



# 2012 Presidential Voter Guide

**Council on American-Islamic Relations**

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## **Foreword**

**The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)** seeks to empower the American Muslim community with its 2012 Presidential Voter Guide, providing general information about the election such as candidate positions and biographies. CAIR seeks to educate Muslim voters on candidate positions and encourages Muslims to support candidates whose positions they agree with.

The 2012 election cycle presents the American Muslim community with an important opportunity to increase its political capacity and presence. With large concentrations of Muslim voters in key swing states such as Florida, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina, and Virginia the American Muslim population has the potential to be influential in determining who will be the next President of the United States.

CAIR as a nonpartisan organization is able to encourage Muslims to participate in national and state elections, conduct voter registrations, training programs, issue briefings, candidate forums, volunteer in campaigns, and get out the vote drives. Nonprofits cannot engage in political activities that support one candidate or party over another, but we are committed to making our community's voice heard.



## **Barack Obama**

President of the United States of America

Party: Democrat

Age: 50

Residence: Washington, D.C. & Chicago, Illinois

Occupation: Attorney & community organizer

Religion: Christianity

Website: <http://www.barackobama.com/>

- **Economy:** Supports overall middle-class tax cuts and increased taxes on top earners. To stimulate the economy and job growth, seeks passage of the American Job Act, which proposes to: cut the payroll tax in half for 98 percent of businesses; federally fund teacher, law enforcement and firefighter jobs at risk; extend unemployment insurance benefits; support additional back to work programs; and allow Americans to refinance their mortgages. Favors investments in alternative and renewable energy to create clean energy markets and combat rising energy costs.
- **Health care:** Signed into law the Affordable Health Care Act, which created sweeping reforms of the nation's health care system. The act prohibits health insurers from refusing coverage based on medical history. Requires most employers to provide coverage for workers. Extends Medicaid to more low-income individuals. Subsidizes low-and-middle-class Americans to buy health insurance. Creates a health insurance exchange to compare policies, rates, and other benefits.
- **National Security:** With the killing of major terrorist leaders, including Osama bin Laden, seeks to ensure the demise of the al-Qaida network through effective targeting and destabilization. Has achieved 2008 campaign objective of ending combat operations in Iraq, although some troops remain, and refocusing operations on Afghanistan and al-Qaeda.
- **Commander in Chief:** In August 2010, announced the end of America's combat mission in Iraq, shifting thousands of troops into advisory positions. Plans the withdrawal of 10,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2011, and 33,000 "surge" troops by 2012. Supported U.S. involvement in the NATO-led operation to assist Libyan rebels to overthrow of Col. Muammar Qaddafi. Favors working with European and Asian countries to increase pressure and sanctions on Iran to prevent it from developing a nuclear weapon.
- **Foreign Policy:** Generally favors negotiating and collaborating with other nations instead of taking unilateral actions. Overall objectives include increasing trade and investment in America, restoring American leadership in Latin America, and ensuring energy security while fighting climate change. Supports "Arab Spring" liberation movements through working with other nations to pressure dictators into stepping down.
- **Immigration:** Supports increased border security and more strict enforcement of employment laws. Proposes a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants without a criminal record who learn English and pay a fine. Requested a Justice Department review of nearly 300,000 immigration removal cases to accelerate cases of illegal immigrants with criminal histories and to drop from the court cases of illegal immigrants seeking a path toward citizenship.
- **Civil Rights:** Signed into law the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which ensures basic protections against pay discrimination for women and other workers. Signed into law the Fair Sentencing Act, which reduced federal sentence guidelines for crack cocaine. Formally repealed the Pentagon's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy for GLBT service members. Supports a secretive policy of targeted assassinations of U.S. citizens abroad who are suspected of terrorism. Permitted the FBI's "racial mapping program," which targeted racial, ethnic and religious groups for investigation by associating criminal behaviors with specific communities.



## **Mitt Romney**

Former Governor of Massachusetts

Party: Republican

Age: 64

Residence: Belmont, Massachusetts

Occupation: Business executive

Religion: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Website: <http://www.mittromney.com/>

- **Economy:** Supports lowering taxes overall and eliminating taxes on earned interest, capital gains and inheritance. Intends to reduce the corporate income tax to 25 percent. Aims to place a cap on federal spending and cut non-security spending by five percent. Seeks congressional passage of existing free trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama. Intends to create jobs and lower energy costs by directing the Department of the Interior to complete a comprehensive survey of American energy reserves in partnership with private companies, looking to issue immediate drilling leases.
- **Health Care:** Supports repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. As an alternative, favors greater competition in the healthcare market by permitting insurance companies to compete across state lines. Seeks to expand tax deductions to individuals who purchase their own insurance. Favors expanding Health Savings Accounts and ensuring that covered individuals cannot be denied insurance because of pre-existing conditions. Plans to reform malpractice litigation. Favors individuals and small businesses forming purchasing pools to lower insurance costs.
- **National Security:** Supports an additional \$30 billion in military spending and setting a minimum for defense spending at four percent of the GDP. Favors increasing active-duty forces by 100,000 troops. Intends to modernize and replace the aging inventories of the Air Force, Army and Marines, and to increase the Navy shipbuilding rate from nine per year to approximately fifteen per year.
- **Commander in Chief:** Critical of the current Administration's plan to withdraw troops from Iraq by 2012. Supports withdrawing all troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, pending approval from military commanders. Cautiously supports the Arab Spring and plans to support individuals and groups seeking to build democratic institutions. Believes the U.S. should follow the "guidance of our ally Israel," instead of, "play[ing] the role of the leader of the peace process." Supports military action to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.
- **Foreign Policy:** Supports cutting \$100 million from the foreign aid budget. Favors a tougher stance with China and Russia and is critical of the current Administration's efforts to "reset" relations with Russia. Intends to direct the Treasury Department to list China as a currency manipulator and to consider placing duties on Chinese imports.
- **Immigration:** Supports completing "a high-tech fence" at the U.S.-Mexico border and increasing border control manpower and resources. Favors providing green cards to highly educated immigrants. Criticized opponents for supporting state programs that provide education benefits to the children of illegal immigrants. Intends to crack down on employers who hire undocumented workers.
- **Civil Rights:** Supports the current Administration's secretive policy of targeted assassinations of U.S. citizens abroad who are suspected of terrorism. Critical of providing constitutional rights to captured combatants. Supports a federal designation of marriage as being between one man and one woman.



## **Ron Paul**

U.S. Representative, Texas

Party: Republican

Age: 76

Residence: Lake Jackson, Texas

Occupation: Physician

Religion: Christian Baptist

Website: <http://www.RonPaul2012.com>

- **Economy:** Supports major tax reform and intends to eliminate the income, inheritance, and capital gains taxes. Aims to veto any unbalanced federal budget or raising of the national debt ceiling. Plans to fully audit and abolish the Federal Reserve and favors a return to the gold standard. Intends to achieve deep federal spending cuts to reduce America's federal deficit. Favors eliminating the Departments of Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, Interior, and Education, as well as the Transportation Security Administration to cut costs.
- **Health Care:** Supports repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. As an alternative, favors greater competition in the healthcare market by permitting insurance companies to compete across state lines. Intends to make all medical expenses tax-deductible for individuals. Plans to reform malpractice litigation and offers to expand Health Savings Accounts. Favors exempting those with terminal illnesses from the employee portion of payroll taxes. Supports payroll tax deductions for primary caregivers of individuals with a terminal illness.
- **National Security:** Considers securing the country's borders as the best way to defend the nation. Intends to end all military engagements round the world and station troops within the U.S. Aims to revitalize the military by eliminating unnecessary projects and redirecting funds.
- **Commander in Chief:** Outspoken critic of the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan; supports the full withdrawal of troops from both countries. Voted in favor of a trio of proposals intended to put limits on U.S. involvement in Libya. Considers the threat of by Iran developing a nuclear weapon to be overblown.
- **Foreign Policy:** Supports eliminating all foreign aid and withdrawing U.S. participation in the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. Intends to close military bases overseas and pledges to only engage the military in foreign acts of war if ratified by Congress.
- **Immigration:** Supports enforcing existing laws and pathways towards citizenship. Intends to secure the U.S.-Mexico border without building a barrier. Sponsored a constitutional amendment to deny birthright citizenship to individuals born in the U.S. to illegal immigrants. Favors streamlining the immigration application process to encourage legal immigration.
- **Civil Rights:** Seeks to direct the intelligence community's efforts toward legitimate threats in adherence to the Constitution. Intends to repeal the Patriot Act. Favors the government not taking any position regarding marriage laws, traditional or otherwise.



### **Michele Bachmann**

U.S. Representative, Minnesota

Party: Republican

Age: 55

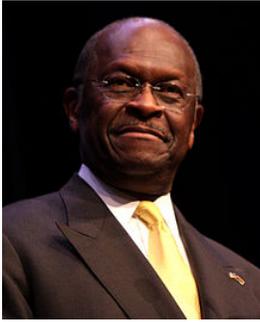
Residence: Stillwater, Minnesota

Occupation: Attorney

Religion: Christian Evangelical

Website: [www.michelebachmann.com/](http://www.michelebachmann.com/)

- **Economy:** Supports lowering taxes and plans on reducing number of federal tax brackets and eliminating the inheritance tax. Favors deep federal spending cuts to reduce America's federal deficit. Intends to eliminate the Department of Energy, Department of Commerce, and Environmental Protection Agency and federal guarantees to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Aims to create jobs and lower energy costs through making federally protected lands available for logging, mining, and drilling for oil and natural gas.
- **Health Care:** Supports repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. As an alternative favors greater competition in the healthcare market through permitting insurance companies to compete across state lines. Plans to reform malpractice litigation and offers to expand Health Savings Accounts. Favors small businesses forming purchasing pools to lower insurance costs. Favors making medical expenses, including health care premiums, tax-deductible for individuals.
- **National Security:** Critical of the current Administration's approach to national security, stating that, "we have a President who is declaring a premature end to the war on terror against the advice of his own generals." Pledges to ensure that, "our borders are fully secured" and "will not rest until the war on terror is won."
- **Foreign Policy:** Plans to, "do whatever it takes to keep the nation safe in an increasingly dangerous world." Aims to uphold America's values by, "standing shoulder-to-shoulder with those who share those values and our interests and standing tall against those who don't."
- **Middle East:** Supports troop reductions from Iraq and Afghanistan, pending approval from military commanders. Favors Iraq and Libya repaying the U.S. for the costs associated with intervening in both countries. Plans to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and considers Israeli settlement-building in the West Bank lawful. Describes the "Arab Spring" as radical and a potential threat to the safety of Israel. Favors using "every military option" to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.
- **Immigration:** Supports the continued enforcement of existing immigration laws and does not favor amnesty or reform. Aims to increase border security through the construction of a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.
- **Civil Rights:** Favors reinstating waterboarding as a tool to gather information from enemy combatants. Supports the current Administration's secretive policy of targeted assassinations of U.S. citizens abroad suspected of terrorism. Critical of the current Administration's repeal of Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell.



## **Herman Cain**

Former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

Party: Republican

Age: 65

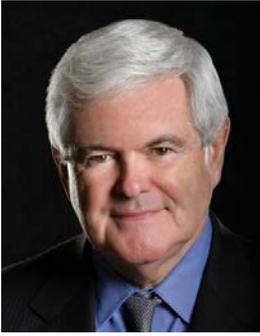
Residence: Sandy Springs, Georgia

Occupation: Business executive

Religion: Baptist

Website: <http://www.hermancain.com/>

- **Economy:** Supports replacing the current federal tax code with a simplified three-part system, consisting of a 9% flat tax on individuals, 9% flat tax on businesses, and 9% national retail sales tax. Favors eliminating the capital gains and inheritance tax. Backs the use of federal loans to financial institutions to stabilize the economy but strongly criticizes loans to private manufactures.
- **Health Care:** Supports repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. As an alternative favors greater competition in the healthcare market through permitting insurance companies to compete across state lines. Plans to reform malpractice litigation and offers to expand Health Savings Accounts. Favors making health insurance premiums tax-deductible for individuals.
- **National Security:** Supports increased reliance on the recommendations of military commanders instead of deferring to political solutions. Critical of the nation's national security agenda, stating that it has become too politicized.
- **Foreign Policy:** Supports the Reagan Administration's foreign policy doctrine, "peace through strength and clarity." Admittedly not a foreign policy expert, plans to develop a team of experienced foreign policy advisors to shape his future Administration's foreign affairs agenda.
- **Middle East:** Supports the continued presence of troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, pending approval from military commanders. Backs the State of Israel and does not consider Palestine interested in peace. Critical of the "Arab Spring" and would have supported former presidents of Egypt and Yemen. To prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear-weapon favors deploying naval ships close to Iran with upgraded missile defense systems.
- **Immigration:** Supports enforcing existing immigration laws and pathways towards citizenship. Aims to secure the U.S.-Mexico border by whatever means necessary, favoring the use of a 20 foot electrified barbed wired fence.
- **Civil Rights:** Supports reinstating waterboarding as a tool to gather information from enemy combatants, if supported by the military. Favors indefinite detention of suspected terrorists without charges. Previously would not consider the appointment of American Muslims to federal leadership positions or judgeships, continues to view the majority of Muslims as extremists.



## **Newt Gingrich**

Former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Georgia

Party: Republican

Age: 68

Residence: McLean, Virginia

Occupation: College professor

Religion: Roman Catholic

Website: [www.newt.org/](http://www.newt.org/)

- **Economy:** Supports lowering taxes and aims to make current reduced income tax rates permanent. Favors an optional flat income tax of 15 percent. Seeks to reduce the corporate income tax. Plans to eliminate the capital gains and inheritance taxes. Supports free market reform of the financial industry and pledges to repeal a majority of its governing laws and regulations. Favors breaking up Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, moving their successors into the private sector. Supports replacing the Environmental Protection Agency and reforming the Food and Drug Administration to promote further collaboration between government and industry.
- **Health Care:** Supports repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. As an alternative, favors greater competition in the healthcare market by permitting insurance companies to compete across state lines. Favors reinforcing laws that prohibit insurers from cancelling the sick's coverage or increasing their costs. Supports establishing high risk insurance pools to cover the uninsured sick. Intends to eradicate Medicare fraud and give federal Medicaid funds to states in the form of block grants. Aims to make health insurance premiums tax-deductible for individuals. Plans to reform malpractice litigation and offers to expand Health Savings Accounts.
- **National Security:** Supports the U.S. military being used judiciously and with clear, obtainable objectives understood by Congress. Considers securing the nation's borders as one of his future Administration's top priorities.
- **Commander in Chief:** Intends to clarify that, "We are engaged in a long war against radical Islamism ... Only a grand strategy for marginalizing, isolating, and defeating radical Islamists across the world will lead to victory." Supports the quick withdrawal of troops from both Iraq and Afghanistan, pending approval from military commanders. Favors the use of every possible means short of war to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.
- **Foreign Policy:** Strongly criticizes the current Administration's foreign policies for lacking a comprehensive vision. Intends to develop an energy plan that "reduce[es] the world's dependence on oil from dangerous and unstable countries, especially in the Middle East." Favors moving the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and considers Palestinians "an invented" people.
- **Immigration:** Signed a pledge to build a double sided fence along the entire southern border of the United States. Favors making English the official language of the U.S. Aims to use local citizen boards to determine which illegal immigrants should be allowed to stay in the country and which should be deported.
- **Civil Rights:** Supports reinstating waterboarding as a tool for gathering information from detainees. Supports the current Administration's secretive policy of targeted assassinations of U.S. citizens abroad who are suspected of terrorism. Strongly criticizes the current Administration's repeal of the Pentagon's "Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell" policy. Previously supported a requirement for American Muslims to take a loyalty test before serving in his Administration, would now require loyalty tests for everyone.



### **Jon Huntsman, Jr.**

Former Governor of Utah and former U.S. Ambassador to China

Party: Republican

Age: 51

Residence: Kalorama, Washington, D.C.

Occupation: Business executive

Religion: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Website: <http://www.jon2012.com/>

- **Economy:** Supports simplifying the personal income tax code and lowering overall tax rates. Favors eliminating the alternative minimum and capital gains tax. Intends to reduce the corporate tax rate from 35 to 25 percent. Aims to seek congressional passage of existing free trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama and to pursue new agreements with Japan, India, Taiwan, and Brazil.
- **Health Care:** Supports repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. As an alternative, favors measures that “harness the free market and give consumers more control over their health care.” Supports permitting insurance companies to compete across state lines. Favors developing an online exchange that enables individuals to compare health insurance plans sold by participating insurers.
- **National Security:** Supports transforming how the Department of Homeland Security functions, asserting that we need a “department that really works, that doesn't give people a sense when they walk through they're going to get shaken down... that doesn't make us all feel like there's a fortress security mentality that is not American.” Often states that national security cannot be attained until the nation rebuilds its workforce and economy.
- **Commander in Chief:** Supports reevaluating the capabilities that are required to secure American interest and support a "right-sized" military. Looks to place a greater emphasis on intelligence gathering activities and standing up more responsive Special Forces units, capable of rapid deployment. Supports a withdrawal of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, leaving Special Forces and intelligence teams in place to ensure that Afghanistan will not be a base for terrorism. Plans to use every possible means, including military intervention, to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.
- **Foreign Policy:** Supports a foreign policy that remains rooted in maintaining traditional alliances. Aims to strength America’s strategic relationship with India. Favors working closely with China to achieve common goals while robustly engaging in areas where we have differences such as human rights. Favors tying future aid for Pakistan to its efforts combating terrorism, curbing proliferation, and contributing to stabilize Afghanistan.
- **Immigration:** Supports securing the U.S.-Mexico border and proposes a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants that includes paying a fine and learning English. As Governor of Utah, supported in-state tuition for illegal immigrant students seeking to attend college and allowing driver cards for illegal immigrants in need of a driver's licenses.
- **Civil Rights:** Opposes reinstating waterboarding as a tool to gather information from enemy combatants. Backs the Defense of Marriage Act but supports civil unions and other rights for same-sex couples. As Governor of Utah, signed several bills restricting abortion.



## **Rick Perry**

Governor of Texas

Party: Republican

Age: 61

Residence: West Austin, Texas

Occupation: Military officer & farmer

Religion: Christian Evangelical

Website: <http://www.rickperry.org/>

- **Economy:** Supports lowering taxes and proposes an optional flat income tax of 20 percent. Favors a \$12,000 standard exemption for individuals with dependents. Seeks to eliminate the inheritance and capital gains taxes, and taxes on social security. Aims to phase out tax exemptions for individuals with annual incomes above \$500,000. Seeks to balance the federal budget by capping federal spending at 20 percent of GDP. Favors adding a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. Plans to preserve social security benefits for current and near term beneficiaries and to allow younger workers to invest in personal retirement accounts.
- **Health Care:** Supports repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. As an alternative, favors "market-based strategies of transparency, choice and competition," to lower costs and reform of malpractice litigation. Intends to provide states with flexibility and incentives to foster competition in the health insurance market. Seeks to develop solutions for patients with pre-existing conditions and to lower costs for small businesses.
- **National Security:** Believes that national security will not exist until the U.S-Mexico border is secure. Intends to direct troops on the border and place aviation assets in the air - possibly relying on the use of aerial drones.
- **Commander in Chief:** Critical of the current Administration's timeline to withdraw troops from Iraq and Afghanistan and favors retaining troops in both countries, pending approval from military commanders. Supported military involvement in Libya. Pledges to use every possible means, including military intervention, to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.
- **Foreign Policy:** Seeks to strike a balance between the arguments that "America shouldn't be in the business of adventurism," and that we as a nation must, "renew our commitment to taking the fight to the enemy wherever they are, before they strike at home." Also critical of the Administration's handling of Arab Spring; would have supported former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Favors moving the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- **Immigration:** Intends to direct increased manpower, technology and limited fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border. Supports postponing immigration reform until the border has been secured. As Governor of Texas, passed the Texas DREAM Act, granting the children of illegal immigrants in-state college tuition if they fulfilled specific educational and residential requirements.
- **Civil Rights:** Supports reinstating waterboarding as a tool in gathering information from detainees. Favors indefinite detention of suspected terrorists without charges at the Guantanamo Bay prison. Signed into law the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act, a Texas state ban on racial profiling that also ensures legal representation of poor defendants.



## **Rick Santorum**

Former U.S. Senator, Pennsylvania

Party: Republican

Age: 53

Residence: Penn Hills, Pennsylvania

Occupation: Attorney

Religion: Roman Catholic

Website: <http://www.ricksantorum.com/>

- **Economy:** Supports simplifying the current tax code and permanently extending current income and capital gains tax rates. Favors eliminating the inheritance tax. Aims to cut the corporate income tax rate from 35 to 17 percent and to eliminate the tax for U.S. manufacturers. Seeks to balance the federal budget by capping federal spending at 18 percent of the GDP and supports a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. Plans to create jobs and lower energy costs by expanding oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico and onshore, including in the Alaskan Natural Wildlife Reserve.
- **Health Care:** Supports repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. As an alternative, favors a “rational health care system” that is “consistent with the philosophy of America, which is free markets, build it from the bottom up.” Emphasizes that purchasing health care insurance is an individual responsibility.
- **National Security:** Considers China, Iran and Venezuela as part of a "gathering storm" of national security threats. Supports increased funding for a comprehensive missile defense system and reevaluating prior missile treaties. States that “nothing is more helpful toward peace, as Ronald Reagan showed, as overwhelming strength and defense.”
- **Commander in Chief:** Supports the continued presence of troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, pending approval from military commanders. Believes anti-Israel elements are working to take advantage of the Arab Spring. Plans to work with Israel to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon and would consider targeted airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities.
- **Foreign Policy:** Supports the use of foreign aid; however, intends to eliminate funding for the United Nations. A firm believer in American exceptionalism; seeks to internationally position the U.S. as an instrument that promotes democracy. Critical of the current Administration for “turning [its] back on Israel,” and “complaining about settlements in Jerusalem, the capital of the country.”
- **Immigration:** Critical of granting amnesty or providing government services to illegal migrants. Voted in favor of several measures that mandated the building of additional fences along the U.S.-Mexico border. Supports making English the national language.
- **Civil Rights:** Supports reinstating waterboarding as a tool in gathering information from detainees. Supports indefinite detentions of suspected terrorists without charges at the Guantanamo Bay prison. Critical of the current Administration’s repeal of Pentagon’s “Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell” policy. Endorses racial and religious profiling, specifically of American Muslims and young men, in order to enhance security at airports.

**Note:** Additional biographies for Green Party and Libertarian Party presidential nominees will be provided after each party holds its nomination convention