



Arab-American and Muslim-American Votes in U.S. Presidential Elections

With only a few days left until the 2024 U.S. presidential election, polling in national and swing states has remained razor-tight. All signs point to an extremely close race for the White House, with the candidate who prevails likely to be whichever one can mobilize and spur higher turnout. Undoubtedly, two of the main demographic groups that will shape the outcome are Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans. Both are highly significant due to the recent shifts in the political landscape stemming from the Biden administration's handling of the Gaza War and the distribution of these voters across several key swing states. According to recent [polling](#) by the Arab American Institute, 81% of Arab-Americans view Gaza as important in determining their vote, with the crisis coming behind only jobs and the economy. Following the onset of the conflict last October, support for the Democratic Party sharply declined from 40% in April of 2023 to 23% in October of 2023. At the same time, the war also seemed to prompt an increase in support for the Republican Party, with many of their gains being amongst Independents.

While support for the Democrats has since bounced back up, the latest numbers show a split tie between them and Republicans at 38% each, with the remaining 24% identifying as Independents or without a clear party affiliation. Alarming for Harris, the polls show that on Election Day, Trump could receive higher support among Arab-Americans instead of voters merely rallying around a third-party candidate. When asked if the presidential election was held today, 42% of respondents said Trump and 41% said Harris. A look at the Electoral College shows how Arab-Americans are expected to play a significant role in the election outcome, as noteworthy pockets of them are dispersed among many of the most important battleground states, with 392,733 in [Michigan](#), 126,553 in [Pennsylvania](#), 77,599 in [Arizona](#), and 58,033 in [Georgia](#). Due to the narrow-thin polling numbers in these swing states, the manner in which these voters sway looks critical. All four of the aforementioned states have been the sites of numerous rallies by both campaigns. President Biden carried all of them in his 2020 win, and Former President Trump won all four back in 2016 when he emerged victorious. Vice President Harris remains behind Biden's 2020 support numbers among Arab-Americans, so unless she makes inroads with other influential demographic groups, she risks losing all four states.

President Biden and his administration have shaped the United States' response to Israel's War on Gaza, and also, its military operations against Lebanon and Iran. Biden has reiterated his support for Israel, while critics, including fellow Democrats, see the United States as allowing Israel to perpetuate a war with no end in sight that has killed a heinous number of civilians. Many Americans see Biden's refusal to use the United States' enormous leverage to end the war while continuing to supply Israel with arms despite overwhelming evidence of war crimes as complicity in Israel's violations. During the Democratic presidential primary process, Biden ran without any serious challengers; however, an ['Uncommitted'](#) movement was initiated calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and an arms embargo on Israel. It began in Michigan's Democratic primary held in late February, where only a few weeks before the election, a coalition campaigned to cast 'uncommitted' ballots instead of for Biden as a protest vote and ended up garnering over 100,000 to do the same – a substantial 13.2% of the total in Michigan and approximately two-thirds of the Biden win margin (154,000) over Trump in the state back in 2020. By the end of the primary season, the 'Uncommitted' movement had received more than 700,000 votes nationwide and subsequently earned 36 delegates at the 2024 Democratic National Convention this past summer.

The 'Uncommitted' movement's stance following Biden's departure from the race and heading into next week's general election is not to endorse any specific candidate for president unless an arms embargo and permanent ceasefire are imposed on Israel. Some analysts have speculated that Harris, if elected, could have a tougher position on Israel than Biden or Trump; however, she has declined to call for an arms embargo and others do not expect a considerable difference. At the same time, since Harris has had less foreign policy experience than Biden, there are those who anticipate that she could rely more on her advisors if she wins the election, providing some hope for a few incremental policy changes. In the end, Harris is likely to lose out on some support among Arab-American, Muslim-American, and progressive voters who are unhappy with the Biden administration's handling of the Gaza War, but the extent to which this impacts the overall electoral results in key swing states remains to be seen and will certainly also be influenced by other important factors like the level of distaste towards Trump, how much he directly benefits from non-Harris voters, and whether disheartened citizens decide to cast ballots for one of the two major-party candidates regardless of their grievances as opposed to gravitating towards a third-party candidate or simply abstaining from voting altogether.