



# PAAIA

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
ALLIANCE OF  
IRANIAN AMERICANS

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# NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY 2018

OF THE IRANIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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Since 2008, PAAIA has commissioned nationally recognized pollsters to survey Iranian American attitudes on important topics ranging from domestic issues to foreign policy preferences. The first of their kind, these national public opinion polls raise the voice of the Iranian American community by presenting accurate scientific data to policymakers and the media in order to better their understanding of Iranian Americans. PAAIA uses the results of these annual surveys to inform our policy stances as we advocate on behalf of the Iranian American community.

# Executive Summary

From August 27 to September 11, 2018, Zogby Research Services (ZRS) conducted a national telephone survey of Iranian Americans for PAAIA. Overall, 400 randomly selected respondents were interviewed. The results presented here, which are compared when possible to the results of previous surveys, highlight many of the same strands of opinion we have found in previous surveys over the last decade. In addition, we also find some significant divergence of opinion within the Iranian American community that reflect the larger divisions in our society, particularly based on age and political party affiliation.

1. The connections between Iranian Americans and Iran are deep, with 90% of respondents reporting they have family in Iran.
2. While we still find significant travel being reported by Iranian Americans to Iran (about one-quarter say they visit at least every 2-3 years) and family members from Iran visiting the United States (37% say their Iranian family members visit the United States at least every 2-3 years), the percentage of Iranian Americans traveling to Iran has declined by 13 points since 2015-2016. There remains strong opposition to the Trump administration's 'travel ban' (77%).
3. Discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity continues to be a significant concern for Iranian Americans, with almost half of respondents saying they have personally experienced discrimination. The most frequently reported types of such discrimination continue to be in social circumstances (now at 72%, up 14 points since 2008) and by airlines or airport security (62%). There are also significant increases in reports of employment and business discrimination (now at 52%) and by immigration officials (now at 47%).  
Concern about increasing discrimination remains very high: almost eight in 10 respondents express concern that the rhetoric and policies regarding immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians will feed into discrimination in the future.
4. While half of the respondents feel more secure about international travel because of airport security, almost as many (43%) are concerned about the potential for discrimination and civil rights violations by TSA and customs officers.
5. The two primary ways that Iranian Americans say they identify themselves are by country of origin (i.e., Iranian) and by ethnicity (i.e., Persian).
6. About half of respondents are disappointed by the exclusion of the MENA category from the 2020 Census, but more than two-thirds are comfortable with a new question on the Census about citizenship and naturalization status.
7. Despite a small uptick in positive ratings of Trump's presidency and his handling of U.S.-Iran relations, about three-quarters of respondents still rate both negatively.
8. With respect to the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal, 70% disagree with this decision, and the majority say that it is unlikely to be effective in getting broader concessions from Iran, increases the likelihood of a military strike against Iran, and is more likely to increase support for hardliners' anti-American sentiment in Iran.
9. Beyond the nuclear deal, important U.S.-Iran relations issues for Iranian Americans include promotion of human rights and democracy and lifting the U.S. trade embargo. Promoting regime change is also of growing importance to the community, particularly among Republican respondents.
10. The community's priorities for the U.S. government in dealing with Iran continue to be advancing democracy and promoting personal and civil rights, allowing Americans to invest in Iran, and enhancing ties through cultural diplomacy and educational exchanges.

11. By an 8:1 margin, respondents oppose the U.S. backing the MEK as a legitimate opposition force in Iran, while by a 2:1 margin they support the U.S. backing exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi as the opposition. Significant percentages of respondents say they do not have enough information to have an opinion about whether the U.S. should back the MEK (44%) or Pahlavi (23%)
12. More than two-thirds of Iranian Americans believe that a parliamentary democracy/republic is the type of government that would work best in Iran. One-half believe that a grassroots democratic movement is the best approach to move Iran toward a more democratic society, while only a combined 15% think that economic sanctions or covert/military action would move the country in this direction. When asked which Iranian leader is most likely to move Iran toward a more democratic society, 35% chose exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi and 19% chose Iranian human rights lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh, the only two leaders to achieve double digits.

# Results

## I. Connections and Communications with Iran

Do you have family in Iran?					
	2018	2017	2016	2015	2012
Yes	90	88	84	84	84
No	10	11	15	15	16
Not sure	-	1	1	1	-

In the current survey, nine in 10 respondents say they have family in Iran.

During the past decade, how often have you traveled to Iran?						
	2018	2017	2016*	2015*	2011*	2009*
Once a year or more often	7	9	9	9	9	11
Once every 2 or 3 years	19	15	30	29	23	30
I rarely travel to Iran	32	26	29	25	29	34
I've never been back to Iran since I left	21	19	22	25	30	N/A
I've never been to Iran	21	31	10	12	8	24
<i>Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.</i>						
<i>* In previous years, the question wording was slightly different: "How often do you travel to Iran?"</i>						

When asked about their travel to Iran in the last decade, 7% of survey respondents say they have traveled to Iran at least once a year, and 19% say they go once every two or three years. One-third (32%) rarely travel to Iran. More than four in 10 respondents (42%) say they either have not been back to Iran since they left (21%) or have never been to Iran (21%).

These numbers are similar to last year's, but we find a significant drop from 2015-2016 in terms of the percentage of Iranian Americans who visit Iran at least every 2-3 years (from 38%-39% to 24%-26%).

During the past decade, how often have family and friends from Iran come to visit you in the United States?		
	2018	2017
Once a year or more often	19	16
Once every two or three years	18	15
Family and friends rarely visit from Iran	38	29
Family and friends have never come to visit from Iran	25	40

More than one-third of survey respondents (37%) receive family and friends from Iran as visitors at least every two or three years, with 19% having such guests at least once a year and 18% every 2-3 years. An equal number (38%) say family and friends "rarely visit" from Iran. The remaining one-quarter (25%) say family and friends have never come to visit from Iran.

## II. Iranian American Experience

How do you identify yourself? (Choose all that apply.)	
	2018
By my country of origin (i.e., Iranian)	43
By my ethnicity (i.e., Persian)	45
By my region of origin (i.e., Middle Eastern)	10
By my race (i.e., white)	7
By my religion	8
None of the above	16

When asked how they identify themselves, Iranian Americans are most likely to choose “by ethnicity” (i.e., Persian) (45%) and “by country of origin” (i.e., Iranian) (43%). One in 10 respondents or fewer identify themselves by region of origin (i.e., Middle Eastern) (10%), by race (i.e., white) (7%), or by religion (8%). About one in six respondents (16%) say they do not identify themselves in any of these ways.

Have you personally experienced discrimination in the past because of your ethnicity or country of origin?		
	2018	2017
Yes	49	56
No	51	44
Not sure	<1	1

Have any Iranian Americans you know experienced discrimination in the past because of their ethnicity or country of origin?		
	2018	2017
Yes	67	63
No	30	26
Not sure	3	11

When asked if they have personally experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity or country of origin, half of the Iranian American respondents (49%) respond affirmatively. Two-thirds (67%) say they know other Iranian Americans who have faced this type of discrimination.

Those who report having personally experienced discrimination are more likely to be younger (18-34: 69% vs. 35+: 39%), have no college degree (60% vs. 47% of those with a degree), have less income (less than \$50K: 62% vs. \$50K+: 46%), and be Christian (63% vs. Muslim: 39%). The same subgroups are also more likely to report knowing other Iranian Americans who have faced discrimination because of their ethnicity or country of origin.

In which of the following ways have you or another Iranian American you know experienced discrimination? (Choose all that apply.)			
	2018	2017	2008
Employment/business discrimination	52	39	48
Social discrimination	72	69	58
By immigration officials	47	35	42
By federal law enforcement or local law enforcement	27	24	25
By airlines or airport security	60	55	58
By racial profiling	44	48	47
None of the above	4	3	6
Not sure	<1	1	2

Those who said they either have personally experienced discrimination or know someone who has were asked about how such discrimination has manifested itself. The top two responses maintain consistent with the 2008 and 2017 surveys:



social discrimination (72%) and by airlines or airport security (60%); both are reported at slightly higher levels than the previous surveys, with social discrimination showing a conspicuous upward trend (from 58% in 2008 to 69% in 2017 to 72% in the current survey). About half of the respondents reporting discrimination point to employment/business discrimination (52%) or by immigration officials (47%); both of these are also higher than last year's survey, by 13 and 12 points, respectively. Discrimination in the form of racial profiling (44%) and by federal or local law enforcement (27%) are reported at consistent levels to previous surveys.

Are you concerned that there may be increased discrimination against Iranian Americans in the future because of the rhetoric that has been used and policies regarding immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians?		
	2018	2017
Very concerned	43	65
Somewhat concerned	34	17
<b>Concerned</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>83</b>
Not too concerned	3	8
Not concerned at all	20	9
<b>Not concerned</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17</b>
Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding and because responses of "not sure" are not included. *In 2017 the question was "Are you concerned that there may be increased discrimination against Iranian Americans in the future because of the rhetoric that has been used and policies advanced by the Trump administration regarding immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians?"		

Are you concerned that rhetoric used by some presidential candidates against immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians will lead to increased discrimination against Iranian Americans in the future?				
	2016	2015*	2013*	2012*
Yes	68	39	49	55
No	28	53	42	39
Not sure	3	9	10	7
Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding. *In 2012 and 2013 we asked: "Are you concerned that U.S. hostilities with Iran have the potential for increasing discrimination against Iranian Americans?" In 2015 the question was worded slightly differently and more generally: "Are you concerned that there may be increased discrimination against Iranian Americans in the future?"				

More than three-quarters of survey respondents (77%) are concerned that there may be increased discrimination against Iranian Americans because of the rhetoric and policies regarding immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians, a percentage consistent with last year's survey (83%), though there is a slight dip in the level of those reporting they are "very concerned" (from 65% in 2017 to 43% in 2018). This concern continues to be significantly higher than it was prior to the 2016 election cycle, almost two times the level of concern expressed in 2015 (39%).

When you travel internationally, which of the following best describes your feelings?	
	2018
I feel more secure because of tight security at airports, TSA procedures, and customs/border enforcement.	50
I feel concerned about the potential for discrimination and civil rights violations by TSA and customs agents.	39
I do not travel internationally because of my concerns about potential discrimination and civil rights violations.	4
I do not travel internationally for other reasons.	7

Half of the Iranian Americans surveyed (50%) say they "feel more secure because of tight security at airports, TSA procedures, and customs/border enforcement" when they travel internationally. More than four in 10, however, express concern about the "potential for discrimination and civil rights violations" by TSA and customs agents, with 4% going so far as to say that they do not travel internationally because of these concerns.

A majority of younger (58% of those 18-34) and single respondents (56%) are concerned about potential discrimination, while fewer older and married respondents share that concern (31% of those 35 and over and 31% of married respondents).

**The U.S. Census Bureau has decided not to include a Middle East/North Africa (MENA) category on the U.S. Census that would have allowed Iranian Americans to write in “Iranian” in a combined question on ethnicity and race. Which of the following best describes your reaction to the exclusion of the MENA category?**

	2018
I am disappointed. I think the Census will be less accurate and less meaningful without the MENA category.	47
I am pleased. I was concerned about providing this information to the Census Bureau.	11
I don't really care. I don't think this category would have provided any useful information anyway.	15
I don't have enough information to form an opinion.	27

Almost one-half of the respondents (47%) are disappointed that the Census will not include a MENA category. About one-quarter hold a more positive view of the exclusion of the MENA category with 11% saying they are pleased because they did not want to provide this information to the Census Bureau and 15% saying the category would not have been useful anyway. A final quarter of respondents (27%) do not have enough information to form an opinion.

Reaction to the exclusion of the MENA category does not vary significantly based on how long ago one's family emigrated to the United States or religious belief, but younger people are more likely to be disappointed than older respondents (18-34: 66% vs. 35+: 38%) and Democrats, Independents, and unaffiliated voters are more likely to be disappointed than Republicans (52% vs. 21%).

**For the 2020 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau is adding a question regarding the citizenship and naturalization status of all members of your household. How comfortable are you with the inclusion of this question on the Census?**

	2018
Very comfortable	53
Somewhat comfortable	16
<b>Comfortable</b>	<b>69</b>
Somewhat uncomfortable	10
Very uncomfortable	19
<b>Uncomfortable</b>	<b>29</b>
Not sure	2

More than two-thirds of Iranian American respondents (69%) are comfortable with the addition of a question about citizenship and naturalization status on the 2020 Census, with a majority (53%) saying they are “very comfortable.” The only demographic with significantly lower enthusiasm for this question is Democrats (58% comfortable), while Republicans (93%) and Independents (76%) have higher rates of comfort with this idea.

## Do you support or oppose the ‘travel ban’ established by President Trump’s executive order and affirmed by the Supreme Court limiting travel from seven countries, five that are predominantly Muslim including Iran?

	2018	2017
Support	17	13
Oppose	77	83
Not sure	6	4
<i>*In 2017 the question was worded slightly differently: “Do you support or oppose the ‘travel ban’ established by President Trump’s executive order limiting travel from six predominantly Muslim countries including Iran?”</i>		

Despite the affirmation by the Supreme Court of Trump’s travel ban in the last year, Iranian Americans are still strongly opposed to this order, with 77% saying they oppose it (compared to 83% last year). Seventeen percent (17%) support the travel ban.

Support for the travel ban is only higher among Republicans (59%), while support is quite low among Democrats (4%) and Independents/Other/Unaffiliated (15%).

## III. U.S. - Iran Relations

How do you rate...				
	the presidency of Donald Trump?		President Trump’s handling of U.S. – Iran relations?	
	2018	2017	2018	2017
Excellent	9	7	15	7
Good	11	6	7	4
<b>+</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>
Fair	12	6	11	7
Poor	64	72	61	75
<b>-</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>82</b>
Not sure	4	9	6	8
<i>Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.</i>				

While there is a slight uptick in the percentage of respondents in the current survey who rate President Trump’s presidency as either excellent (9%) or good (11%), up 7 points overall since 2017, still more than three-quarters (76%) rate his presidency negatively, including almost two-thirds who rate it “poor” (64%).

When asked specifically about Trump’s handling of U.S.-Iran relations, percentages track the respondents’ overall ratings of the Trump presidency, with 22% giving positive ratings (excellent: 15%, good: 7%), up 11 points since 2017, but 72% view it negatively (fair: 11%, poor: 61%).

Again, age and political party are the key demographics of significance for these opinions. Younger respondents are less likely than older respondents to view the Trump presidency (18-34: 9% vs. 35+: 24%) or his handling of U.S.-Iran relations (18-34: 6% vs. 35+: 29%) positively. And there are wide disparities in the positive views of Democrats and Republicans with respect to Trump (6% vs. 69%) and his handling of relations with Iran (8% vs. 63%). The positive views of Independents and unaffiliated respondents are also significantly lower than Republicans (Trump: 17% and U.S.-Iran relations: 25%).

Do you agree or disagree with the Trump Administration's decision to withdraw from the Iran Nuclear Deal also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)?	
	2018
Strongly agree	19
Somewhat agree	7
<b>Agree</b>	<b>26</b>
Somewhat disagree	16
Strongly disagree	54
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>4</b>

Seven in 10 Iranian American respondents disagree with the Trump Administration's decision to withdraw from the Iran Nuclear Deal or JCPOA, with a majority of respondents (54%) saying they "strongly disagree." One-quarter of respondents (26%) agree with this decision.

Not surprisingly, Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to agree with Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement (67% vs. 12%); about one-quarter of Independents and unaffiliated respondents (27%) agree with this decision. Men and those who emigrated to the United States since 1990 are twice as likely as women and those who emigrated before 1990 to agree (men: 34% vs. women: 17%; since 1990: 44% vs. 1990 or before: 21%).

The overall level of disagreement with withdrawal in the current survey is even greater than the percentages of respondents in the 2017 survey who thought that the Trump Administration should "keep the deal" (60%) and that overall the JCPOA had a "positive impact" (52%).

In your opinion, how likely is it that the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA will be effective at getting broader concessions from Iran?	
	2018
Very likely	17
Somewhat likely	16
<b>Likely</b>	<b>33</b>
Somewhat unlikely	18
Very unlikely	35
<b>Unlikely</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.</i>	

A majority of respondents (52%) think it is unlikely that the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA will be effective in getting broader concessions from Iran, with more than one-third (35%) saying it is "very unlikely." One-third (33%), however, believe that it is likely to garner more concessions from Iran. Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents are not sure whether the withdrawal will be effective or not.

Those most likely to believe that the withdrawal will be effective include Republicans (72% vs. 23% of Democrats and 31% Independents/other/unaffiliated), those who immigrated since 1990 (48% vs. 30% of earlier emigrants), and those ages 35-64 (44% vs. 20% of 18-34 year olds and 30% of those over age 65).

In your opinion, does the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA increase the likelihood of a military strike against Iran?	
	2018
Strongly agree	19
Somewhat agree	32
<b>Agree</b>	<b>51</b>
Somewhat disagree	19
Strongly disagree	19
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.</i>	

A majority of respondents (51%) also believe that the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA increases the likelihood of a military strike against Iran, while 38% disagree with this assessment and 12% are unsure.

Here we do not find the same differences of opinion that we see in the previous question, but rather generally consistent responses among younger and older respondents and those who emigrated since 1990 and those who emigrated before then. Even between Democrats and Republicans we find a much smaller gap, with 60% of Democrats and 45% of Republicans seeing an increased likelihood of a military strike against Iran because of the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA.

Which outcome of renewed sanctions resulting from the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA seems more likely in your opinion?	
	2018
That sanctions will produce the changes in Iranian policy that the Trump administration desires.	24
That sanctions will harm the Iranian people and increase support for hardliners' anti-American sentiment.	67
Not sure	9

Two-thirds of Iranian American respondents (67%) think it is more likely that the renewed sanctions “will harm the Iranian people and increase support for hardliners’ anti-American sentiment,” while one-quarter of respondents (24%) think it is more likely that the sanctions “will produce the changes in Iranian policy that the Trump administration desires.”

Only among Republicans does a majority think it is more likely that the sanctions will work as the administration intends (63% vs. 11% of Democrats and 23% of Independents/unaffiliated). Majorities in all other demographic groups agree that the sanctions are more likely to harm the Iranian people and increase their support for anti-American sentiment.

When it comes to U.S.-Iran relations, of the following list of issues which two are most important to you? (Choose two.)			
	2018	2017	2016
Promotion of human rights and democracy in Iran	74	63	68
Lifting U.S. trade embargo to support economic growth in Iran	44	50	36
Successful negotiation of a new nuclear agreement between the U.S. and Iran*	15	21	21
Limiting Iran's role in supporting terrorist organizations or foreign military involvement	14	15	9
Keeping sanctions in place or tightening sanctions against the government in Iran	7	8	17
Promoting regime change in Iran	37	28	22
Not sure	4	4	17
<i>*In 2016 and 2017, this option was: “Successful implementation of the Iran nuclear agreement between P5+1 and Iran.”</i>			

The “promotion of human rights and democracy in Iran” continues to be the most important issue to Iranian Americans (74%), as it was 2017 (63%) and 2016 (68%). The second top choice is again “lifting the U.S. trade embargo to support economic growth in Iran” (44%). “Promoting regime change” (37%) is again the third most selected issue of importance, with a significant trendline, up 9 points from last year and 15 points from 2016.

These top three issues are consistent across demographic groups with one exception. Republican respondents consider regime change the most important issue (61%), followed by human rights (58%) and limiting Iran’s role in terrorism (26%), with less emphasis on lifting the U.S. trade embargo (14%).

The renegotiation of the nuclear agreement (15%), “limiting Iran’s role in supporting terrorist organizations or foreign military involvement” (14%), and “keeping sanctions in place or tightening sanctions” (7%) are generally considered of less importance to Iranian American respondents.

What should the top two priorities be for the U.S. government in dealing with Iran? (Choose two.)			
	2018	2017	2016
Allowing Americans to invest in Iran to improve the economy and create employment opportunities	45	46	52
Advancing democracy and promoting personal and civil rights	58	55	56
Negotiating a new nuclear agreement between the U.S. and Iran*	17	26	7
Enhance people to people ties through cultural diplomacy and educational exchanges	42	37	34
Give greater support to our allies in the Middle East to counter Iran’s regional ambitions	4	7	5
Support Iranian opposition groups and figures	13	8	8
Tighten economic sanctions against the Iranian government	13	8	11
Not sure	4	4	18
<i>In previous surveys the question was: “Moving beyond the Iran nuclear deal, what should the top two priorities be for the U.S. government in dealing with Iran?” *In 2016 and 2017, this option was “Seek new areas of cooperation with the Iranian government.”</i>			

The top two priorities for Iranian-American respondents with respect to the U.S government in dealing with Iran remain the same as they were in 2016 and 2017: “advancing democracy and promoting personal and civil rights” (58%) and “allowing Americans to invest in Iran to improve the economy and create employment opportunities” (45%). There is a continuing upward trend of respondents identifying “enhancing people to people ties through cultural diplomacy and educational exchanges” as a priority (42% in 2018, up 5 points from 2017 and 8 points from 2016).

These top three priorities are quite consistent across demographic groups, with the only exception being that Republican respondents identify “tightening economic sanctions” (43%) as a higher priority than cultural diplomacy and educational exchanges (23%).

Negotiation of a new nuclear agreement is identified by 17% of respondents, followed by 13% who select “support Iranian opposition groups” and “tighten economic sanctions.” Just 4% consider it a priority to “give greater support to our allies in the Middle East to counter Iran’s regional ambitions.”

## IV. Iran's Government and Leadership

Would you support or oppose the U.S. government backing the MEK (aka People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, PMOI, or MKO) as a legitimate opposition force against the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)?	
	Total
Strongly support	3
Somewhat support	3
<b>Support</b>	<b>6</b>
Somewhat oppose	2
Strongly oppose	48
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>I don't have enough information to form an opinion</b>	<b>44</b>

One-half of the respondents (50%) oppose the U.S. government backing the MEK as a legitimate opposition force against the Islamic Republic of Iran, while just 6% support this. The remaining 44% of respondents say they don't have enough information to form an opinion on this question. (This mirrors our results last year regarding favorability of Maryam Rajavi, leader of the MEK, when we found that 7% had a favorable view of her, 48% had an unfavorable view, and 45% had no opinion.)

While support for the MEK is slightly higher among Republican respondents (15% vs. 3% of Democrats and 1% of Independents), their opposition to the MEK is also higher (58% vs. 49% of Democrats and 50% of Independents). Republicans have more knowledge of the MEK (28% say they have no opinion based on a lack of information vs. 49% of Democrats who say they same), but this higher level of familiarity has not translated into more net support for the U.S. backing the MEK.

Would you support or oppose the U.S. government backing Reza Pahlavi (Crown Prince and leader of the National Council of Iran) as a legitimate opposition force against the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)?	
	Total
Strongly support	30
Somewhat support	20
<b>Support</b>	<b>50</b>
Somewhat oppose	8
Strongly oppose	19
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>I don't have enough information to form an opinion</b>	<b>23</b>

When asked if they support or oppose the U.S. government backing Reza Pahlavi as a legitimate opposition force against the IRI, one-half of respondents say they support such backing (50%), while 27% oppose it and 23% say they do not have enough information to form an opinion. (These percentages reflect slightly higher rates of support than the favorability ratings captured in last year's survey for Pahlavi. At that time, 37% of respondents had favorable views, 21% had unfavorable views, and 42% had no opinion because of a lack of information.)

Republicans are more supportive than Democrats and Independents of Reza Pahlavi, with three-quarters of Republican respondents expressing support (78%) compared to 43-44% of Democrats and Independents.

## What type of government do you think would work best in Iran?

	2018	2017	2014	2011
Islamic republic	<1	1	2	2
Reformed Islamic republic	5	8	7	4
Parliamentary democracy/Republic*	68	55	69	67
Constitutional monarchy	14	11	N/A	N/A
None of the above	5	16	15	16
Not sure	7	9	7	11
Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding. *In previous surveys, this option was "Secular democracy."				

Two-thirds of Iranian American respondents (68%) think that "parliamentary democracy/republic" is the type of government that would work best in Iran. (This response is consistent with previous years when the option was termed "secular democracy.") There is broad agreement across all demographic groups that a parliamentary democracy or republic is the best choice for Iran's governmental system. Lagging far behind, "constitutional monarchy" garners support from 14% of respondents, followed by reformed Islamic Republic with just 5%.

## In your opinion, which of the following approaches is most likely to move Iran toward a more democratic society?

	2018
Gradual reform through the current political structure	28
Grassroots democratic movement	50
Covert action/military attack	5
Economic sanctions	11
Not sure	7
Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.	

Half of the survey respondents (50%) believe that a grassroots democratic movement is the approach most likely to move Iran toward a more democratic society. More than one-quarter (28%) favor gradual reform through the current political structure. The two least preferred options among survey respondents are economic sanctions (11%) and covert action or military attack (5%).

The only demographic group whose choices vary significantly from the overall responses is Republican respondents, who are evenly split between grassroots democratic movement (34%) and economic sanctions (34%) as the most likely approaches for moving Iran toward a more democratic society. Thirteen percent (13%) of Republican respondents believe that covert action or military attack is the approach most likely to be effective.

## In your opinion, which of the following Iranian leaders is most likely to move Iran toward a more democratic society?

	2018
Hassan Rouhani	4
Mir-Hossein Mousavi	9
Maryam Rajavi	1
Reza Pahlavi	35
Nasrin Sotoudeh	19
Ghasem Sholeh-Saadi	2
Not sure	31
Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.	



When asked to select the Iranian leader who is most likely to move Iran toward a more democratic society, more than one-third of respondents (35%) select Reza Pahlavi, the Crown Prince and leader of the National Council of Iran. He is followed by Nasrin Sotoudeh, a human rights lawyer and opposition figure within Iran, who garners support from 19% of survey respondents. Support for the other leaders in the survey is in the single digits: Mir-Hossein Mousavi (9%), a reformist politician and former prime minister; Hassan Rouhani (4%), president of Iran; Ghasem Sholeh-Saadi (2%), former member of the Iranian parliament and opposition figure within Iran; and Maryam Rajavi (1%), leader of the People's Mojahedin of Iran and president-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran. Almost one-third of the respondents (31%) say they are not sure who is most likely to move Iran toward a more democratic society.

Democrats slightly prefer Sotoudeh (27%) over Pahlavi (25%), while Republicans strongly prefer Pahlavi (61%) over Sotoudeh (10%).

## Methodology

Zogby Research Services (ZRS) was commissioned by PAAIA to conduct, in partnership with Zogby Analytics, a live operator telephone survey of 400 Iranian American adults. The survey was conducted between August 27 and September 11, 2018. Samples are randomly drawn from purchased telephone Iranian surname lists. Up to four calls are made to reach a sampled phone number, respondents that were not available but qualified to respond were allowed to set appointments to be recalled within the time frame of the fieldwork. Weighted variables may include age, race, gender, region, party, education, and religion. Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error for 400 is +/- 4.9 percentage points. This means that all other things being equal, the identical survey repeated will have results within the margin of error 95 times out of 100.

Subsets of the data have a larger margin of error than the whole data set. As a rule we do not rely on the validity of very small subsets of the data especially sets smaller than 50-75 respondents. At that subset we can make estimations based on the data, but in these cases the data is more qualitative than quantitative. Additional factors can create error, such as question wording and question order.

## Demographics

18-34	32%	Family moved to US since 2000	9%
35-44	16%	Family moved... 1990—1999	10%
45-54	16%	Family moved... 1981-1989	22%
55-64	18%	Family moved... 1978-1980	24%
65+	17%	Family moved... before 1978	35%
Male	52%	No college degree	13%
Female	48%	College degree/+	87%
Income <\$50K	16%	Muslim	24%
Income \$50K-\$100K	29%	Baha'i	4%
Income >\$100K	49%	Jewish	6%
East	23%	Zoroastrian	7%
South	23%	Christian	16%
Central/Great Lakes	12%	Agnostic	10%
West	42%	Atheist	8%
Married	56%	Other religion	21%
Single, never married	31%	Democrat	48%
Divorced/widowed/separated	11%	Republican	15%
Civil union/domestic partnership	1%	Independent/Unaffiliated	36%



