

Report on Arab American Battleground States Poll
February 24-26, 2004

Conducted by Zogby International
for
The Arab American Institute

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Introduction

Beginning this month the Arab American Institute will regularly poll Arab American voters in four states: Michigan, Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. 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 believe that it will be 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.

Results of First Arab American Battleground State Tracking Poll

A) Bush Reelection

Our first Arab American Four States-Tracking Poll (FSTP) (conducted from February 24 - 26, 2004) recorded deep dissatisfaction with the policies of the Bush Administration and very low Arab American support for the reelection of President George W. Bush.

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

Excellent/Good	32%
Fair/Poor	67%

2) Do you think President Bush deserves to be reelected or is it time for someone new?

Reelect Bush	28%
Someone New	65%

B) Attitudes Toward Policy

President Bush’s low “reelect” numbers are derivative of the low approval ratings that Arab American voters give to his Administration’s policies and performance. While the President’s overall job approval rating is only 32%, what is remarkable is that in only one of the eight policy areas did Arab Americans give Bush a +30% rating.

3)

Policy Area	Approval Rating (%)	Disapproval Rating (%)
Overall Job Performance	32	67
Israel-Palestine	16	80
Civil Liberties for Immigrants	23	63
Health Care	24	72
Environment	25	65
Economy	25	75
Iraq War	26	72
Foreign Policy	27	62
Taxes	32	64

In further questioning, Arab American voters were asked how important three of these issues were in determining their vote. Of the three, the Iraq war appears to carry the most weight, slightly edging out the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both issues were deemed to be “very important” in influencing the November vote of two-thirds of Arab American voters. Protecting the civil rights of immigrants was very important to slightly less than one-half of Arab American voters.

4) Importance in November Vote

Issue	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important
Civil Liberties	44	36	11	5
Iraq War	69	22	3	3
Arab-Israeli conflict	64	25	4	4

C) Bush vs. Kerry vs. Nader

If the election were held today and featured President George W. Bush and Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, Kerry would win the Arab American vote in these states by a margin of 54% to 30%.

In this match-up, Kerry wins the support of virtually all demographic groups of Arab American voters. He beats President Bush among native-born Arab Americans and immigrants, and among all of the major religious groupings (Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims). Kerry also wins in three of the four states, losing to President Bush only in Ohio.

5) Bush vs. Kerry

If the election were held today, how would you vote?

	All	MI	FL	OH	PA	Catholic	Orthodox	Muslim	Native-Born	Immigrant
Bush	30	27	31	50	20	36	39	12	35	18
Kerry	54	52	54	34	73	47	43	78	48	73
Other	5	7	6	2	4	2	6	5	5	5
Not Sure	11	14	9	14	3	15	12	5	13	5

Ralph Nader's entry into the contest cuts significantly into Kerry's lead over President Bush. Kerry still leads overall and among most demographic groups, but his margin is reduced. Only in Ohio does Nader appear to take more votes from President Bush than from John Kerry.

Bush vs. Kerry vs. Nader

If the elections were held today, how would you vote?

	All	MI	FL	OH	PA	Catholics	Orthodox	Muslim	Native-Born	Immigrant
Bush	27	25	30	40	18	31	37	8	31	16
Kerry	43	40	47	31	52	44	29	57	39	54
Nader	20	26	14	11	26	13	20	32	20	22
Other	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	-	1	2
Not Sure	9	9	8	15	3	11	12	3	10	6

D) Where do Nader's votes come from?

a) Demographics

A comparison of the results establishes that one-half of Nader's overall votes come directly from John Kerry. Of these 'Kerry-turned-into-Nader voters,' 40% are Democrats, 40% are Republicans, and the remaining 20% are independent.

One-third of Nader's voters were those who in the Bush-Kerry match up had indicated "other" as their preference. Only one in six Nader voters come from the Bush column—and most of them were Democrats and Independents who were voting for Bush, but now switch to Nader.

Almost 40% of Nader's voters are Muslim Arab Americans while another almost 30% are Orthodox Christians or Protestants.

It is also important to note that three-fourths of Nader voters are native-born Arab Americans and three-fourths are also college educated. Two-thirds of Nader voters in this poll are Arab American women.

b) Issues

It appears from the polling data that Nader voters are high intensity issue voters. Ninety percent of Nader's voters give President Bush a poor rating in dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Eighty percent give Bush a poor rating on Iraq, and 70% give him a poor rating on health care, the economy and civil liberties.

In addition, 80% of those who indicate that they would vote for Nader say the Arab-Israeli conflict is "very important" in determining their vote.

E) Quantitative Comparison of 2000's election with that of 2004; and Nader's impact

The respondents to this FSTP indicated that in 2000, George W. Bush won their vote by a 46% to 29% margin, with Ralph Nader picking up 13%. Comparing this 2000 vote with Arab American voter preferences for 2004 establishes a significant shift of over 30% of Arab American votes. This represents a potential

shift of 170,000+ Arab American votes from the Republican to the Democratic column.

This Democratic margin of victory, of course, is less than it would be without Nader in the contest. In that case, with Bush at 30% and Kerry at 54%, the shift from 2000 to 2004 is more than 40%, or more than 200,000 Arab American votes moving from the Republican to the Democratic column.

6) Comparison of 2000 with 2004

	2000	2004	2004 (without Nader)
Bush	46	27	30
Gore / Kerry	29	43	54
Nader	13	20	--

F) Methodology

Zogby International interviewed 501 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 (Michigan, Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania), reflecting the overall demographic profile of the national Arab American community.

Category	Percent
Michigan	39
Florida	26
Ohio	16
Pennsylvania	19
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Democrat	39
Republican	33
Independent	27
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Native Born	75
Immigrant	25
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Catholic	35
Orthodox/Protestant	28
Muslim	24
Other/No Affiliation	13