

AMERICAN MUSLIM ALLIANCE

" From Strategic Thinking to Concrete Results "

ELECTION ADVISORY:

TO ALL AMA CHAPTERS AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIVISTS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

"Our vote is the best guarantee of our rights and the best expression of our citizenship."
AMA/AMT National Chair, Dr. Agha Saeed

The American Muslim Alliance, in collaboration with the American Muslim Taskforce, has launched the largest mobilization drive in its history for the 2008 Presidential election campaign.

Because voter mobilization efforts are generally credited with increasing turnout, AMA's Get Out The Vote (GOTV) efforts to "Mobilize and Publicize" can make a distinct impact on races both at the national and local level. "When elections are at their closest, American Muslims are at their greatest."

While AMA National is strictly nonpartisan, its branches, however, are free to choose either a partisan approach or a more comprehensive multi-partisan approach to reflect the wide make-up of their native communities in mobilizing efforts.

Publicizing the voter turnout, mobilization efforts, and identifying distinct voting patterns, where possible, are of critical importance for all AMA chapters and activists. In conjunction with reporting on these mobilization efforts, AMA chapters should highlight the political context when explaining levels of participation.

Action Recommendations

Cognizant of the role that the American Muslim voters can play in this election, the AMA is asking that American Muslim voters keep their eyes on real issues like civil liberties, the economy, human rights, war, and health care, and maximize their impact by taking the following four steps in the next three weeks: Final Voter Registration, Voter Mobilization, Voter Documentation, and Voter Education.

1) **Final Voter Registration** - Continue with voter registration in all states, with special emphasis in key battle ground states and swing counties, where there is still time to register to vote. Also, try to obtain absentee ballots for those who are planning to be out of town on Nov 4, the day of election.

- a. [Click here for states with open Voter Registration.](#)
- b. [Click here for states with Absentee Ballots](#)

2) **Voter Mobilization:** American Muslims must vote together for a common purpose, and vote in large numbers to affect real change and to have a greater role in future policy discussions. What is needed:

- a. Organize a get-out-to-vote team in your district / neighborhood.
- b. [Click here for states with Voting Absentee for citizens living outside of the U.S.](#)
- c. [Click here for states with early voting](#)
- d. Develop resources such as :
 - i. Poll Maps
 - ii. Transportation for election day for those unable to go to a voting booth.
- e. Organize absentee ballots for the least likely-to-vote sections of the community.
- f. Maintain an effective and visible presence in all local forums.

In addition Muslim community leaders need to know why people don't vote. What are the underlying reasons for not going to the polls? According to a Census Bureau survey, time constraint is the single biggest reason given by Americans not voting. Here is a summary of their findings:

Americans not voting. Here is a summary of their findings:

- NO TIME : 21.5%
- Didn't Like Candidates: 13%
- Ill or faced Emergency: 15%
- Lacked Transportation: 4%
- Out of Town: 11%
- Polls too long: 1%
- Failed to Make it: 21.3%
- Decline to state 13.2

The AMA recommends that the community leaders should find a suitable response for each of the above obstacles: help those who are going to be out of town, or who are ill, or who cannot get time off from work, to obtain absentee ballots, provide transportation for those who lack transportation, and remind, encourage and car pool with those likely to forget.

3) **Voter Education** - The AMA wants its members and supporters to continue with community education forums and seminars.

- a. Research and compare candidates from your district and issue scorecards for the convenience of your community.
- b. * **Organize a candidates' forum /townhall meeting and enable your community to have a direct dialogue with the candidate. (Identify and engage at least one elected official in issue to concern to yourself and your community.)**
- c. Walk the local community through each item on the ballot.

Make sure that Muslim voters are as knowledgeable as local and state issues as about federal and international issues. These educational programs should be premised on a 'think globally and act locally' approach.

4) **Voter Documentation** - Though the AMT and several of its member organizations are planning to conduct nationwide surveys and studies of Muslim voter turnout and voting patterns, the AMT wants local groups and organizations to help document and publicize the Muslim vote. A proven record of American Muslim vote - voting in high numbers, together, and for a common purpose - is one of our greatest strengths as citizens of the United States.

As Nov. 4 approaches it becomes increasingly apparent that each vote will count. Every eligible voter must register, do the research, make an informed selection, go to the polls and make a choice. As we leave the polling station, throw your modesty away, walk up to any journalists or exit pollsters you see, introduce yourself and tell them who you voted for and why.

For more information visit www.amaweb.org and www.americanmuslimvoter.net

[Click Here for AMA's Civic Education Toolkit](#)

The AMA is a civic education and leadership training organization with 101 chapters nationwide. Its goals are:

Political education.

Building coalitions with other citizens' group.

Creation of organized political structures at district, county, state and national levels to bring about organized participation in the two-party system.

Training American Muslims as leaders.

Setting up internship programs for Muslim Youth Developing institutionalized capability for political research and analysis.

Help our fellow Americans understand Islam and Muslims, and provide an intellectual medium for understanding the world and world events.