



The Council on American-Islamic Relations

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AMERICAN MUSLIM VOTERS AND THE 2016 ELECTION **A Demographic Profile and Survey of Attitudes**

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Conducted by Triton Polling & Research
www.tritonpolling.com

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BACKGROUND

As American Muslim participation in the political process has experienced steady growth in the past several decades, so has interest in better understanding Muslims as voters. During the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, American Muslim groups mobilized to deliver presidential endorsements that received national attention. In 2006, CAIR issued its first-ever random sample poll of likely Muslim voters. Prior to the increasingly heated 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, CAIR commissioned polls to track the views of American Muslim voters. CAIR also commissioned a national exit poll survey of Muslim voters following the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections.

In the 2014 Midterm Election, CAIR released a survey of the six most populous states of American Muslim voters, which included California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Texas and Virginia. CAIR also released a similar six state poll for the March 2016 “Super Tuesday” primary that explored Muslim views of Democratic and Republican Party presidential nominees.

This report presents a detailed picture of American Muslim voter demographics and explores their views on a multitude of communal concerns and public policy issues several weeks before the 2016 presidential election. The survey results are drawn from a random sample telephone survey of 804 American Muslim registered voters.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

- 86% of registered Muslim voters intend to vote in this year’s presidential election.
- 12% of Muslim voters are still undecided about who to vote for in this presidential election.
- 72% of Muslim voters said they will vote to elect Hillary Clinton, while 4% said they will vote for Donald Trump, 3% will vote for Jill Stein, and 2% will vote for Gary Johnson.
- 44% of Muslim voters consider themselves moderate, while 25% consider themselves liberal, and 11% consider themselves conservative.
- The percentage of those who said they are closer to the Democratic Party remained constant, from 66% in a similar poll taken in 2012, to 67% today, after having increased from 49% in a similar poll taken in 2008.
- Affiliation with the Republican Party remained relatively steady, 6% today, 9% in 2012 and 8% in 2008.
- The number of respondents that said the Democratic Party was friendly toward Muslims grew from 49% in 2012 to 61% today, while those that said the Republican Party was friendly toward Muslims dropped from 12% in 2012 to 7% today.
- 62% of respondents said that the Republican Party was unfriendly toward Muslims (compared to 51% in 2012), while 2% said that the Democratic Party was unfriendly (compared to 6% in 2012).
- The top six important issues to American Muslim voters are civil rights, education, jobs and the economy, protecting students from bullying and harassment, a proposed ban on Muslims traveling to the U.S., and terrorism and national security.

- 80% of respondents said defeating ISIS was very important and another 13% said it was somewhat important as an issue in influencing which candidate they would vote for.
- Nearly half, 47%, said that the U.S. did not provide enough support in the past year to combat and defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria.
- 91% of respondents believe that Donald Trump's proposed temporary ban on Muslim travelers entering the U.S. is the wrong decision and only 3%, within the margin of error, believe that it is the right decision.
- 85% of respondents believe that Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. has increased in the past year. Moreover, 30% of respondents say they have experienced discrimination or profiling in the past year.
- 82% support Syrian refugees resettling in the U.S.
- More than half, 62%, of those polled attend a mosque at least once a month.
- 66% of respondents say they have a four-year or graduate degree.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 804 respondents was drawn through a randomization procedure from a larger database of almost 450,000 Muslim voters with landline phone numbers, out of a larger database of 1,578,000 American Muslims. The 804 respondents themselves were a subset of this larger database characterized by having two or more traditionally Muslim names.

The American Muslim voter database was developed by matching state records of registered voters with an extensive list of some 45,000 traditionally Muslim first and last names. In compiling this list, common names prevalent among Muslims across the world's Muslim majority ethnic groups were identified and verified by well-informed members of these ethnic groups.

Although it is the largest such list compiled to date, this pool of Muslim voters does not include Muslims with uncommon names, nor those who do not have traditionally Muslim names. Also excluded are Muslims with names (such as Sarah or Adam) that are also common in other communities.

CAIR commissioned an independent polling company, Triton Polling & Research of Henderson, Nevada, which conducted the poll via person to person telephone interviews.

Calls were conducted after the first presidential debate between September 27 and October 5. Respondents included 430 men and 374 women from across the nation. The poll has a margin of error is +/- 3.5%, with a 95% confidence level.

The interview explored the following topics:

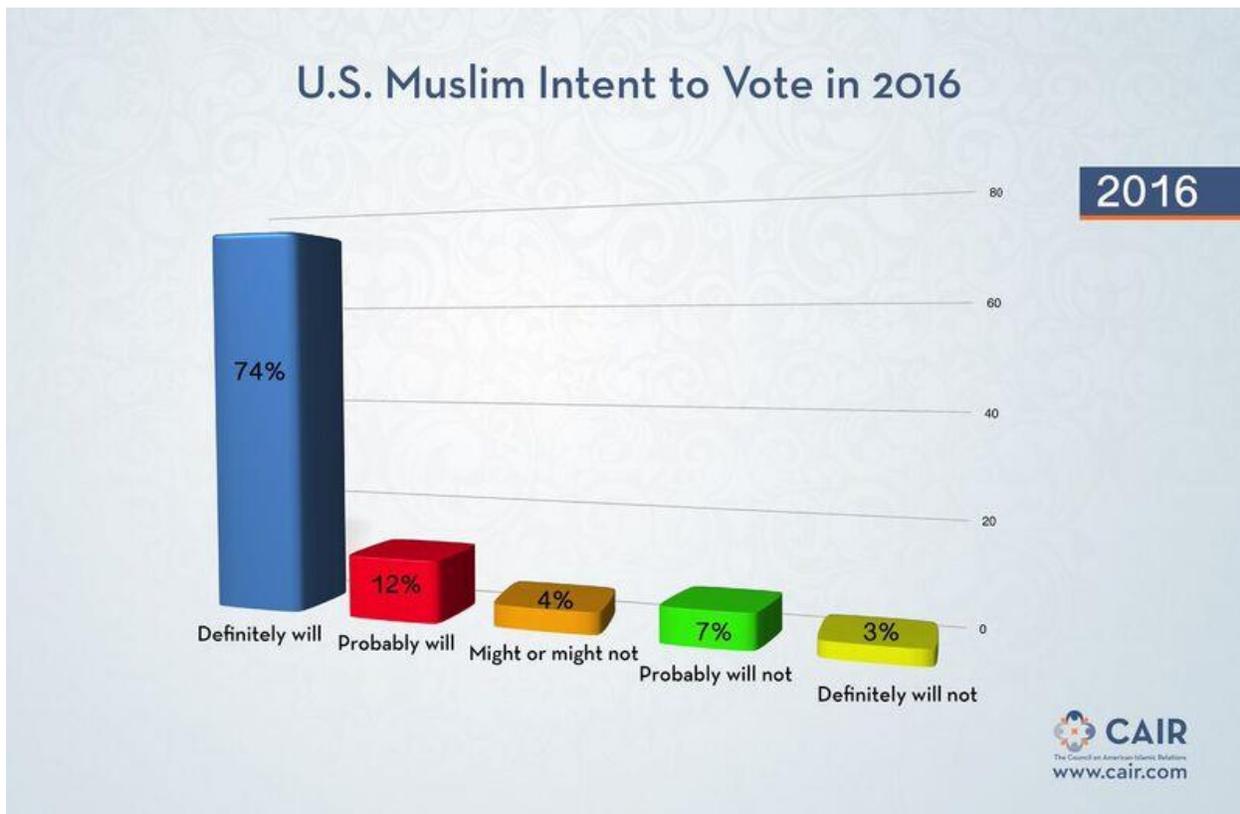
1. Basic demographic indicators, including age, gender, education, income, and occupation.
2. Social and religious life, including marital status, religious affiliation, and religiosity
3. Political behavior and voting intentions.
4. Views on public issues.

CIVIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

Intent to Vote in the 2016 General Election

How likely is it that you will vote in the 2016 Presidential Election?

(Based on total respondents)



When asked about their intentions to vote in the 2016 general election, 86% of Muslim voters said that they plan to vote, with 74% saying that they definitely will and another 12% saying that they probably will. Only 4% responded that they might or might not, 7% probably will not, and 3% definitely will not vote.

Importance of Issues in Candidate Selection

How important are each of the following issues in terms of their influence on which candidate you will vote for?

(Based on respondents likely to vote)

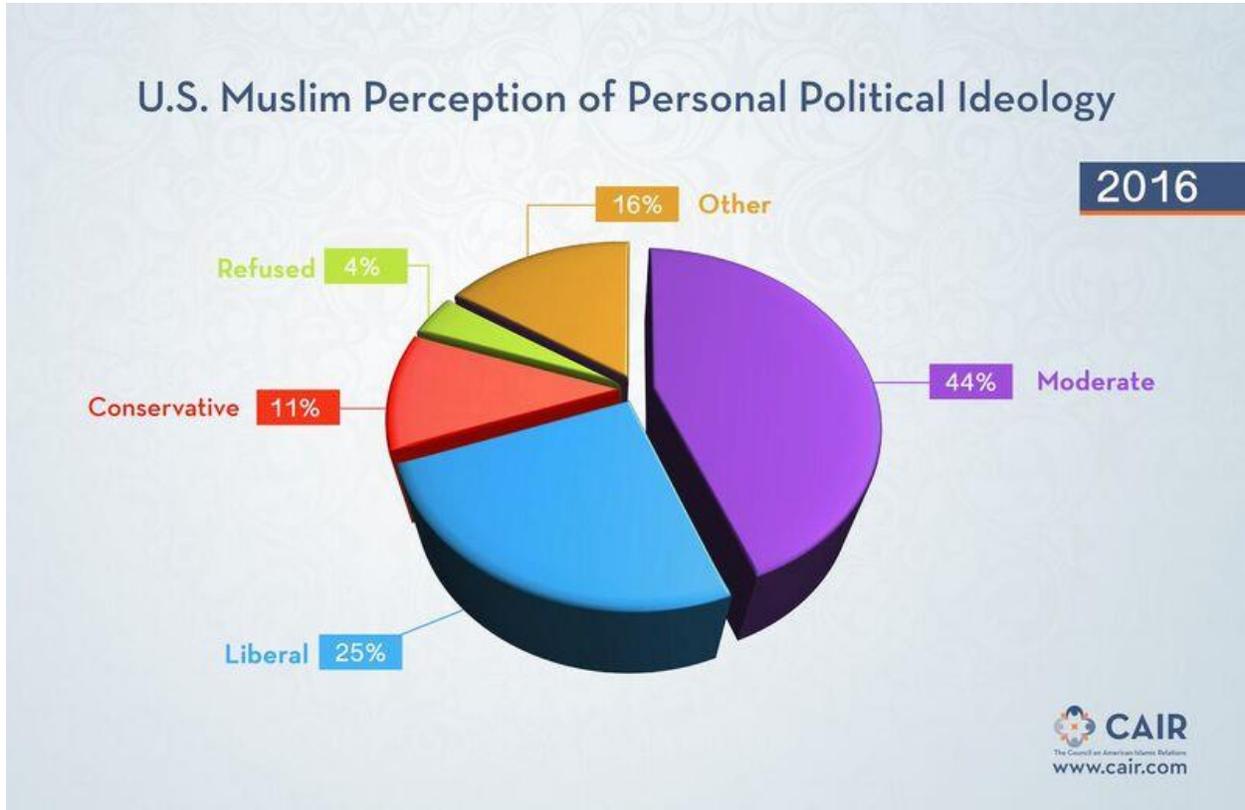
Importance of Issues in Candidate Selection to U.S. Muslims					
Issue	Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant	Don't know
Civil rights	89%	9%	0%	1%	1%
Education	88%	10%	1%	0%	0%
Jobs and the economy	85%	13%	1%	0%	0%
Protecting students from bullying & harassment	85%	9%	3%	1%	2%
Proposed Ban on Muslims from traveling to the United States	84%	7%	1%	4%	3%
Terrorism and national security	84%	12%	3%	0%	1%
Defeating ISIS	80%	13%	3%	3%	2%
Health care policy	79%	17%	2%	1%	1%
Islamophobia	77%	9%	3%	8%	3%
Medicare and social security	75%	20%	3%	1%	1%
International relations	74%	21%	3%	1%	1%
The environment	70%	24%	5%	1%	1%
The minimum wage	69%	21%	4%	2%	4%
The civil war in Syria	66%	23%	5%	3%	3%
Social welfare programs	65%	25%	4%	2%	4%
Israel – Palestine conflict	63%	25%	5%	2%	4%
Immigration reform	61%	28%	6%	2%	3%
Tax policy	59%	32%	6%	0%	2%
Abortion	40%	28%	13%	12%	7%

Respondents were asked how important each of the above mentioned issues were in terms of their influence on which candidate they will vote for. Overall, Muslim voters prioritized domestic issues over international issues. The top five policy issues were: civil rights, education, jobs and the economy, protecting students from bullying and harassment, proposed bans on Muslims from traveling to the U.S., and terrorism and national security.

Perception of Personal Political Ideology

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a conservative, liberal, moderate, or another classification?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)

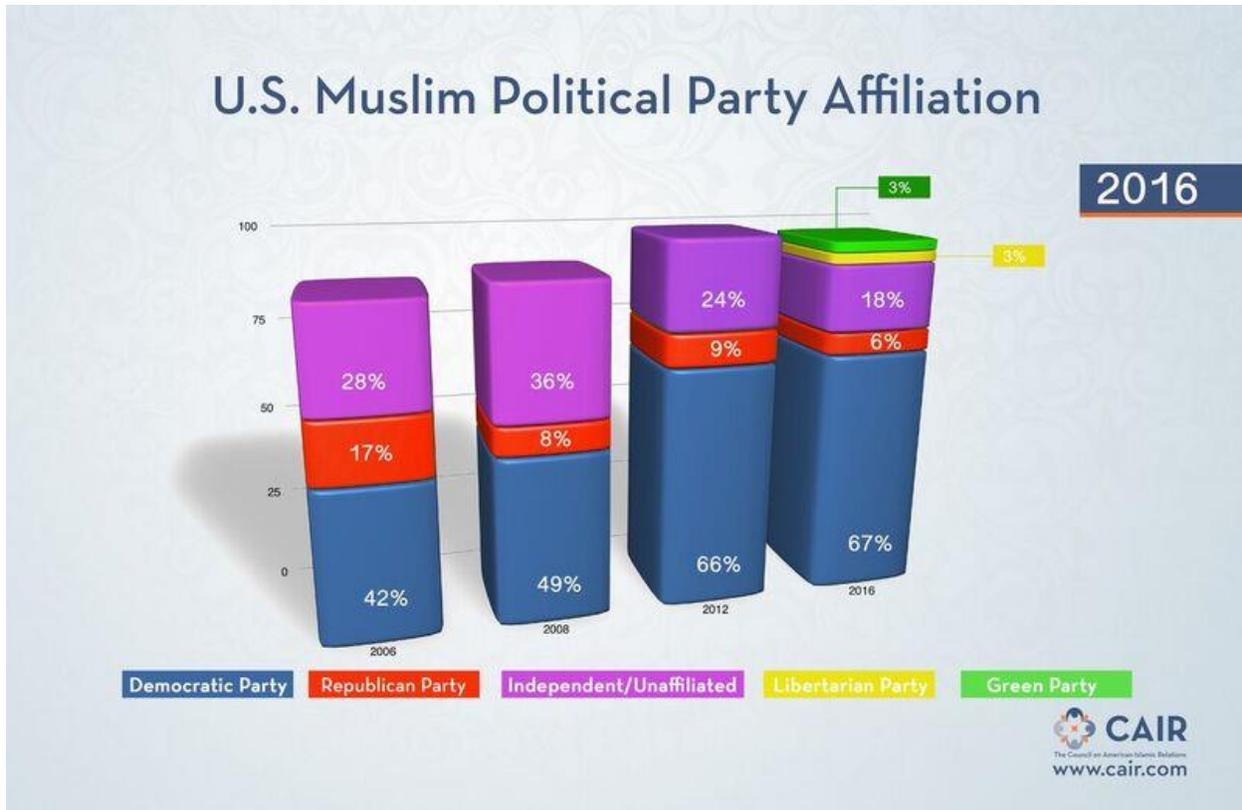


This poll indicates that the majority of Muslim voters, regardless of political party affiliation, consider their personal political ideology to be moderate (44%), followed by liberal (25%), conservative (11%), and then other (16%).

Political Party Affiliation

Do you consider yourself closer to the Republican Party, Democratic Party, Green Party, and Libertarian Party?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)



Note: 2006 data sourced from previous mid-term election survey sample commissioned by CAIR in 2006.

Note: 2008 data sourced from previous general election survey sample commissioned by CAIR in January, 2008.

Note: 2012 data sourced from previous general election survey sample commissioned by CAIR in October, 2012.

Note: 2016 data sourced from current survey sample.

This poll suggests that the past trend of Muslim voters increasingly aligning with the Democratic Party has stabilized. Sixty-seven percent, said they consider themselves members of the Democratic Party (similar to 66% in 2012 after increasing from and 49% in 2008).

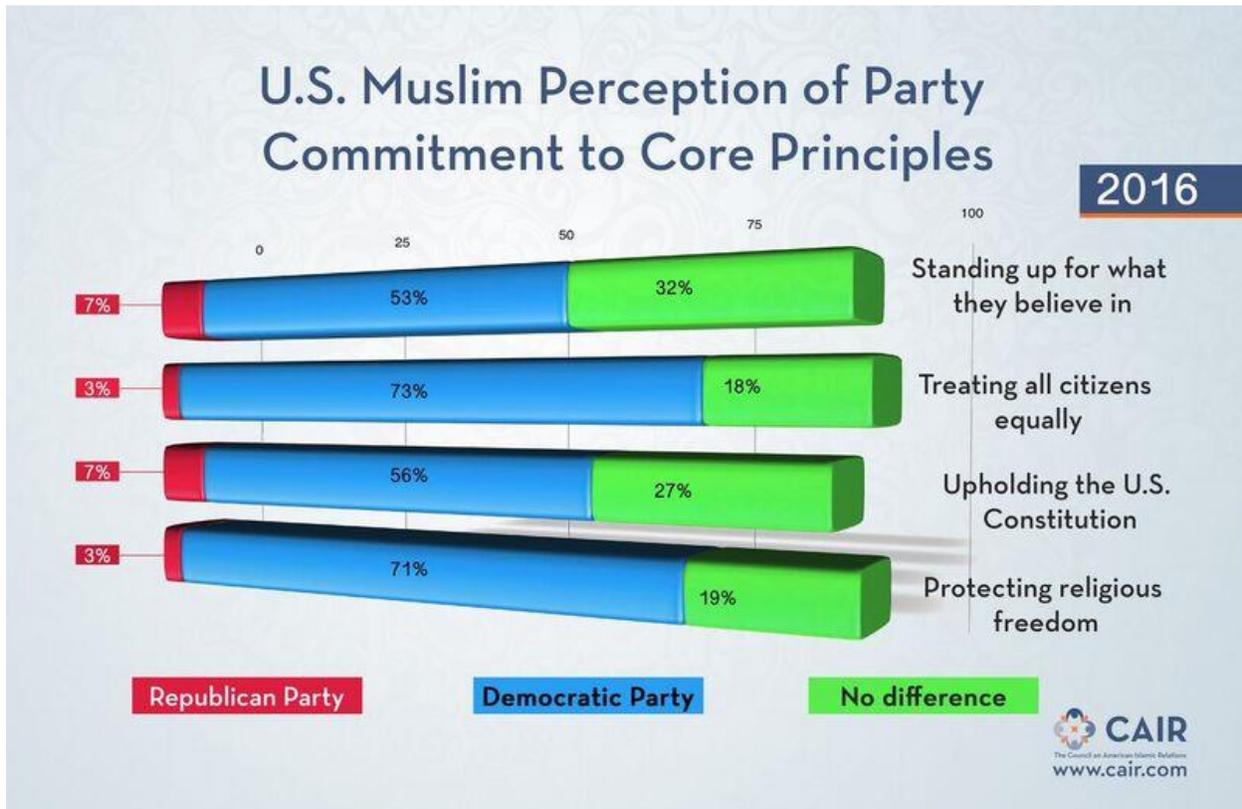
Those who reported being Republican, 6% today, remained nearly the same from 9% in 2008. Such consistency signals the end of a trend in the decline of Muslim voters who reported being Republican (down from 17% in 2006).

Three percent, of Muslims respectively align themselves with the Green Party and Libertarian Party. Eighteen percent, of respondents were not willing to say that they “felt closer to” any of the parties. However, the overall proportion of unaffiliated Muslims decreased, from 24% in 2012 and 36% in 2008.

Perception of Party Commitment to Core Principles

Thinking about the two major political parties in this country, which [party] would you say is most concerned with ____, the Republican or the Democratic Parties? Categories include: protecting religious freedom; upholding the U.S. Constitution; treating all citizens equally; and, standing up for what they believe in.

(Based on respondents likely to vote)



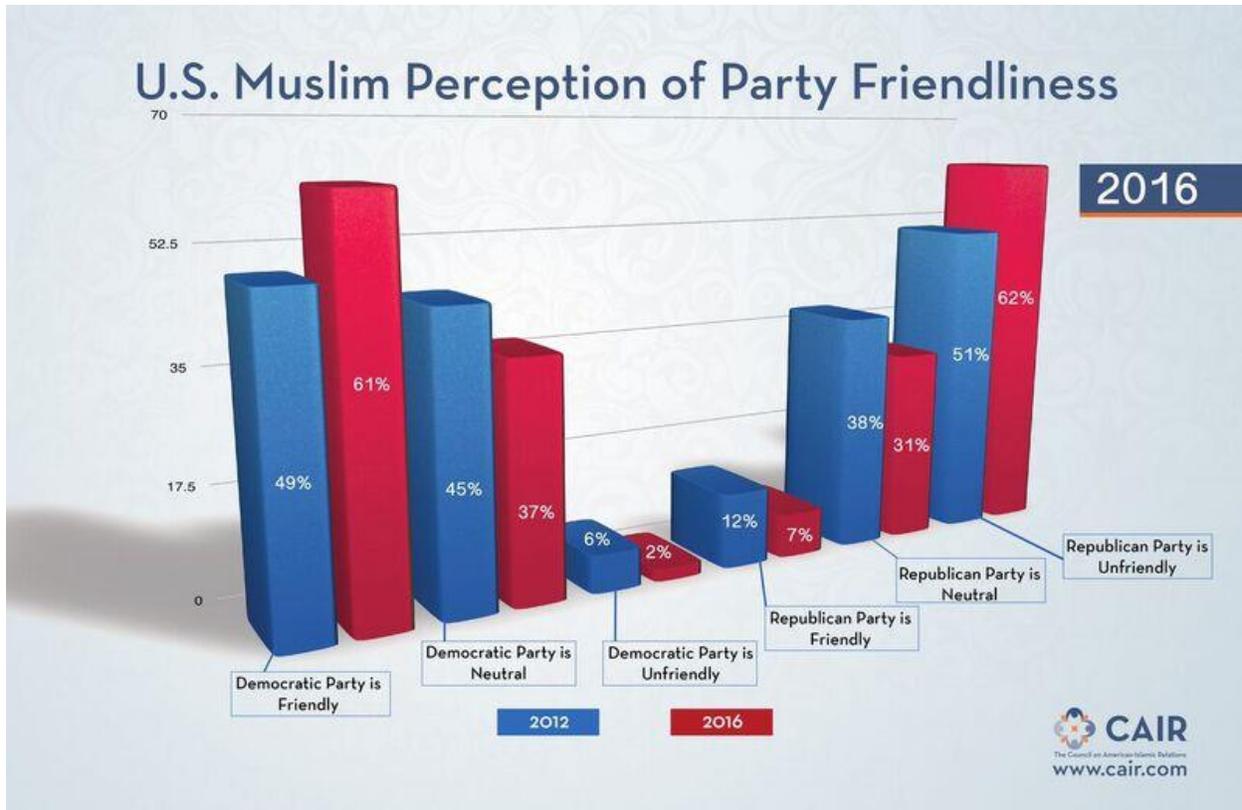
With respect to perception of political party commitment to core principles:

- 56% of respondents believe that the Democratic Party is more likely to uphold the U.S. Constitution (up from 50% in 2012) versus the 7% of respondents who favored the Republican Party (down from 12% in 2012).
- 71% percent of respondents feel that the Democratic Party is more concerned with protecting religious freedom (up from 61% in 2012) versus the 3% of respondents who favored the Republican Party (down from 9% in 2012).
- 73% percent of respondents said that the Democratic Party is more likely to treat all people equally (up from 68% in 2012) versus the 3% of respondents who favored the Republican Party (down from 6% in 2012).
- 53% of respondents said that the Democratic Party stands up for what they believe in (up versus 48% in 2012) versus the 7% of respondents who favored the Republican Party (down from 11% in 2012).
- Overall, no more than 7% of Muslim voters evaluated the Republican Party more favorable on any of these issues.

Respondent Perception of Party Friendliness to Muslims

Do you feel that the Democratic Party / Republican Party is generally friendly toward Muslims, neutral toward Muslims, or unfriendly toward Muslims?

(Based on respondents likely to vote)

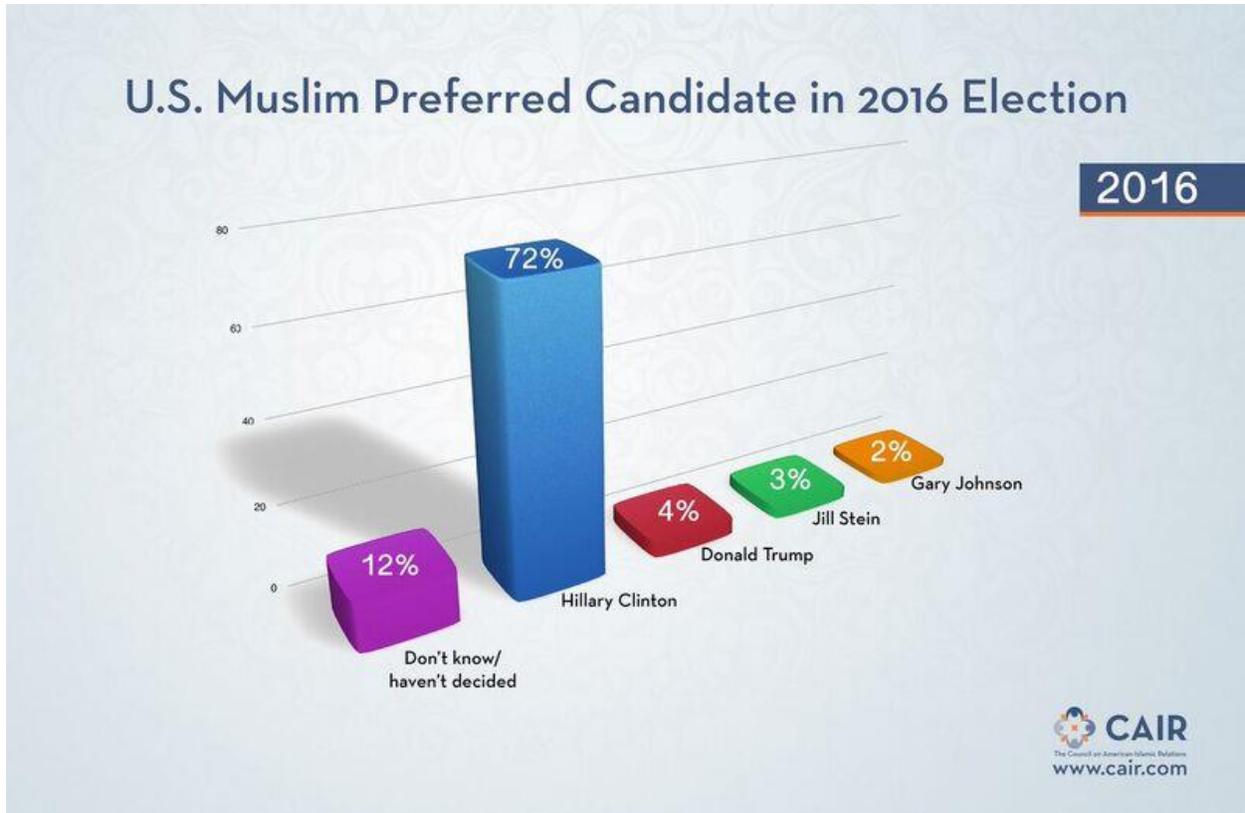


Each of the parties was evaluated by respondents on “friendliness to Muslims.” Sixty-one percent, of respondents said that the Democratic Party was friendly towards Muslims, while 7% said that the Republican Party was friendly. By contrast, 62% of respondents said that the Republican Party was unfriendly towards Muslims, while 2% percent said that the Democratic Party was unfriendly. In comparison to 2012, Muslims over the past four years have developed more favorable perceptions of the Democratic Party and less favorable perceptions of the Republican Party.

Preferred Presidential Candidate in 2016 Election

Who do you expect to vote for in the 2016 Presidential Election?

(Based on respondents likely to vote)



In a choice between presidential candidates from all major political parties (Democratic Party, Republican Party, Libertarian Party, and Green Party), those who said they planned to vote in the presidential election were asked to name their preferred candidate.

Twelve percent, of Muslim voters remain undecided in comparison to the 25% of surveyed respondents in 2012 (both surveys respectively being conducted in October 2012 and 2016). An additional 7% refused to answer the question.

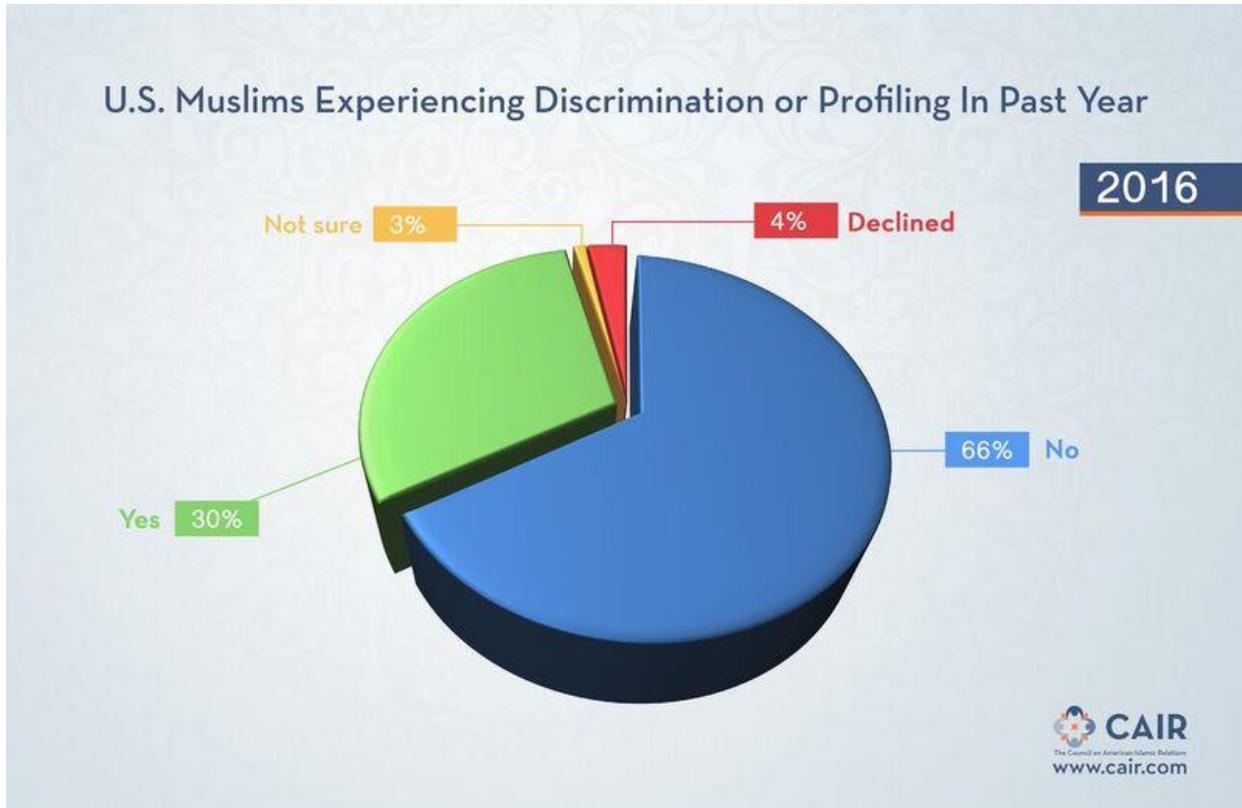
A majority of Muslim voters, 72%, plan to vote for the Democratic Party candidate, Hillary Clinton (up from the 68% who planned to cast their ballots for President Obama in 2012).

Only 4% of Muslim voters plan to vote for the Republican Party candidate Donald Trump (down from the 7% who planned to cast their ballots for Mitt Romney in 2012).

Only 3% of Muslim voters plan to support Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein and 2% plan to support Libertarian Party presidential candidate Gary Johnson.

Respondent Experiencing Discrimination or Profiling in Past Year

In the past year, have you ever felt discriminated against, or do you feel that you have been profiled, anywhere in the United States because of your religious or ethnic background?



Thirty percent, of respondents say they have experienced discrimination or profiling in the United States because of their religious or ethnic background in the past year. Conversely, 60% of respondents did not feel as though they have been discriminated against or profiled in the past year. CAIR expresses serious concern that nearly one-third of surveyed Muslim voters, a sample of the nation's 6 to 8 million American Muslim community, reports being discriminated against or profiled in the past year.

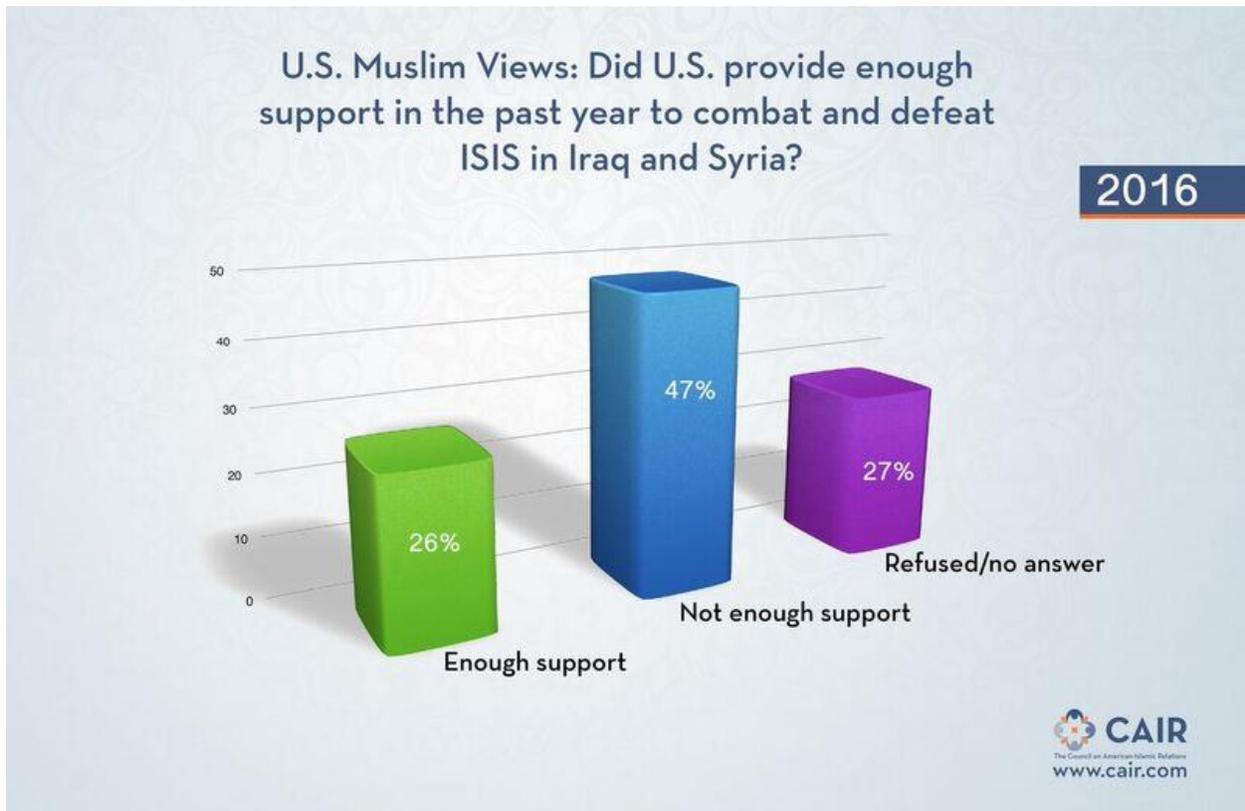
Note: CAIR's 2012 election survey included a similar question asking respondents, "Since 9/11, have you ever felt discriminated against, or do you feel that you have been profiled, anywhere in the United States because of your religious or ethnic background?" However, CAIR's 2016 election survey only asks respondents if they have faced discrimination or profiling in the past year. The decision to change this survey question is based on CAIR's need to provide relevant and timely information that can better inform researchers on the unprecedented spike in anti-Muslim violence that has taken place in the past year. As such, the responses to this year's survey question are not directly comparable to CAIR's 2012 survey question.

U.S. MUSLIM VIEWS & OPINIONS

Did U.S. provide enough support in the past year to combat and defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria?

Do you think that the U.S. provided enough support or not enough support in the past year to combat and defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)



Almost half of respondents, 47%, believe that the U.S. did not provide enough support in the past year to combat and defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Conversely, 26% believe that the U.S. did provide enough support and 27% refused to answer or provided no answer.

Is Donald Trump's proposed temporary ban on Muslim travelers entering the U.S. the right decision?

Do you think that Donald Trump's proposed temporary ban on Muslim travelers entering the U.S. is the right decision or the wrong decision?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)

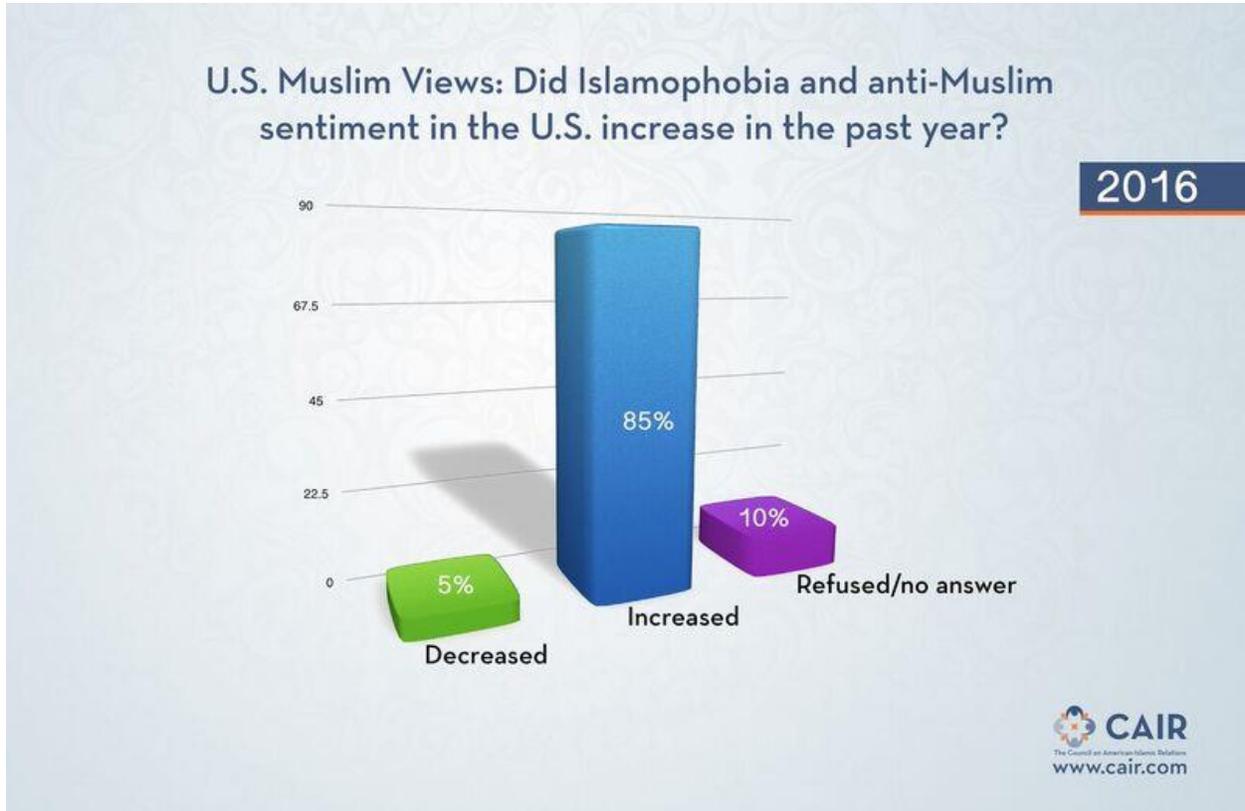


The majority of respondents, 91%, believe that Donald Trump's proposed temporary ban on Muslim travelers entering the U.S. is the wrong decision. Conversely, within the margin of error, only 3% believe that the travel ban is the right decision and 6% refused to answer or provided no answer.

Did Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. increase in the past year?

Do you think Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. has increased or decreased in the past year?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)

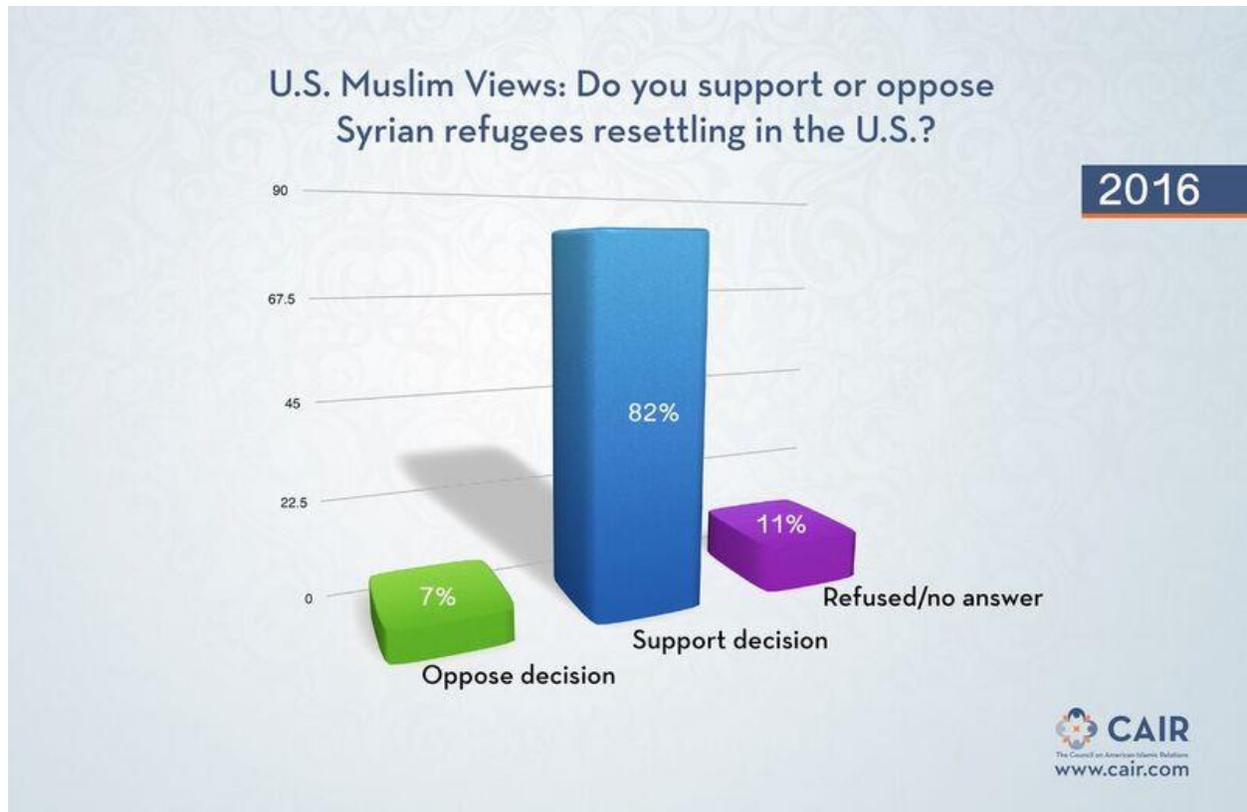


The majority of respondents, 85%, believe that Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. has increase in the past year. Conversely, only 5% believe that such sentiment has decreased and 10% refused to answer or provided no answer.

Support for Syrian refugees resettling in the U.S.

Do you support or oppose Syrian refugees resettling in the U.S.?

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)



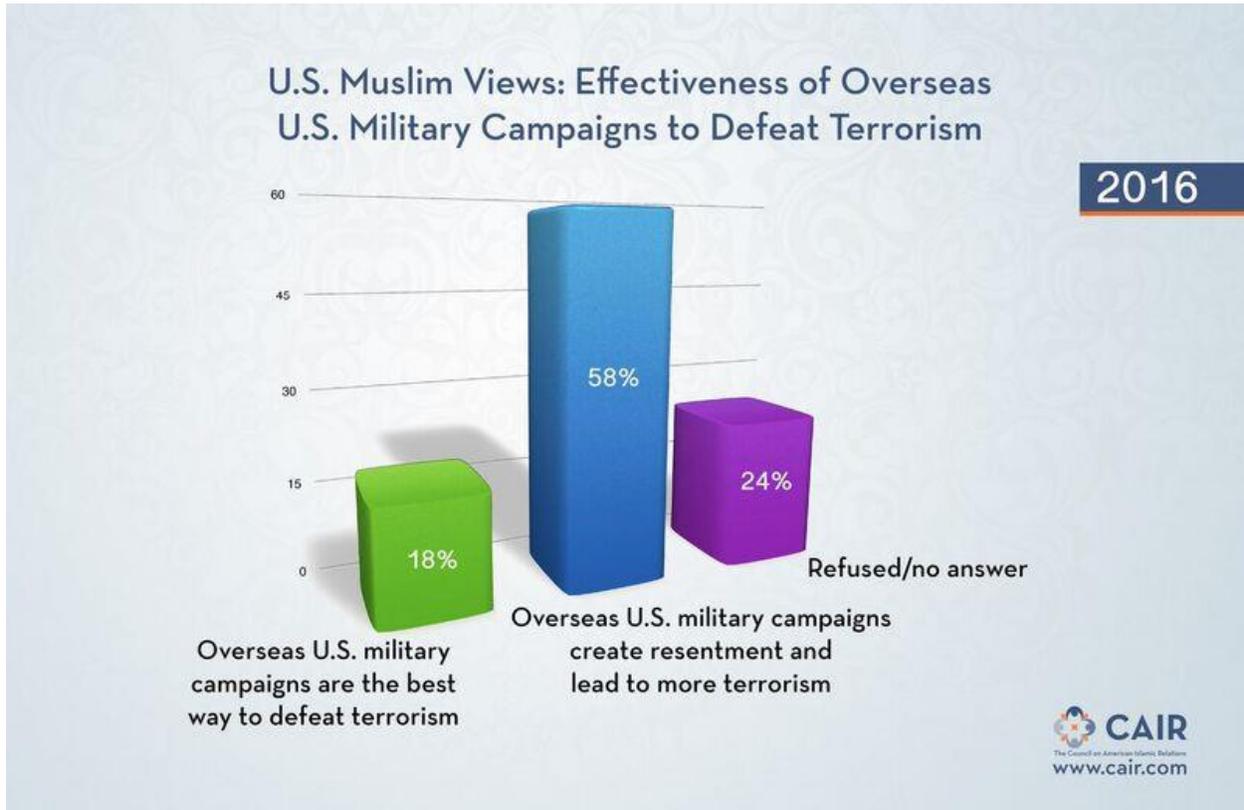
The majority of respondents, 82%, support Syrian refugees resettling in the U.S. Conversely, only 7% oppose resettlement and 11% refused to answer or provided no answer.

Effectiveness of Overseas U.S. Military Campaigns to Defeat Terrorism

Which of the two following statements do you agree with more:

Overseas U.S. military campaigns are the best way to defeat terrorism, or, overseas U.S. military campaigns create resentment and lead to more terrorism.

(Based on respondents likely to vote / Respondents who answered)



The majority of respondents, 58%, believe that overseas U.S. military campaigns aim at “defeat[ing] terrorism” create resentment and lead to more terrorism. Conversely, only 18%, believe such military campaigns are effective and 24% refused to answer or provided no answer.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PROFILE

Mosque Attendance for Friday Prayer

On average, how often do you attend the mosque for Friday Prayer?

Mosque Attendance for Friday Prayer	
Less than once a week	2%
About once a week	45%
Once or twice a month	17%
A few times a year	12%
Seldom	7%
Never	15%
Refused	2%

Involvement in Mosque's Non Prayer Activities

Not including prayer, how involved are you in activities at the mosque?

Involvement in Mosque's Non Prayer Activities	
Very involved	13%
Somewhat involved	28%
Not very involved	28%
Not at all involved	29%
Refused	2%

Religious Denomination

Do you consider yourself to be . . .

Religious Denomination	
Sunni	51%
Shia	7%
Or, just a Muslim	33%
Other	5%
Refused	4%

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender

What is your gender?

Gender	
Male	53%
Female	47%

Age

Which of the following categories includes your age?

Age Distribution	
Under 18	1%
18-24	7%
25-29	7%
30-34	7%
35-39	7%
40-54	29%
55-69	29%
70 or older	11%
Refused	1%

Educational Attainment

What is the highest level of education that you had the opportunity to complete?

Educational Level	
Some high school or less	3%
Graduated high school	11%
Some college	8%
Graduated college (2 year degree)	11%
Graduated college (4 year degree)	30%
Advanced degree (Masters or Doctorate)	36%
Refused	1%

Annual Household Income

Which of the following categories includes your total annual household income before taxes?

Annual Household Income	
Less than \$15,000	3%
\$15,000 to less than \$25,000	5%
\$25,000 to less than \$35,000	6%
\$35,000 to less than \$50,000	11%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	13%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	11%
Or, more than \$100,000	28%
Refused	23%

Marital Status

What is your marital status?

Marital Status	
Single	17%
Married	78%
Divorced, widowed, or separated	4%
Refused	2%

Respondent Employment Status

Are you currently employed?

Respondent Employment Status	
Employed	58%
Not Employed	42%
Refused	1%

Occupational Profile

Which of the following categories best describes your occupation?

(Based on those who are employed)

Occupational Profile	
Physician or Dentist	10%
Lawyer	1%
Engineer	9%
Teacher or Professor	11%
Salesperson	7%
Construction or Manufacturing worker	1%
Business Owner	14%
Professional or Technical	12%
Managerial	5%
Secretarial or Administrative	4%
Transportation	2%
Other	20%
Refused	3%

PLACE OF BIRTH AND ETHNICITY

Country of Birth

Were you born overseas?

Country of Birth	
U.S.	22%
Other	78%

Years of U.S. Residency

For how long have you been living in the United States?

(Based to those born overseas)

Years of U.S. Residency (Foreign-Born Respondents)	
Less than 10 years	4%
10-19 years	18%
20 years or longer	78%
Refused	0%

Ancestry by Region

What geographic region did your ancestors come from?

Ancestry by Region	
South Asian (including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh)	57%
The Arab World	18%
Southeast Asian (including Malaysia & Singapore)	9%
Turkey	0.4%
Iran	4%
Africa	5%
The Caribbean	1%
Central or South America	1%
Europe	1%
Identified as being of mixed ancestry	1%
Somewhere else	0.3%
Refused	2%

Respondent's Time Zone

Determined by area code

Time zone	
Eastern	58%
Central	21%
Mountain / Pacific	22%