



PAAIA

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS
ALLIANCE OF
IRANIAN AMERICANS

NATIONAL PUBLIC
OPINION SURVEY

2020

OF THE IRANIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

www.paaia.org



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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 September 8–20, 2020, Zogby Research Services conducted a national telephone survey of 406 Iranian Americans on behalf of PAAIA. This year's survey results are presented below.

The upcoming U.S. elections loom large in the strands that emerge from the results this year. Iranian Americans, regardless of political party, have some shared concerns including increased discrimination and political concerns like the economy and jobs, foreign policy, health care, and national security. In addition, on a bipartisan basis, the Iranian American community wants the U.S. government to prioritize advancing democracy and human rights in Iran and believes that a grassroots democratic movement is the best way for Iran to move to a more democratic society. However, there are also stark divisions apparent between Democrats and independents, on the one hand, and Republicans, on the other, when it comes to issues like sanctions, deal-making with Iran, evaluations of the current administration's handling of the U.S.-Iran relationship, and additional priorities for the U.S.-Iran relationship beyond their shared top choice regarding the advancement of democracy.

A brief summary of the findings includes the following points:

- The Iranian American community maintains high levels of connection and high rates of communication with their family and friends in Iran. For the first time, in this year's survey we find that mobile communication applications and Internet telephone and video chat services are being more frequently utilized to maintain these connections than phone calls.
- Discrimination continues to be a major source of concern for Iranian Americans. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents report that either they or another Iranian American they know have faced discrimination because of their ethnicity or country of origin. And more than three-quarters (78%) are concerned about increased discrimination in the future because of the rhetoric and policies regarding immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians, and because of increased tension in the U.S.-Iran relationship.
- As the 2020 election approaches, Iranian American respondents say the most important issues they are considering as they determine their votes for president and members of Congress are the economy and jobs, and foreign policy, followed by health care, terrorism and national security, and education. If the election were held today, Iranian Americans would side with former Vice President Joe Biden over President Donald Trump by a margin of 56% to 31%, with independent Iranian Americans saying they prefer Biden 57% to 17%.
- When it comes to the main goals of Iranian American civic or advocacy organizations, respondents most frequently selected U.S. domestic issues that affect the lives of Iranian Americans. The most important issues selected by the respondents include enhancing Iranian American participation in the U.S. political process and increasing the influence of Iranian Americans (42%), improving the image of Iranian Americans (36%), and protecting the civil rights of Iranian Americans (35%). Compared to last year, there is a significant decline in the percentage of respondents who expect that one of the main goals of an Iranian American civic organization is to influence U.S.-Iran policy (from 36% in 2019 to 24% in 2020).
- With respect to the current state of U.S.-Iran relations, there has been a slight uptick in the Iranian American community's positive ratings for President Trump's handling of the relationship – to 31% from 22% in 2019 and 2018 – though level is less than one-half of the positive ratings given to President Obama for his handling of U.S.-Iran relations in 2016 (71%).
- By far, the most important issue for respondents when it comes to U.S.-Iran relations is promotion of human rights and democracy in Iran. There is broad bipartisan agreement on this priority; however, beyond this issue we find divergent views among Democratic and Republican respondents. Democrats and independents are concerned with lifting the trade embargo and the negotiation of a new nuclear agreement, while Republicans prioritize promoting regime change and limiting Iran's role in supporting terrorist organizations and foreign military involvements.

- Similarly, there is bipartisan agreement among Iranian American respondents when identifying what they want the U.S. government to focus on in the U.S.-Iran relationship, namely, advancing democracy and promoting personal and civil rights, and allowing Americans to invest in Iran. Beyond that, Democratic respondents say the priority for the U.S. government should be enhancing and facilitating humanitarian trade with Iran, while Republican respondents desire a focus on tightening the economic sanctions.
- Asked about the outcome of sanctions on Iran, again we find a significant partisan divide, with Democrats saying sanctions are harmful to the Iranian people and counterproductive by increasing support for anti-American sentiment and Republicans saying the sanctions are producing the results the Trump administration is seeking.
- Overall, about one-half of Iranian American respondents regardless of party affiliation want a more comprehensive deal with Iran that addresses both the country's nuclear ambitions and its role in regional conflicts. Among Democrats, about four in 10 want to see a return to the JCPOA, while among Republicans about four in 10 want no deal with Iran.
- Iranian American respondents continue to believe that a grassroots democratic movement is the approach most likely to move Iran toward a more democratic society. About one-third in this year's survey prefer gradual reform through the current political structure.
- Asked their opinions regarding the U.S. government backing the MEK or Reza Pahlavi as the legitimate opposition force against the Islamic Republic of Iran, about three in 10 Iranian American respondents say they strongly support Pahlavi while just 8% say the same of the MEK. On the other hand, the U.S. backing the MEK is opposed by six in 10 respondents, and its potential backing of Pahlavi is opposed by one-third of the respondents.

Results

I. Connections and Communications with Iran

How frequently do you communicate with your family and friends in Iran?					
	2020	2019	2017	2015	2011
Daily	15	15	8	7	5
Several times a week	26	26	17	21	24
Several times a month	27	26	30	32	33
Several times a year	9	14	16	19	22
Less frequently*	8	10	16	16	15
Not at all**	6	10	13	5	2
I do not have family in Iran**	9	-	-	-	-

*Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.
 *In 2011 and 2015 surveys, these options were "rarely" and "never."
 ** In 2020, an option for "I do not have family in Iran" was added.*

Communication with family and friends in Iran is occurring at rates quite similar to those found in last year's survey. More than four in 10 respondents are in contact at least several times per week, including 15% who say they communicate daily. More than one-quarter (27%) are in touch with family and friends in Iran several times a month, while 9% say they communicate several times a year. Only 14% are either infrequently in contact or do not communicate with family or friends at all. Just 9% of Iranian American respondents say they do not have family in Iran.

The only characteristic of respondents that significantly affects frequency of communication with family and friends in Iran is the length of time since emigration. Almost six in 10 respondents (58%) whose families left Iran since 1990 communicate with those still in Iran at least several times a week, while only about one-third (32%) of those who emigrated in 1990 or before do so.

How do you communicate with your family and friends in Iran? (Choose all that apply.)						
	2020	2019	2017	2015	2011	2009
I write letters	16	12	5	2	4	7
I send emails	31	41	23	44	32	40
I call them	50	74	66	89	72	88
Internet telephone and video chat services (e.g., Skype, Google Hangout)	52	66	42	49	9	4
Mobile communications applications (e.g., Telegram, Viber, Whatsapp, WeChat, etc.)	60	69	43	52	-	-
Social media and social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	48	57	42	51	25	14
Other	2	<1	2	1	-	-

For the first time in more than a decade of polling, we find that phone calls are no longer the most commonly reported mode of communication for Iranian Americans connecting with family and friends in Iran. While one-half (50%) of respondents who communicate with family and friends in Iran say they use phone calls to stay in touch, 60% say they use mobile communication apps like Telegram and Viber, and 52% use Internet telephone and video chat services like Skype and Google Hangout. Social media and social networks like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are used by 48% of those who communicate with family and friends in Iran. Fewer than one-third of these respondents (31%) say they utilize email to keep in touch, and 16% report that they write letters to family and friends in Iran.

Among respondents under age 55, usage rates of mobile communication apps, Internet chat services, and social media are quite similar (54%, 57%, and 57%). But among those 55 and over, three-quarters (75%) say they use apps like Telegram and Viber, which is about two times higher than the rates of usage of chat services (42%) and social media (33%) by these older respondents.

II. Iranian American Experience

Have you or another Iranian American you know personally experienced discrimination in the past because of your ethnicity or country of origin?

	2020	2019	2018		2017		2016	2015
			Have you personally...	Have any Iranian Americans you know...	Have you personally...	Have any Iranian Americans you know...		
Yes	60	63	49	67	56	63	48	43
No	36	33	51	30	44	26	49	54
Not sure	4	4	<1	3	1	11	3	3

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

In 2017 and 2018, this was asked as two separate questions: "Have you personally experienced..." and "Have any Iranian Americans you know experienced..."

This year six in 10 Iranian American respondents report that they themselves or another Iranian American they know has experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity or country of origin. This is similar to the numbers reported in each of the last three years, after a significant increase from 2016 to 2017.

Those who are most likely to report discrimination either personally or for another Iranian American are women (70% vs. men: 50%), younger (18-54: 72% vs. 55+: 35%), emigrated since 1990 (69% vs. 1990 or before: 55%), or identify as a Democrat (64%) or independent (66% vs. 45% of Republicans).

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 immigrant, Muslims, and Iranians, and because of increased tensions between the United States and Iran?

	2020
Very Concerned	38
Somewhat concerned	39
Concerned	78
Somewhat unconcerned	4
Very unconcerned	18
Unconcerned	22

More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) say they are concerned about increased discrimination against Iranian Americans given the political rhetoric and policies directed at immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians, as well as heightened tensions between the United States and Iran. This high level of concern has remained consistent in the last few years (2019: 71%, 2018: 77%, 2017: 83%) since a significant jump after 2015 (39%).

The highest levels of concern about discrimination are among women (86% vs. 69% of men), those 18-54 (85% vs. 61% of those 55+), and Democrats (89%) and independents (82% vs. 50% of Republicans).

When you vote in federal elections for president or Congress, which of the following issues do you consider most important in determining your vote? (Choose three.)

	2020	2019	2016 rank
The economy and jobs	47	40	(1)
Foreign policy (like the U.S.-Iran relationship)	47	50	(2)
Health care	37	37	(5)
Terrorism and national security	28	29	(3)
Education	27	22	(4)
Civil liberties	18	19	(8)
Immigration	18	20	-
Environment	15	10	-
Women's rights	15	16	(9)
Taxes	14	16	(7)
Climate change	13	9	-
Guns	7	14	-
Supreme Court	7	4	-
The political party of the candidate	6	5	(9)
Other	2	1	-
Not sure	<1	-	(6)

As we approach the 2020 general election, Iranian American respondents were asked to pick the top three issues they consider most important in determining their vote in federal elections for president or Congress.

The top two issues, both selected by 47% of respondents, are the economy and jobs and foreign policy (like the U.S.-Iran relationship). Health care (37%), terrorism and national security (28%), and education (27%) round out the top five issues in the current survey. Civil liberties (18%), immigration (18%), the environment (15%), women's rights (15%), taxes (14%), and climate change (13%) represent the next tier of concerns as Iranian Americans consider their votes in federal elections in 2020.

Fewer than one in 10 respondents point to guns (7%), the Supreme Court (7%), and the political party of the candidate (6%) as issues of significance for determining their vote. (It is worth noting that the survey was completed before the recent death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg.)

When looking at different demographic groups, we find that older voters place an even greater emphasis on the economy and jobs and on foreign policy for determining their votes, while for younger voters immigration and terrorism and national security are top-tier issues of concern. In terms of divisions based on political affiliation, the top two issues for Democrats are foreign policy (48%) and health care (44%), while Republicans point to the economy and jobs (68%) and terrorism and national security (46%) as the issues of most importance in determining their votes.

These overall results are quite similar to last year's responses, with the only notable difference being a slight increase in the importance of the economy and jobs (+10) for voters.

If the 2020 presidential election were to be held today, which of the following best describes how you would vote?

	2020	2019
Definitely President Donald Trump	21	10
Probably President Donald Trump	10	11
Probably former Vice President Joe Biden*	14	19
Definitely former Vice President Joe Biden*	42	50
Other**	4	-
Not sure	5	8
I would not vote	4	2

* In 2019, we asked about the Democratic Party candidate.
 ** In 2020, an option for "other" was added.

More than one-half of Iranian American respondents (56%) in the current survey say they will either “probably” or “definitely” vote for former Vice President Joe Biden for president in the 2020 presidential election; 31% say they will either “probably” or “definitely” vote for President Trump. Only 5% remain undecided at this time, with 4% saying they intend to vote for another candidate and 4% saying they will not vote.

While Iranian Americans who identify as Democrats or as Republicans report predictable voting patterns (i.e., Democrats: 9% Trump vs. 84% Biden; Republicans: 88% Trump vs. 8% Biden), among independents 17% say they will likely vote for Trump and 57% say they will likely vote for Biden.

What would you expect to be the two main goals of an Iranian American civic or advocacy organization? (Choose two.)

	2020	2019
Enhance Iranian American participation in the U.S. political process and increase the influence of Iranian Americans	42	50
Improve the image of Iranian Americans	36	39
Protect the civil rights of Iranian Americans*	35	-
Advocate for issues of importance for Iranian Americans in the United States	30	31
Preserve and promote Iranian culture and heritage	27	28
Influence U.S.-Iran policy	24	36
Other*	2	-
Not sure	2	8

*In 2020, an option for “protect the civil rights of Iranian Americans” and “other” were added.

The main goals for an Iranian American civic or advocacy organization most frequently selected by respondents in the current survey are: “enhancing Iranian American participation in the U.S. political process and increasing the influence of Iranian Americans” (42%), “improving the image of Iranian Americans” (36%), and “protecting the civil rights of Iranian Americans” (35%). Between one-quarter and one-third of respondents cite “advocating for issues of importance for Iranian Americans in the United States” (30%), “preserving and promoting Iranian culture and heritage” (27%), and “influencing U.S.-Iran policy” (24%) as the main goals they would expect for such an organization.

Comparing these results to last year’s survey, we find a significant decline in the percentage of respondents who expect that one of the main goals of an Iranian American civic organization would be to “influence U.S.-Iran policy” (from 36% in 2019 to 24% in 2020). In addition, a new option added to the current survey, the “protection of Iranian Americans’ civil rights,” is viewed as an expected goal for such an organization by 35% of respondents.

III. U.S.-Iran Relations

How do you rate President Trump’s handling of U.S.-Iran relations?				
	2020	2019	2018	2017
Excellent	17	13	15	7
Good	14	9	7	4
+	31	22	22	11
Fair	12	9	11	7
Poor	54	66	61	75
-	66	75	72	82
Not sure	3	3	6	8

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

When asked about President Trump’s handling of U.S.-Iran relations, two-thirds of Iranian American respondents (66%) give the president negative ratings (fair: 12%, poor: 54%). About three in 10 (31%) give his handling of U.S.-Iran relations positive ratings (excellent: 17%, good: 14%).

Political party affiliation is the only demographic variable of significance for these opinions. Democrats and independents overwhelmingly view Trump’s handling of U.S.-Iran relations negatively (Democrats: 86%, independents: 77%); positive ratings from these two groups are just 13% and 23%, respectively. On the other hand, 76% of Republican respondents give Trump positive ratings in this regard, while 21% hold negative opinions.

Overall, there is an uptick in Iranian Americans’ positive views of the president’s handling of U.S.-Iran relations since the earlier years of his term, up 9 points from 2018 and 2019. However, it is worth noting that these numbers remain markedly lower than the positive ratings given to President Obama’s handling of U.S.-Iran relations in 2016 (71%).

When it comes to U.S.-Iran relations, of the following list of issues, which two are most important to you? (Choose two.)					
	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Promotion of human rights and democracy in Iran	58	54	74	63	68
Lifting the U.S. trade embargo to support economic growth in Iran	29	38	44	50	36
Successful negotiation of a new nuclear agreement between the U.S. and Iran*	27	20	15	21	21
Promoting regime change in Iran	25	25	37	28	22
Preventing a war with Iran*	23	27	-	-	-
Limiting Iran’s role in supporting terrorist organizations or foreign military involvement	22	21	14	15	9
Keeping sanctions in place or tightening sanctions against Iran	14	8	7	8	17
Not sure	2	3	4	4	17

**The wording of these options has varied slightly in different survey years.*

The top issue for Iranian Americans with respect to U.S.-Iran relations continues to be “promotion of human rights and democracy in Iran” (58%); this has been the top issue for the last five years.

The next tier of issues of concern for Iranian Americans includes “lifting the U.S. trade embargo to support economic growth in Iran” (29%), “successful negotiation of a new nuclear agreement between the U.S. and Iran” (27%), and “promoting regime change in Iran” (25%).

Fewer than one-quarter of respondents cite “preventing a war with Iran” (23%) and “limiting Iran’s role in supporting terrorist organizations or foreign military involvement” (22%) as the most important issues related to U.S.-Iran relations. “Keeping sanctions in place or tightening sanctions” continues to be the issue of least importance (14%) with respect to U.S.-Iran relations for Iranian American respondents.

While “promotion of human rights and democracy in Iran” is the most important issue for respondents regardless of political party affiliation, with majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents holding this view, there is a complete divergence of opinion beyond that top choice. For Democrats and independents, lifting the trade embargo (D: 36%, I: 29%), a new nuclear agreement (D: 32%, I: 28%), and preventing a war with Iran (D: 27%, I: 28%) are the next most important issues. For Republican respondents, however, promoting regime change (37%), limiting Iran’s support of terrorism and in the region (26%), and sanctions (24%) are top concerns.

What should the top two priorities be for the U.S. government in dealing with Iran? (Choose two.)				
	2020	2018	2017	2016
Advancing democracy and promoting personal and civil rights	44	58	55	56
Allowing Americans to invest in Iran to improve the economy and create employment opportunities	32	45	46	52
Enhancing and facilitating humanitarian trade with Iran*	30	-	-	-
Enhance people to people ties through cultural diplomacy and educational exchanges	28	42	37	34
Negotiating a new nuclear agreement between the U.S. and Iran**	25	17	26	7
Give greater support to our allies in the Middle East to counter Iran’s regional ambitions	13	4	7	5
Tighten economic sanctions against the Iranian government	13	13	8	11
Support Iranian opposition groups and figures	13	13	8	8
Not sure	2	4	4	18

**In 2020, the option for “Enhancing and facilitating humanitarian trade with Iran” was added.
** In 2016 and 2017, this option was “Seek new areas of cooperation with the Iranian government.”*

The top two priorities for Iranian-American respondents with respect to the U.S government in dealing with Iran remain the same as they have been in past surveys: “advancing democracy and promoting personal and civil rights” (44%) and “allowing Americans to invest in Iran to improve the economy and create employment opportunities” (32%). These percentages are slightly lower in the current survey because of the addition of a new priority, “enhancing and facilitating humanitarian trade with Iran,” which is ranked third (30%), closely followed by “enhancing people to people ties through cultural diplomacy and educational exchanges” (28%) and “negotiating a new nuclear agreement” (25%).

About one in eight respondents consider “giving greater support to Middle East allies to counter Iran’s regional ambitions,” “tightening economic sanctions,” and “supporting Iranian opposition groups” to be top priorities for the U.S. government in dealing with Iran.

Again, we find political party affiliation to be the only subgroup with significant differences of opinion on these priorities. While advancing democracy, allowing Americans to invest in Iran, and negotiating a new nuclear agreement are priorities with bipartisan agreement, Republican respondents identify tightening economic sanctions (26%) and supporting Iranian opposition groups (25%) as much higher priorities than humanitarian trade (14%) and cultural diplomacy (14%). On the other hand, humanitarian trade and cultural diplomacy are areas that one-third or more of Democrats and independents identify as priorities.

Which outcome of renewed sanctions resulting from the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA seems more likely in your opinion?

	2020	2019	2018
That sanctions will produce the changes in Iranian policy that the Trump administration desires.	32	28	24
That sanctions will harm the Iranian people and increase support for hardliners' anti-American sentiment.	57	63	67
Not sure	12	9	9

Almost six in 10 Iranian American respondents (57%) think it is more likely that the renewed sanctions “will harm the Iranian people and increase support for hardliners’ anti-American sentiment,” while about one-third of respondents (32%) think it is more likely that the sanctions “will produce the changes in Iranian policy that the Trump administration desires.”

Democratic and independent respondents are twice as likely as their Republican counterparts to believe that the sanctions will harm the Iranian people and increase anti-American sentiment (67%/65% vs. 33%). On the other hand, a majority of Republicans think it is more likely that the sanctions will work as the administration intends (59% vs. 24% of Democrats and 23% of independents).

In addition, almost two-thirds (63%) of those whose families emigrated prior to 1990 believe the sanctions are harmful; one-quarter of this subgroup think the sanctions will work as intended. But among those whose families have emigrated since 1990, opinion is split, with 45% saying the sanctions will work and 48% saying they will only do harm.

Which option regarding “deal-making” with Iran do you favor?

	2020
Returning to JCPOA	29
Making a more comprehensive deal that would address both Iran’s nuclear ambitions and its engagement in regional conflicts	47
No deal	24

When asked which option they favor regarding making a new deal with Iran, 47% of Iranian American respondents say they would prefer “making a more comprehensive deal that would address both Iran’s nuclear ambitions and its engagement in regional conflicts.” About three in 10 respondents (29%) would opt to return to the JCPOA. One-quarter (24%) say they want no deal struck with Iran.

While about one-half of both Democrats (50%) and Republicans (52%) favor a more comprehensive deal, 40% of Democrats favor returning to the JCPOA compared to just 11% of Republican respondents. And while only 10% of Democratic respondents opt for “no deal,” 38% of Republicans favor not returning to negotiations with Iran at all.

Younger respondents are also far more likely than older respondents to say they favor a more comprehensive deal (18-34: 69% vs. 35+: 38%).

IV. Iran’s Government and Leadership

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

	2020	2019	2018
Grassroots democratic movement	44	40	50
Gradual reform through the current political structure	30	35	28
Economic sanctions	11	8	11
Covert action/military attack	10	9	5
Not sure	6	8	7

Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Iranian American opinion regarding the most likely approach for moving Iran toward a more democratic society remains stable. In the current survey the top choices, as in 2018 and 2019, are a grassroots democratic movement (44%) followed by gradual reform through the current political structure (30%). The two least preferred options among survey respondents are economic sanctions (11%) and covert action or military attack (10%).

As we found in 2019, younger respondents (ages 18-34) prefer gradual reform through the current political structure (40%) to a grassroots democratic movement (35%), while older respondents (ages 35+) hold the opposite view (gradual reform: 24% vs. grassroots movement: 48%).

While a grassroots democratic movement is the top choice of respondents regardless of political party affiliation, it is more frequently selected by Democrats and independents (50% of each group) than by Republican respondents (32%). Among Republicans there is also significantly higher support for economic sanctions (22%) and covert action/military attack (21%) than among Democrats (6% and 6%, respectively) and independents (8% and 9%, respectively).

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)?

	2020	2018
Strongly support	8	3
Somewhat support	16	3
Somewhat oppose	13	2
Strongly oppose	45	48
I don’t have enough information to form an opinion	18	44

Almost six in 10 respondents (58%) oppose the U.S. government backing the MEK as a legitimate opposition force against the Islamic Republic of Iran, with 45% saying they strongly oppose such backing of the MEK. On the other hand, just 8% of respondents say they strongly support the U.S. government backing the MEK as a legitimate opposition force and an additional 16% somewhat support this idea. Almost one in five respondents (18%) say they don’t have enough information to form an opinion on this question.

Those most likely to express opposition to the MEK include respondents ages 55+ (84%), those who favor returning to the JCPOA (72%), and those who would definitely vote for Biden if the election were held today (69%). On the other hand, those subgroups most likely to express strong support for the MEK include those respondents who say they would definitely or probably vote for President Trump if the election were held today (18%) and who rate Trump’s handling of U.S.-Iran relations excellent or good (18%).

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)?

	2020	2018
Strongly support	29	30
Somewhat support	24	20
Somewhat oppose	14	8
Strongly oppose	18	19
I don't have enough information to form an opinion	15	23

About three in 10 Iranian American respondents (29%) strongly support the U.S. government backing Reza Pahlavi as a legitimate opposition force against the IRI, with a majority saying they at least somewhat support him (53%). Overall, one-third oppose him, including 18% who say they strongly oppose Pahlavi. Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents say they do not have enough information to form an opinion.

Republicans are twice as likely to be strongly supportive of Reza Pahlavi than Democrats and independents, with 53% strongly supporting him (and 70% saying that they are at least somewhat supportive), compared to one in five Democrats (20%) and one-quarter of independents (27%) who strongly support him.

Delving more deeply into the data, we find that levels of those who strongly support Pahlavi are highest among those who would definitely vote for President Trump if the election were today (64%) and consider Trump's handling of U.S.-Iran relations to be excellent (68%).

Methodology & Demographics

Zogby Research Services (ZRS) was commissioned by PAAIA to conduct, in partnership with Zogby Analytics, a live operator telephone survey of 406 Iranian American adults. The survey was conducted between September 8 and 20, 2020. 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 406 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.

18-34	32%
35-44	16%
45-54	16%
55-64	18%
65+	18%
Male	52%
Female	48%
Income <\$50K	18%
Income \$50K-\$100K	34%
Income >\$100K	48%
East	21%
South	27%
Central/Great Lakes	12%
West	40%
Married	58%
Single, never married	27%

Divorced/widowed/separated	12%
Civil union/domestic partnership	4%
Family moved to US since 1990	36%
Family moved before 1990	64%
No college degree	14%
College degree/+	86%
Muslim	36%
Baha'i	4%
Jewish	6%
Zoroastrian	15%
Christian	9%
Agnostic	12%
Atheist	7%
Other religion	11%
Democrat	44%
Republican	22%
Independent/Unaffiliated/Minor	34%

