

Executive Summary

As we approach the deadline for the completion of a P5+1 agreement with Iran over the disposition of Iran's nuclear program, The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA) commissioned Zogby Research Services (ZRS) to examine the attitudes of both Iranian Americans and the American public at large toward a number of issues related to the nuclear pact, U.S.-Iranian relations, and the status and role of Iranian Americans.

From May 20 to May 31, 2015, we polled 400 Iranian Americans and, from May 30 to May 31, 2015, we surveyed 1,010 American adults.

What we found was an Iranian American community that has retained strong ties to close family members in Iran. As a result they are supportive of efforts to reach a nuclear agreement with Iran and hopeful that in the wake of such an agreement life will improve for their family and friends in Iran, who they say have been hurt by the U.S. sanctions on Iran.

At the same time, despite continuing discrimination, Iranian Americans appear to feel more comfortable with their future in the United States. They say that two of their top priorities are to enhance their image in the United States and to improve American understanding of their culture.

For their part, American voters at large, while supportive of a nuclear agreement with Iran and displaying favorable attitudes toward Iranian Americans, in surprisingly large numbers indicate that they are unsure or uninformed about a number of key issues involving U.S.-Iranian relations.

A summary of our key findings follows:

1. Most Iranian Americans (more than eight in 10) have close family still in Iran, with one-third having parents in Iran and more than one-half having siblings there.
2. While most Iranian Americans do not travel to Iran to visit family, they do remain in close contact, with six in 10 reporting that they communicate with family and friends in Iran at least several times each month.
3. While the preferred form of communication between Iranian Americans and friends and family in Iran is by phone, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of various mobile communication apps and forms of social media. Iranian Americans, however, do report encountering a number of problems in communicating with Iran; chief among them are poor Internet and phone service in Iran, followed by security concerns and internet censorship.
4. More than two-thirds report that economic sanctions imposed on Iran have had a significant impact on their family and friends in Iran. In this context, almost seven in 10 Iranian Americans are supportive of the exemptions the U.S. government has made for remittances to family and supplies of food and medicine, and a majority would favor expanding exemptions. Three-quarters favor facilitating the transfers of remittances to family in Iran.
5. Two-thirds of Iranian Americans are in favor of the P5+1 agreement to place limits on Iran's nuclear program, but a plurality believe that the agreement should be subject to congressional approval. Nevertheless, eight in 10 say that President Obama has been effective in handling nego-

tiations with Iran.

6. Iranian Americans also believe that should a nuclear agreement be reached, it will have a positive impact on the Iranian people, improving their economic opportunities and advancing political reform within Iran. And while eight in 10 believe that a successful agreement will improve Iran's relations with the West, only six in 10 believe that it will improve Iran's relations with its regional neighbors.
7. Should no deal be reached by the June 30th deadline, two-thirds of Iranian Americans support continuing negotiations. Less than one in 10 would support any military action against Iran.
8. On the domestic front, Iranian Americans appear to feel increasingly secure in the United States. While four in 10 report either having been discriminated against or knowing someone who has been a victim of discrimination because they are Iranian, fewer respondents say they fear that discrimination will increase in the future or worry about government surveillance.
9. Among the issues affecting their community, the top two priorities for Iranian Americans are improving Americans' understanding of Iranian culture and ensuring that the image of Iranian Americans is accurately portrayed. These are followed by improving understanding between the peoples of the United States and Iran and working to lift the trade embargo to support commercial ties between the United States and Iran.
10. There are no surprises in the survey of American public opinion, except for the significant number of respondents (about one-third across the board) who say they are "not sure" or "not familiar enough with the issue" to have an opinion. Nevertheless, by a margin of two to one, Americans have a favorable view of Iranian Americans and a slight plurality have a positive view of the Iranian people. On the other hand, by a six to one margin Americans have an unfavorable view of the Iranian government.
11. By a two to one margin, Americans support the P5+1 framework agreement with Iran, while a slight majority support congressional approval and oversight of any negotiated deal. In both cases, more than one-third have no opinion because they are not sure or are unfamiliar with the issue.
12. With regard to existing exemptions to U.S. sanctions on Iran that allow for family remittances or shipments of food and medicine, almost four in 10 Americans say that these exemptions should be kept the same, while near equal numbers (about one in seven) say they should either be expanded or stopped. Three in 10 are not sure.