voters attach to several key issues and which candidate they feel would be best qualified to address these issues.

In this poll we sought to understand why Arab American voters choose Bush, Kerry, or Nader; how strong their support is for each candidate; and what factors, if any, would cause them to change their vote in November.

The results for the July poll follow. Where relevant, for purposes of comparison the February and April 2004 results appear in parentheses ().

Results of Third Arab American Battleground State Tracking Poll

A. Bush Performance and Reelection

Our July 2004 poll shows that President Bush’s job performance rating continues to decline in the opinion of Arab American voters.

- 1) How would you rate President Bush’s performance on the job?

	<u>July</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>February</u>
Excellent/Good	27.5	30	32
Fair/Poor	71.5	67	67

2) The percentage of Arab Americans who feel that the President deserves to be reelected has also declined since we first asked that question in February 2004 (the reelect question was not asked in April 2004).

	<u>July</u>	<u>February</u>
Reelect	24.5	28
Someone New	69	65

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>US Born</u>	<u>Immigrant</u>	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Muslim</u>
Reelect	24.5	6	62	19	27	18	34.5	33	6
Someone Else	69	89.5	30	72	67.5	73.5	60	59	91
Not Sure	6.5	5	8	8	5.5	8.5	5.5	8	3

3) When matched against Senator John Kerry, the Democratic nominee, Bush's Arab American support continues to decline while Senator Kerry's numbers have risen and are now back to his Feb. 2004 level.

	<u>July</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>February</u>
Bush	24.5	30	30
Kerry	54	49	54
Other/Not Sure	21.5	21	16

	<u>Overall*</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>US Born</u>	<u>Immigrant</u>
Bush	24.5 (30)	7 (9)	60 (63)	17 (26)	26 (34)	19 (19)
Kerry	54 (49)	82 (76)	17 (20)	46 (42)	53 (46)	55.5 (60)
Other/Not Sure	21.5 (21)	11 (16)	23 (17)	37 (32)	20 (21)	25.5 (21)

* (April 2004)

	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Muslim</u>	<u>Florida</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Ohio</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>
Bush	36 (37)	31 (37)	6 (10)	43 (40)	22 (28)	23 (24)	21 (28)
Kerry	47 (45)	42 (46)	73 (62)	47.5 (47)	53 (49)	56 (48)	59 (53)
Other/Not Sure	17 (18)	27 (17)	21 (28)	19.5 (13)	24 (23)	21 (28)	20 (19)

4) In the 3-way race with President Bush, Senator John Kerry, and Independent Ralph Nader, Kerry continues to hold a strong and growing lead.

	<u>July</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>February</u>
Bush	24	28	27
Kerry	51	45	43
Nader	13	14	20
Other/Not Sure	12	14	10

	<u>Overall*</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>US Born</u>	<u>Immigrant</u>
Bush	24 (28)	7 (10)	62 (59)	17 (19)	26 (30)	18 (21)
Kerry	51 (45)	78 (73)	17.5 (18)	47 (35)	51 (44)	50 (49)
Nader	13 (14)	8 (8)	11.5 (10)	20 (28)	12 (13)	16 (17)
Other/Not Sure	12 (14)	7 (10)	9 (14)	16 (18)	10 (14)	16 (14)

* (April 2004)

	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Muslim</u>	<u>Florida</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Ohio</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>
Bush	35.5 (33)	32 (33)	6 (10)	30 (35)	22 (25)	22.5 (25)	24 (26)
Kerry	44.5 (46)	40.5 (29)	65.5 (50)	48 (40)	51 (42)	49 (50)	56 (52)
Nader	10 (10)	15.5 (13)	19 (19)	13 (14)	12 (19)	12 (5)	17 (12)
Other/Not Sure	11 (11)	12 (13)	9.5 (21)	9 (11)	15 (14)	17 (20)	3 (11)

What Happened from February to July 2004

A) Senator Kerry's rise has continued to match President Bush's decline with Nader's numbers holding steady since April.

In the two-way race, Bush's decline is most notable among native-born Arab Americans, independents, and Arab Americans who are Orthodox or Protestant Christians. Kerry's rise is most significant among native-born Arab Americans, Democrats, independents, and Arab American Muslims.

The overall percentage of Arab Americans who remain undecided in the two-way race is still a substantial 21%.

B) In the three-way race, once again President Bush's decline is matched by Senator Kerry's gain. In this context, Kerry has significantly increased his share among native-born Arab American, independents, and Arab American Muslims.

C) Overall when compared with the 2000 election in these same four battleground states, the July 2004 numbers indicate a shift of 225,000 actual Arab American turnout voters in Florida, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania from the Republican to the Democratic column. This is up from the 170,000 voter shift that was evident in the April 2004 numbers.

D) When the names of the Vice-Presidential candidates are added, the overall numbers do not move significantly.

Bush/Cheney	26.5
Kerry/Edwards	51
Nader/Camejo	11
Not Sure	13

E) In the four states, the Bush decline and Kerry rise is most evident in Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania where Kerry holds a greater than 2 to 1 lead in each state's policy results.

Only in Florida, in the two-way contest was there a tightening of the numbers.

F) Overall in the two-way and three-way match-ups, the percentage of Arab Americans who are undecided or are supporters of Ralph Nader remains a high 21% to 25%.

G) Most worrisome for President Bush must be the continued decline in his job performance rating and his reelect ratings.

Of special concern to the President, in this regard, should be the fact that 30% of Arab Americans who identified themselves as Republicans indicate that "it is time for someone new."

While Senator Kerry has not yet been able to fully capitalize on the high 69% of Arab American voters who indicate that "it is time for someone new," Bush's extremely low "reelect" numbers indicate that a dramatic shift in Arab American voter patterns will be in evidence in 2004.

H) Also of concern to Republicans should be the fact that when asked for party preference, Arab Americans now indicate a 42%-27% Democratic edge. That is up significantly from previous polls in which the Democratic margin was never greater than four or five percent.

B. Issues of Importance to Arab Americans and the President's Job Performance Ratings

- 1) When asked to evaluate how important each of the following issues would be in determining their choice for President, the following rank order of issues occurs:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>
Economy	81	16	3
Terrorism/National Security	74	22	3
Health Care	70.5	23.5	5.5
Iraq	66	24	9.5
Foreign Policy	65	28.5	4.5
Civil Liberties	63.5	28.5	3
Taxes	63	31.5	3.5
Israel-Palestine	57.5	32	10

- 2) What follows are the Presidential preferences of Arab American voters who say that each of the above issues are very important:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Nader</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
Economy	28	53	14.5	10
Terrorism/National Security	28	50.5	12	9.5
Health Care	16	55	15	14
Iraq	21	55	15	9
Foreign Policy	21	54.5	16	9
Civil Liberties	17.5	58	14.5	10
Taxes	23	50	15	11
Israel-Palestine	17.5	54	15.5	13

- 3) When we asked Arab American voters to rate President Bush's job performance in each issue area we received the following responses (the February 2004 responses are in parentheses):

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Excellent/Good</u>	<u>Fair/Poor</u>
Overall	27.5 (32)	71.5 (67)
Terrorism/National Security	31	65.5
Taxes	29.5 (32)	69 (64)
Civil Liberties	23 (21)	69 (63)
Iraq	23.5 (26)	75.5 (72)
Economy	23 (25)	76 (75)
Foreign Policy	18.5 (27)	77.5 (62)
Health Care	18 (24)	77.5 (72)
Israel-Palestine	9 (16)	86 (80)

- 4) When it comes to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, would you say you have more confidence in George Bush, John Kerry, both equally, or neither?

	<u>July</u>	<u>April</u>
Bush	14	16
Kerry	24	22
Both	5	6
Neither	50	48

- 5) If you agreed with President Bush or Senator Kerry on most issues but strongly disagreed with him on his Middle East policy, is it very possible, somewhat possible, or not possible that you would vote for another candidate?

	<u>Bush</u> <u>Voters</u>	<u>Kerry</u> <u>Voters</u>
Very Possible	9	12
Somewhat Possible	19	29
Not Possible	69	50

Analysis

- A) The rank order of issue concerns for Arab American voters appears, for the most part, to be no different than it is for other US voters, with the economy, terrorism/national security, health care, and Iraq topping the list of concerns.
- B) What is significant is that among those Arab American voters who say that each of these issues are “very important” in determining their vote, Senator Kerry is the preferred candidate in each case—often by margins of 2 to 1 or greater. This is especially noteworthy in the areas of foreign policy, terrorism/national security and taxes which had been thought to be the President’s strong suits.
- C) While Arab Americans who feel that resolving the Israeli-Palestinians dispute is a very important concern choose John Kerry over George Bush by more than a 3 to 1 ratio, this appears to be more the result of displeasure with the President’s performance than with confidence in Kerry.

President Bush’s job performance on this issue has dropped to an all-time low of 9% Excellent/Good versus 86% Fair/Poor.

But when asked to rate their confidence in Bush and Kerry on this issue, 50% of Arab Americans say they have confidence in neither of the two.

This may explain why increasingly Arab Americans indicate that this issue will not be a major factor in shaping their final vote choice in 2004.

C. Why Arab Americans Choose Bush, Kerry, Nader and What Might Change Their Vote

- 1) When we asked Arab American voters who indicated that they would vote for President Bush or Senator Kerry on what basis they made their choice, we received the following responses:

Why Bush		Why Kerry	
Vote Republican	10	Vote Democrat	10
Taxes and Domestic Issues	25	Taxes and Domestic Issues	14.5
Foreign Policy	10	Foreign Policy	5
Like him as a man	25	Like him as a man	8.5
Against Democrats	10.5	Against Republicans	52

- 2) Nader supporters were asked a number of questions about their vote and what might bring them to change their vote to either John Kerry or George Bush:

Nader Supporters and Kerry	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Support John Kerry on most issues, but strongly oppose his Middle East policy positions	49	43
Do not like John Kerry and would not vote for him	31	59.5
Would leave Nader and switch to Kerry if you see that Kerry could win and Nader cannot	24.5	74.5
Switch to Kerry if his position on the Middle East gets closer to your own	67.5	32.5

Nader Supporters and Bush	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Support George Bush on most issues, but strongly oppose his Middle East policy positions	32	67.5
Do not like George Bush and would not vote for him	62.5	32
Would leave Nader and switch to Bush if you see that Bush could win and Nader cannot	18	79
Switch to Bush if his position on the Middle East gets closer to your own	36	61

- 3) When those Arab Americans who indicated that they were either undecided or supporting another candidate why they did not have a preference among the major candidates:

Undecided and “Other” Voters	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Do not know enough about the candidates	56	29
Don't like any of the candidates	39	42
Candidates don't differ on the issues I care about	50	19
My vote doesn't count	17	78
If a candidate took a position on the Middle East that I care about, I'd vote for him	56	10

Analysis

- A) **Bush:** Though at an all time low among Arab American voters, what's left of Bush's support at 24.5 appear to be somewhat solid. 70% of Arab American Bush supporters say they are supporting him because they like his position and party or "like him as a man."

Even if John Kerry took a Middle East position considered more positive, 69.5% of current Bush voters indicate that they would not switch.

However, if President Bush developed a more positive Middle East position, it is possible that he might gain only about 1/3 of Nader's supporters.

- B) **Kerry:** Senator Kerry's support, while growing, remains somewhat softer than President Bush's.

Less than 40% of Kerry's Arab American voters say that they are supporting him because they like his position and party or "like him as a man." More than 50% of Kerry's voters are anti-Bush voters.

Kerry could win up to 2/3's of Nader's voters if he were to develop a more positive Middle East position.

- C) **Nader:** About 1/3 of Nader's Arab American voters appear to be firm Nader supporters. While Kerry could win 2/3's of Nader's current support base and Bush could only take about 1/3, it requires that either candidate take a different stance on the Middle East for this to occur.

Only 24.5% of Nader supporters would switch to Kerry if it appears that Nader won't win, only 18% would go to Bush under the same terms. At least 3/4's of Nader's votes would not abandon their candidate on this basis alone.

- D) About 80% of undecided Arab American voters believe that their vote will count, but more than 1/2 claim not to know enough about the major candidates and almost 40% do not like the choices available to them.

If one of the candidates took a better position on the Middle East, over 1/2 of these undecided voters would switch their votes.

Methodology

Zogby International interviewed 500 Arab American registered voters, who indicated a likelihood to vote in November 2004. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 4.5%. The voters came from four states (Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania), reflecting the overall demographic profile of the national Arab American community.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Florida	20.5
Michigan	39
Ohio	21
Pennsylvania	19.5
Democrat	42
Republican	27
Independent	22
US Born	75
Immigrant	25
Roman Catholic	35
Orthodox	28
Muslim	24
Other/No Affiliation	13