

## Executive Summary

With the long-negotiated nuclear agreement between the P5+1 and Iran finalized, adopted, and then implemented in January 2016, PAAIA asked Zogby Research Services to examine the attitudes of Iranian Americans with respect to U.S.-Iranian relations, the newly implemented agreement, and the experience of the Iranian American community.

From February 10–16, 2016, Zogby Research Services polled 400 Iranian Americans.

What we find is an Iranian American community that continues to maintain close ties with Iran, through regular communications with family and friends (64% do so at least several times a month) and closely following news from Iran (69%), as well as occasional travel by more than one-third of respondents. A majority of Iranian Americans personally identify based on their country of origin, while only 10% identify themselves by religion. Only about one-third say religion is important in their lives.

Respondents are concerned, however, that these ties to Iran and their identification as Iranian Americans may lead to problems. About one-half (47%) say they are concerned that travel to Iran will lead to closer scrutiny by U.S. law enforcement, and one-half (48%) note that they or someone they know have experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity or country of origin. Further, they are concerned about more discrimination in the future because of the rhetoric used by some presidential candidates regarding immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians (68%). Overwhelmingly, Iranian American respondents say there is no support for extremist groups or ideologies in their community (85%).

Like many of their American compatriots, the most important issue for Iranian Americans in determining their votes in federal elections is the economy and jobs (59%). Foreign policy (33%) and terrorism and national security (22%) are also important issues for these voters, as are education (21%) and the honesty of the candidates (20%).

More than seven in 10 respondents rate Barack Obama's presidency (75%) and Obama's handling of U.S.-Iranian relations (71%) as either excellent or good.

Considering the ongoing presidential nominating contests, when asked who they would support in the Republican primary or caucus in their state, respondents are very divided, with only John Kasich getting a double digit response (13%). Those who would vote on the Democratic side lean toward Bernie Sanders in the primary and caucus process, with 43% saying they would vote for Sanders versus 34% who would support Hillary Clinton.

With respect to the P5+1-Iranian nuclear agreement, or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the level of support among Iranian Americans is strong and stable (65% in 2016, 64% in 2015). A majority of respondents say they expect the agreement to have positive impacts on improving Iran's relations with the United States and the West (77%), improving the personal and civil rights of Iranian citizens (68%), expanding economic opportunities for the Iranian people (65%), and improving Iran's relations with its regional neighbors (55%).

Going beyond the nuclear deal, Iranian Americans say the top priorities for the U.S. government in Iran should be advancing democracy and promoting personal and civil

---

rights (56%) and allowing Americans to invest in Iran to improve the economy and create employment opportunities (52%). When asked about their concerns as Iranian Americans, they identify the promotion of human rights and democracy in Iran as most important to them personally (68%).