

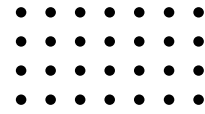


UNDERSTANDING ARAB VOTERS IN CALIFORNIA

Key Issues, Political Attitudes,
and Representation in 2025



Executive Summary



The Arab American Civic Council conducted a comprehensive survey of Arab voters in California to better understand their perspectives, priorities, and experiences related to key political issues and leadership representation. Conducted between September 20 and September 28, 2025, the survey gathered responses from 880 residents who identify as Arab, Middle Eastern, or North African, providing valuable insights into the community's views on topics such as the economy, immigration, climate change, foreign policy, and social issues. This report summarizes the survey findings, highlighting the community's concerns, levels of approval or disapproval toward political figures, and perceptions of their representation in California's political landscape.



Methodology

This survey was fielded from September 20, 2025, to September 28, 2025. Respondents were recruited via text and phone. **The survey includes 880 respondents who live in California and identify as Arab, Middle Eastern, or North African.** The margin of error for the sample is 3.3%.

This survey was conducted by Dr. Tom K. Wong on behalf of the Arab American Civic Council, with funding provided by the Rise Together Fund and the California Endowment.



880

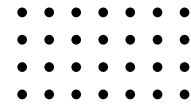
ARAB AMERICAN AND
MENA VOTERS IN
CALIFORNIA

Demographic Profile

The survey was completed by a diverse and robust group of individuals. The gender distribution of respondents was balanced, with 52.8% male, 44.4% female, and 2.8% non-binary/third gender. The average age was 43.4 years. Education was high, with 72.2% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The income profile was mixed, with 63.9% reporting an annual household income under \$150,000 and 36.1% exceeding \$150,000.

The political ideology was balanced, with 41.7% reporting as Moderate, 33.4% as Liberal/Very Liberal, and 25.0% as Conservative/Very Conservative.

Engaged but Disillusioned



Arab American voters are not disengaged from democracy—they are disengaged from political institutions that fail to represent them. According to this report, Arab Americans are among the most politically-engaged voters in California, yet they navigate a political system that neither reflects their priorities nor earns their trust. Disillusionment here reflects distrust, not apathy.

voted in 2024



95.4%

plan to vote in 2026



91.7%

87.7%



say they are
not adequately represented

77.3%



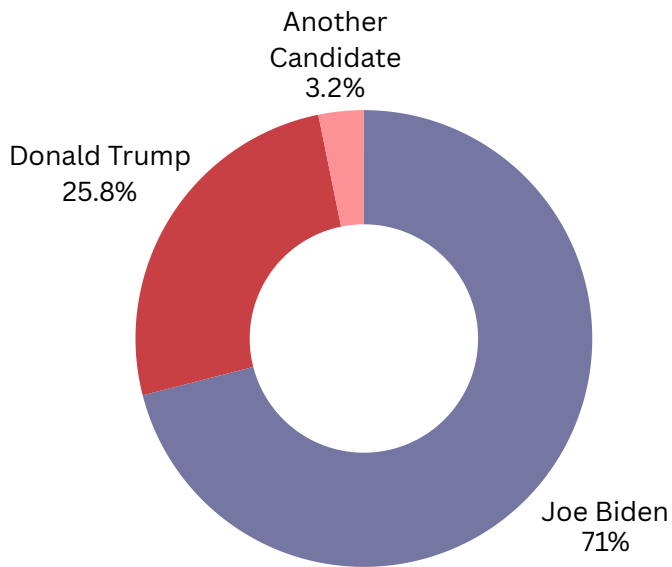
say the country is on the wrong track

69.5%

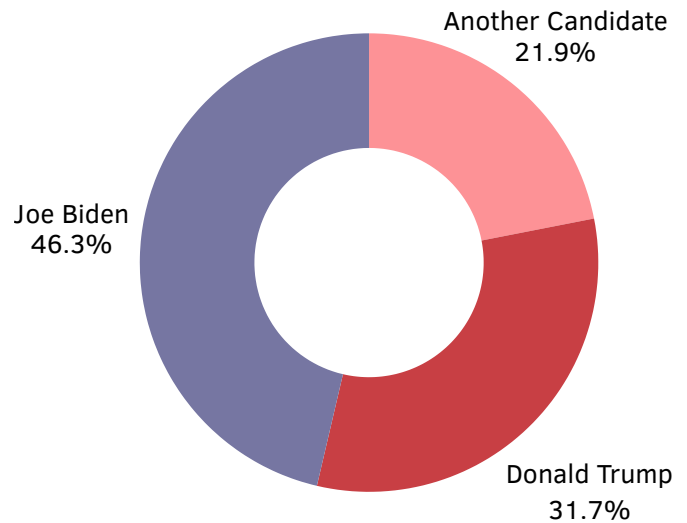


feel officials care little
or not at all about them

Arab American Votes in 2020



Arab American Votes in 2024



VOTERS ARE MOVING, NOT LEAVING

Rather than completely withdrawing from politics, Arab American voters are seeking to recalibrate their approach and maintain their civic engagement through various means. This shift reflects accountability, not indecision. They are signaling a desire to be active participants without pledging loyalty to any specific party.

DISAFFECTED, NOT DISENGAGED

- Biden support drops from 70.9% (2020) to Harris at 46.3% (2024)
- Third-party voting rises to 21.9%

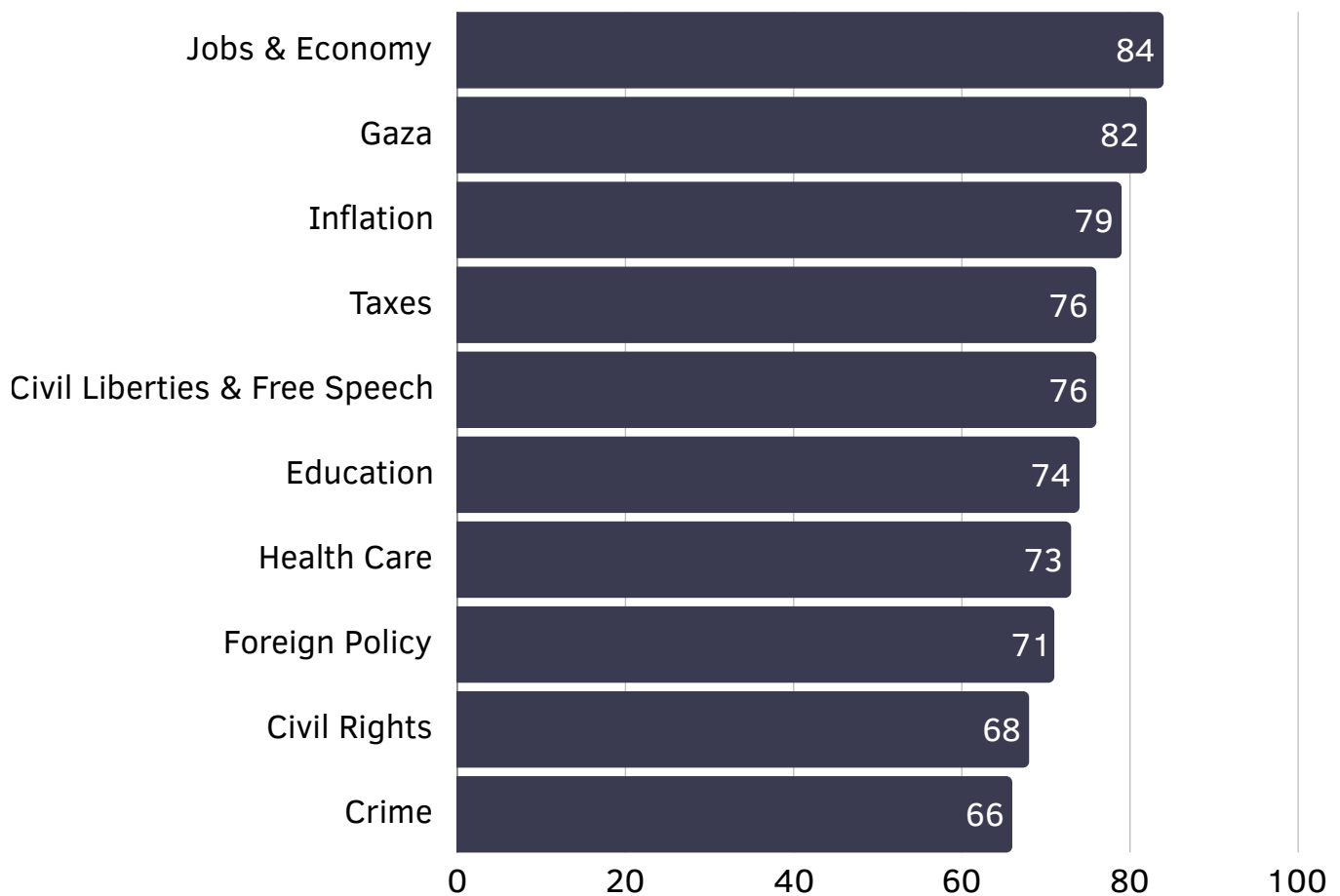
More than half of respondents (55.4%) have shifted party alignment over time - signaling loyalty to issues rather than political parties.

TOP ISSUES



According to this report, Arab American voters are values-driven with a primary concern on material, moral, and civil impacts. They desire a stable economy and civil life alongside social justice, particularly in their stance on Gaza.

10 Issues Arab American Voters Said Were “Very Important”



HATE CRIMES



When harm occurs, Arab Americans overwhelmingly turn to community institutions rather than the state.

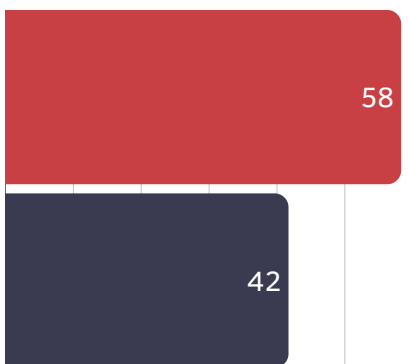
The survey reveals that a significant portion of Arab-American respondents have experienced hate crimes. Among those affected, only about a third reported the incident, suggesting barriers to reporting or hesitancy to do so. When they reported, **most (80%)** contacted community-based organizations, whereas **fewer (40%)** contacted local police or the FBI (5%). Additionally, many respondents found the reporting process neither straightforward nor accessible; **only 40%** reported it was simple. These barriers undermine effective institutional responses and reinforce reliance on community-based systems.

41.7%

reported that they had been targeted by a hate crime or knew someone who had been.

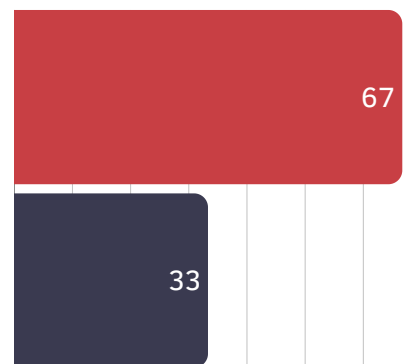
Have you ever experienced a hate crime, either directed at you or directed at someone else you know?

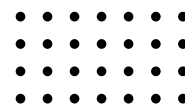
● No ● Yes



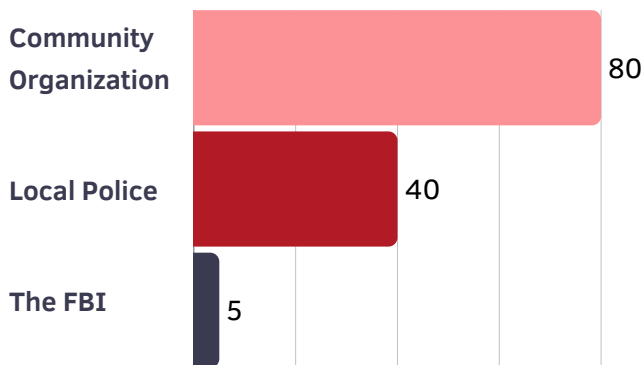
Did you report the hate crime?

● No ● Yes

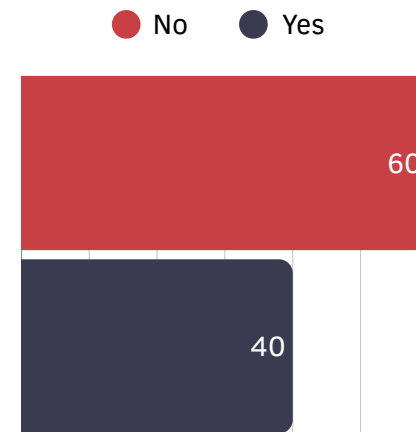




Who did you report the hate crime to?



Did you find the reporting process to be simple and accessible?

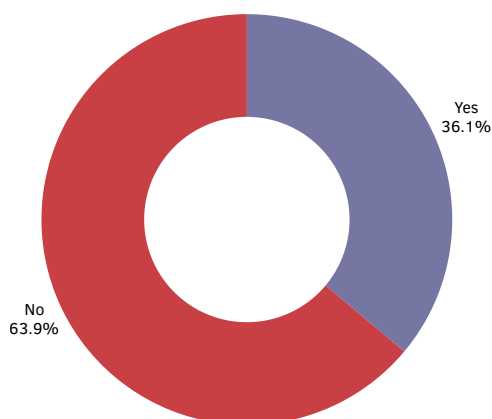


PUBLIC TRUST

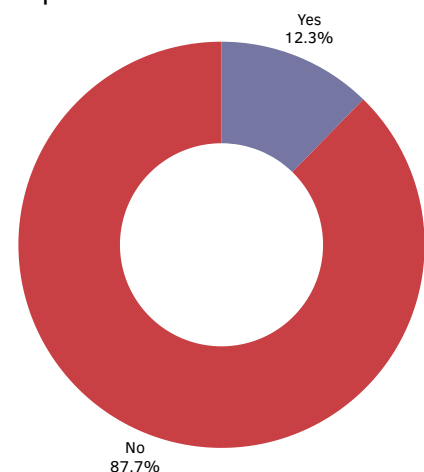


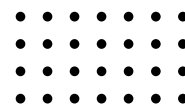
The survey results reveal generally low levels of trust and perceived engagement from public officials among Arab-American voters in California. **Only 5.6%** believe public officials care a great deal about their opinions. However, a **majority (66.7%)** find it very or somewhat important for public officials to engage directly with their community, while an **overwhelming 87.7%** feeling they are underrepresented.

Do you feel that public officials care about issues affecting your community?

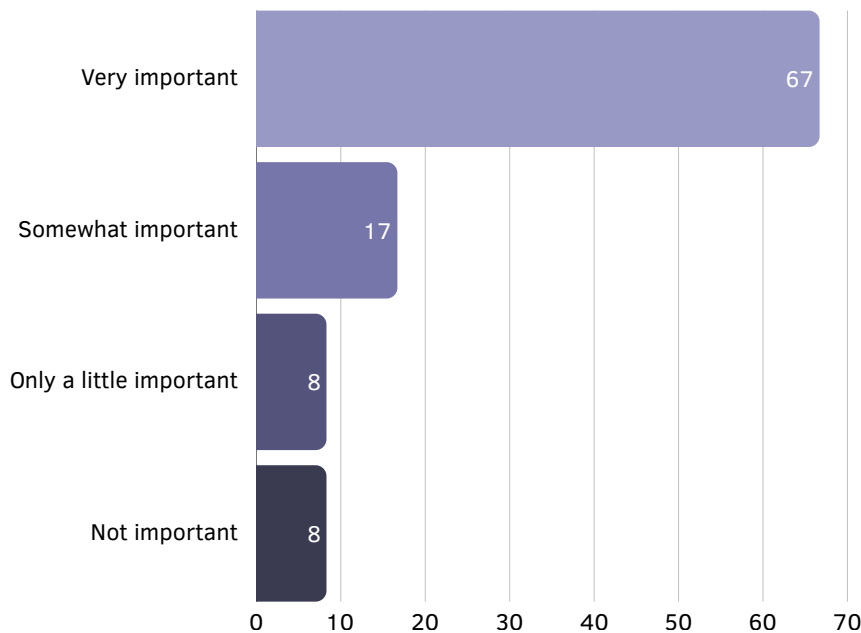
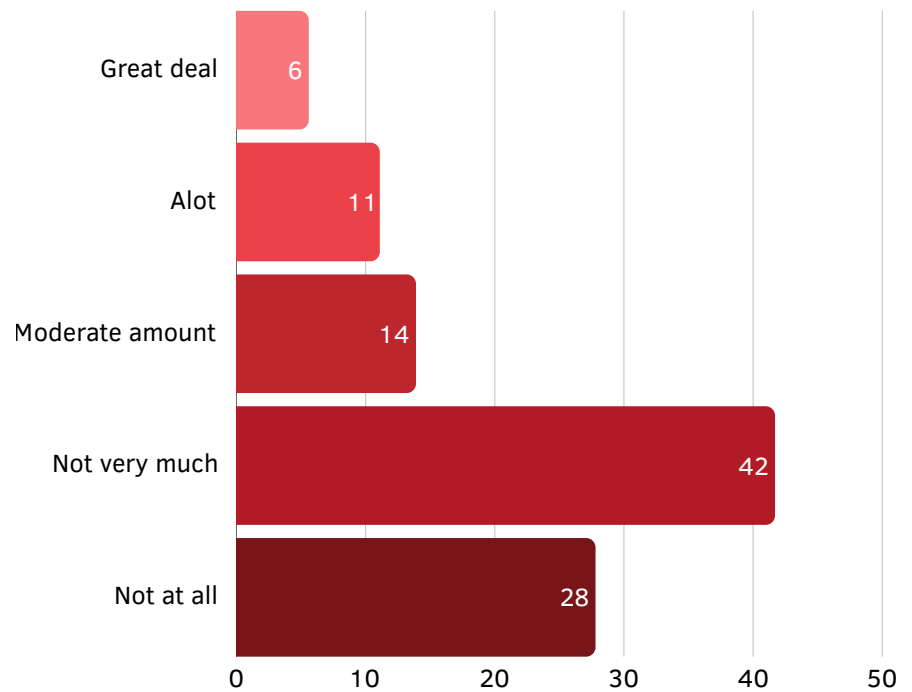


Do you believe that Arab Americans are adequately represented in political leadership?





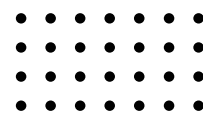
How much do public officials care about what people like you think?



How important is it to you that public officials engage directly with your community?

Conclusion

Engaged, Disillusioned, but Still Showing Up



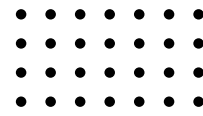
This survey reveals a clear and consistent story: Arab Americans in California are deeply engaged in civic life, yet profoundly disillusioned with the political institutions meant to represent them. High voter turnout, strong intent to participate in future elections, and fluid partisan alignment indicate an electorate that has not withdrawn from democracy but is actively reassessing where trust, legitimacy, and accountability reside.

Across issue areas, Arab American voters express clear priorities rooted in economic stability, civil liberties, education, and foreign policy, particularly regarding Gaza. These concerns are shaped by lived experiences of censorship, erasure, global violence, and domestic exclusion. When political leadership fails to reflect these realities, voters respond not with disengagement, but with recalibration: shifting vote choices, withholding loyalty, and demanding alignment rather than symbolism.

At the same time, the data points to a widening trust gap. Large majorities believe the country is on the wrong track, feel underrepresented in political leadership, and perceive that public officials do not care about people like them. Experiences with hate crimes—and the overwhelming reliance on community-based organizations rather than law enforcement—underscore how trust increasingly is not rooted in state institutions but in the community.

Conclusion

Engaged, Disillusioned, but Still Showing Up



Arab American voters are not withdrawing; rather, they are staying loyal to the issues that matter most to them.

Arab American voters continue to participate at high levels because they believe their participation is more important than their disengagement, especially when they are allowed to voice their opinions. Their engagement reflects a belief that democracy should work—even when it does not currently work for them. This report, therefore, does not describe a disengaged constituency; it documents an electorate that is well attuned, prioritizes issues over symbolic partisanship, and signals the importance of meaningful representation.

Agencies, political leaders, and political parties should therefore:

Recognize their services need further understanding and attunement with Arab American constituencies, especially as it relates to hate crimes reporting

Understand that Arab Americans are more focused on issues versus party loyalty

Foreign issues - especially Gaza - directly impact their decision-making rationale and domestic livelihood. It is critical for political leaders to understand and speak the language of these voters.