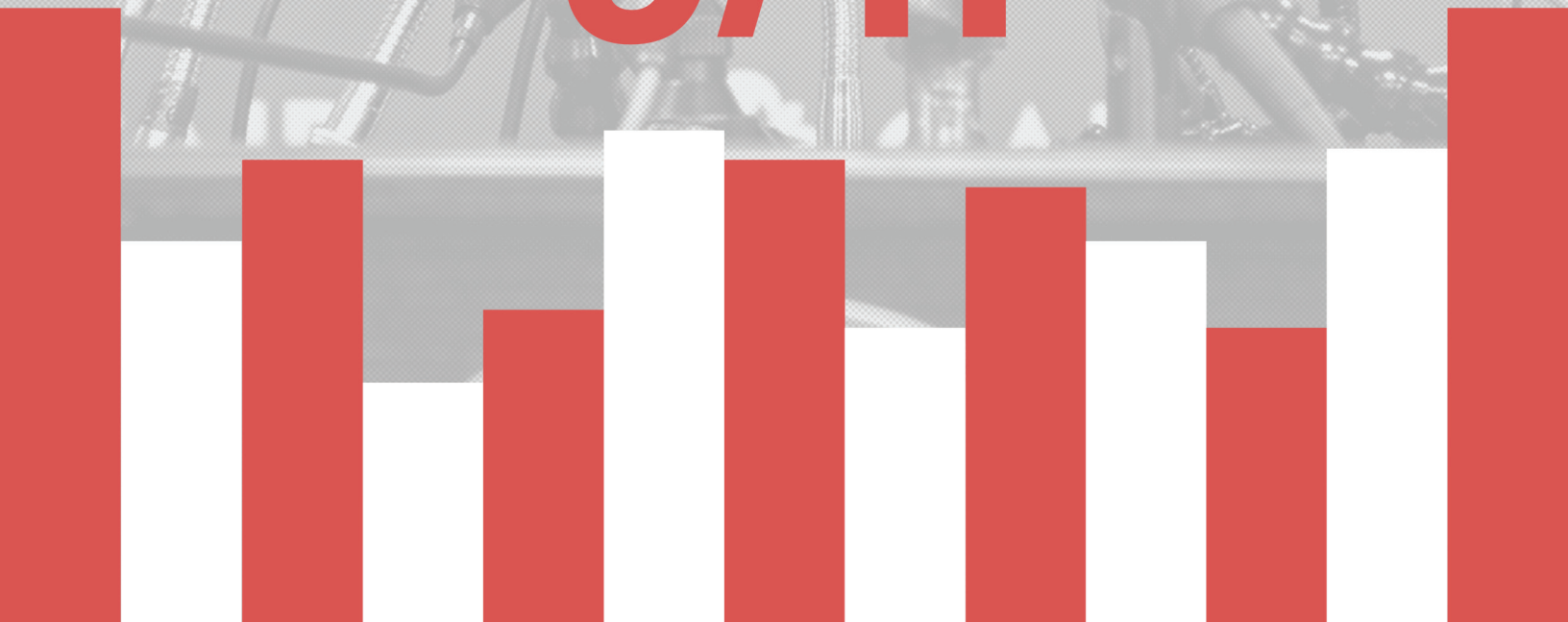


Remembrance & Resilience: American Muslims

20
YEARS AFTER

9/11



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CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

Direct questions about this report to:

Council on American-Islamic Relations
453 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003
Tel: 202-488-8787, Fax: 202-488-0833, www.cair.com

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INTRODUCTION

The Council on American-Islamic Relations has produced and released this report to help our nation mark the twentieth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Titled **“Remembrance and Resilience: American Muslims Twenty Years After 9/11,”** this educational report reviews and analyzes the ways 9/11 has impacted our country and, in particular, the Muslim community in the United States. The report covers four critical areas:

I. Unconstitutional National Security Policies Post-9/11 (Pages 3 – 7)

After September 11, 2001, the government instituted several programs that eroded civil liberties of all Americans and targeted Muslims in America, including the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), the Patriot Act, the No-Fly list, the Watchlist, and the Muslim Ban. This report discusses those programs and their unique impact on American Muslims.

II. Hate Crimes Post-9/11 (Pages 8 – 9)

The report analyzes trends in hate crimes after September 11, 2001. We found that hate crimes fluctuated in the years after 9/11, rising and levelling out before sharply increasing a decade after the attacks in response to various current events such as the invasion of Iraq, the mobilization of anti-Muslim hate groups against Park51, the rise of the Tea Party, terrorist attacks by extremist groups, and the presidential campaign of Donald Trump.

III. Survey of American Muslim Perspectives, Experiences, and Key Findings (Pages 10 – 30)

A critical part of this report is our survey of American Muslims. The survey of over 1,000 American Muslims provided insights into the state of the community, including their perspectives on post-9/11 government activities such as wars overseas and surveillance policies here at home, their observations regarding issues such as anti-Muslim discrimination and media coverage of Islam, and how Muslims of different races and genders report different views and experiences.

IV. Meeting and Overcoming Challenges Created by 9/11 (Pages 31 – 32)

Finally, the report notes examples of American Muslim resilience. That is, Muslims working to overcome some of the challenges that September 11th created for the country and the community in particular by engaging in more interfaith activities, civil rights activism, and political engagement.

We encourage journalists, academics, non-profits, and religious institutions to use this report to bolster their understanding of the American Muslim community.

I. UNCONSTITUTIONAL “NATIONAL SECURITY” POLICIES POST-9/11

Following September 11, 2001, the rights and religious liberties of all Americans were eroded in a series of overzealous attempts by federal and state governments, lawmakers, and law enforcement agencies to secure the nation. American Muslims often bore the brunt of excesses committed in the name of national security.

For the past 20 years, CAIR has worked to empower American Muslims and allies to fight these discriminatory, unconstitutional, and anti-Muslim programs and laws. While some of the most egregious programs like rounding up Muslim immigrants and requiring Muslim male immigrants to periodically register with the government have come to an end, other programs have eroded the civil liberties of all Americans, particularly American Muslims.

Below is a list of major programs and policies that have undermined the rights of Americans since September 11, 2001 here in the United States and around the world:

Rounding Up Muslims: In the days and weeks following September 11, 2001, the federal government rounded up and detained [nearly 800 Muslim citizens and immigrants](#), holding them for days or weeks without being charged and interrogated under the false pretense of being a threat. Under this DOJ and FBI-led program, many Muslim immigrants were deported without reason or charge.

The Patriot Act: In passing the 2001 U.S.A. Patriot Act, Congress adopted without hearings or debates [wide-sweeping federal surveillance authorities](#). That included authorizing FISC (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court) courts to issue rubber-stamped warrants and permit the warrantless searches of private records, property, and communications. The severity of these unconstitutional abuses would only later be revealed by whistleblowers like Edward Snowden and reporters like Glenn Greenwald.

National Security Letters: National Security Letters are federal administrative orders compelling their private recipients to provide information to federal law enforcement investigators. They do not require a judge or hold the legal weight of a warrant. The use of “national security letters” is not new, but with new authorities provided by the Patriot Act, the FBI no longer had to have specific facts linking a subject to a foreign power to justify each letter. Now, to issue a national security letter, the FBI merely has to certify that the information is “relevant” to a national security investigation, leading to the private information

of thousands of Americans being unconstitutionally divulged without a warrant. Between 2003 and 2005, the FBI issued an excess of 143,000 National Security Letters with the DOJ Inspector General's office, finding the letters were routinely issued [without proper authorization and outside statutory and regulatory requirements](#).

The Watchlist: For nearly 20 years, the watchlisting system has demonized and stigmatized the Muslim community. Created by then President George W. Bush in 2003 through executive order, the Terrorism Screening Database (TSDB) — colloquially known as the “watchlist” — currently includes more than one million names.

Placing countless American Muslims on the No Fly and Selectee List, the watchlisting system is a set of interlocking national security programs throughout the federal government that primarily acts as a “stop-and-frisk” program that [targets for Muslims enhanced screening and interrogations](#). The watchlist has been used as a tool to target innocent Muslims secretly and systematically without any due process or accountability.

In addition to the fact that the discriminatory placement of innocent Americans on the unconstitutional watch list occurs without due process, the watchlist has created everyday hardships for American Muslim families, including additional invasive screening and hours-long detentions; being harassed – and in at least one prominent case, even tortured – at U.S. ports of entry; having their bank accounts closed without explanation or notice; not being able to send funds to their parents and family through wire transfer; not being allowed to test drive or buy a car; being treated as armed and dangerous by local law enforcement during routine traffic stops, which means police approach the person with guns drawn; not being allowed to get jobs at airports; the FBI and other agencies using the person's watch list status to pressure the person to become a government spy on their own communities.

CAIR and several other civil liberty groups are engaged in multiple federal lawsuits [challenging the constitutionality of the watchlist](#).

Registering Muslim Immigrants: Established by the George W. Bush administration, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) program required non-immigrant men and boys over the age of 16 from 24 predominantly Muslim countries and North Korea to report to an immigration office to be photographed, fingerprinted, and interviewed. Those targeted by the NSEERS program were also required to leave the United States through specified ports. Anyone who failed to comply with the program faced arrest and

deportation. The program was effectively [dropped by the DHS](#) in 2011 and was viewed by many as an ineffective and burdensome program involving a massive profiling campaign targeting individuals based on their Muslim religion and ethnicity. The Obama administration later officially disbanded the program.

Entrapping Muslims: Over the last two decades, the FBI has built a network of at least 15,000 registered undercover informants, many paid to infiltrate American Muslim communities.

CAIR estimates that nearly half of all federal terrorism prosecutions during this period involved the use of an informant, and about a third of sting operations were driven by an informant who led the plot. A number of those cases involved financially motivated informants [going to great lengths](#) over long periods of time to radicalize and enable individuals – including mentally ill persons – to commit acts of scripted terrorism.

Mass Surveillance of Americans, Including Muslim Leaders: Under Section 215 of the Patriot Act, Congress enabled the NSA and FBI to illegally collect the phone, email, and online records of millions of law-abiding Americans in the name of national security for more than a decade.

In 2015, Congress attempted to limit Section 215 to only collection on “[specific selection terms](#).” However, CAIR maintains that it could still permit courts to order private businesses to turn over large quantities of phone records from certain area codes, ZIP codes, and regions of the U.S. It could also be interpreted to permit collection from certain electronic devices, email hosts, or other internet records that contain “specific” search “terms.”

CAIR believes that NSA meta-data programs primarily [spy on and collect the communications of Arab and Muslim Americans](#). CAIR’s national executive director was among those U.S. Muslim leaders being targeted for FBI and NSA surveillance under FISA. Another leader spied on was attorney Faisal Gill, an American citizen, U.S. Navy veteran, and former Bush administration DHS official.

New York City Spying on Muslims: From 2001 to 2014, the New York city Police Department carried out an illegal and [unconstitutional human mapping program](#) that spied on and infiltrated Islamic institutions, including houses of worship, student groups, and businesses that cater to the Muslim community. [According to the Associated Press](#), NYPD officers – in cooperation with the CIA – conducted “surveillance of entire Muslim neighborhoods, chronicling every aspect of daily life, including where people eat, pray and get their hair cut.” The NYPD also recruited informants referred to as “mosque crawlers” to monitor religious sermons without any suspicion of wrongdoing. Police officials acknowledge that the program generated [zero criminal leads](#).

In 2014, the [NYPD disbanded](#) its special unit that conducted widespread warrantless surveillance of law-abiding Muslims and settled one of several lawsuits in 2018, agreeing not to conduct surveillance based on religion or ethnicity, paying \$75,000 in damages and \$1 million dollars in legal fees.

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): From its inception, the [underlying goal of CVE](#) has been to gain access to, surveil and collect information on the American Muslim community. Established by the Obama administration in 2011-12, the program was piloted in three areas with large Muslim populations: Boston, Los Angeles, and the state of Minnesota. CVE components include intervening in an individual's supposed path toward violent extremism, interdicting criminal activity, and reintegrating those convicted of criminal activity into society.

The true motive of singularly targeting the Muslim community was exposed by the [Trump administration's withdrawal of CVE funds](#) from projects that did not focus on Muslims and in which law enforcement was not involved. While the Biden administration is attempting to remake CVE to address broader forms of extremism and decouple programs from law enforcement, American Muslims, for a good reason, remain wary of new iterations of the program.

Anti-Muslim Bills: Anti-Muslim hate groups and Islamophobic politicians also introduced anti-Sharia or anti-foreign law bills in more than 30 states in attempt to codify their opposition to Muslims. Since 2010, elected state representatives have [introduced at least 221 anti-Muslim "foreign law" bills in 44 state legislatures](#). As of 2021, 15 of these bills are law in 13 states, covering nearly a quarter of the nation.

The language these bills use is often purposefully broad to block legal challenges to their discriminatory nature. In 2012, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit upheld a lower court's decision to block implementation of an Oklahoma state constitutional amendment that would have prohibited courts from applying or considering "Sharia law" in a federal court challenge brought by CAIR.

The following year, Oklahoma legislators circumvented constitutionality concerns by hiding the anti-Sharia bill's bias behind a broader, facially neutral "foreign law" ban and passed anti-Muslim law HB 1060. CAIR has challenged similar unconstitutional and discriminatory "anti-Sharia," "anti-foreign law," and "anti-Islamic Indoctrination" bills that have been introduced in state legislatures nationwide.

The Forever Wars: The 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) authorizes U.S. military attacks on those connected with the 9/11 terrorist attacks and gives the president even more sweeping powers. In combination with the 2002 AUMF, which authorized the use of force against the nation of Iraq, the United States has spent some six trillion U.S. tax dollars to [conduct military operations](#) in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Cuba (Guantanamo Bay), Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Georgia, and the Philippines. These military interventions have been directly tied to the deaths of thousands of U.S. and allied soldiers and over 250,000 innocent Muslim civilians.

Muslim Ban: The Trump Administration's discriminatory Muslim and African Bans were the culmination of 15 years of anti-Muslim politicians, media, and hate groups fearmongering about Muslims in a failed attempt to disenfranchise an entire worldwide religious community.

Repealed on the [first day of the Biden administration](#), the Muslim Ban was [first authorized on January 27, 2017](#), and amended several times to place varying levels of discriminatory travel restrictions on mostly Muslim and African citizens and government officials. Countries included Burma, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Nigeria, Iran, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Venezuela, and Yemen.

[Because of the ban](#), thousands of Muslim families have been ripped apart, students have been deprived of educational opportunities, and the sick have been blocked from receiving treatment.

II. HATE CRIME TRENDS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

September 11, 2001 sparked an immediate and deadly rise in hate crimes across the United States that has yet to fully subside twenty years later. Although the attacks themselves sparked a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment, Islamophobia became a tool of manipulation used by politicians and media voices to instill and escalate fear of Islam and advance disastrous government policies against Muslims here and overseas. Over the past 20 years, their rhetoric has come at a deadly cost and resulted in a number of hate crimes against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim.

The first hate crime in the aftermath of 9/11 was against a Sikh American named Balbir Singh Sodhi. On September 15, 2001, a man in a pickup truck passed by Sodhi's gas station and [killed](#) him, assuming he was a Muslim man. On the same day, Sodhi's killer opened fire on several other people who were Arab. Those victims all survived their attacker.

In 2000, the FBI [documented](#) 28 incidents against Muslims. However, the number of incidents surged to 481 in 2001, an increase of 1,600%. In the year after 9/11, CAIR documented 1,717 anti-Muslim incidents, with the largest reports comprising of hate messages and harassment. In 2002, the FBI recorded a 67% decrease in hate crime incidents against Muslims. In comparison, CAIR [reported](#) 602 complaints of discrimination in 2002, which constituted a 15% increase over the previous year. Moreover, CAIR [compared](#) their findings in 2003 with the year preceding September 11, which showed a 64 percent increase.

Between 2004-2009, hate crimes against Muslims remained steady. However, in 2010, the FBI [recorded](#) 160 hate crimes, a 49% increase from 2009. This was largely due to the "Ground Zero mosque" [controversy](#), a well-organized anti-Muslim propaganda campaign against a planned Islamic center in lower Manhattan. Anti-Muslim hate groups who mobilized during this controversy also played a major role in spreading the conspiracy theory that Muslims were plotting to impose "Sharia law" on the United States. So did the Tea Party, which swept into political power during the 2010 midterm elections. 2011 saw [approximately](#) 160 hate crimes against Muslims. Overall, hate crimes against Muslims remained constant between 2011-2014.

In 2016, CAIR [recorded](#) 260 hate crime incidents. This rise can be directly connected to events in the preceding years, including violent attacks by ISIS and anti-Muslim campaign rhetoric, including Donald Trump's call for a complete ban on Muslim immigrants. The following year, President Trump signed an executive order banning all refugees and nationals of seven Muslim-majority countries from

entry into the country. The announcement, coupled with his anti-Muslim rhetoric, also made a significant impact on the lives of American Muslims.

In 2017, CAIR [documented](#) 464 incidents pertaining to the unconstitutional Muslim Ban. That was a staggering 18 percent of the total number of anti-Muslim bias incidents recorded in 2017. Moreover, CAIR [reported](#) 300 hate crimes during 2017, with damage and destruction of property being the most common type of crime.

In 2021, CAIR released its civil rights report titled *Resilience in the Face of Hate*. There was a significant [drop](#) in hate crimes in 2020, which CAIR believes is because of the coronavirus outbreak. Despite this, more than 6,000 complaints have been [recorded](#) for 2020.

III. SURVEY OF AMERICAN MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES & EXPERIENCES

CAIR conducted an online survey of American Muslims from August 12, 2021, until September 3, 2021 (11:59 PM). CAIR received a total of 1,338 responses to our survey. CAIR's survey provided significant insights into the lived experiences of American Muslims 20 years after September 11, 2001. This section includes a list of key findings, a description of the survey methodology, analysis of the survey, and the full results.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

CAIR received a total of 1,338 responses to our survey. Of the 1,338, we received 1,053 complete responses. Below are the key findings from CAIR's survey.

1. **63%** of American Muslims believe that American media coverage of Muslims has not become more accurate in the years since 9/11.
2. **40%** of respondents said that they are frequently stopped for extra screening or questioning at airports [strongly agree (**20%**) and agree (**20%**)]. This number is on par with the amount of complaints CAIR receives concerning immigration and travel related issues.
3. **95%** of Muslims said that when they hear negative comments about Islam and Muslims, they always (**45%**) or sometimes (**50%**) speak out.
4. **69%** of our respondents said that they have personally experienced one or more incidents of anti-Muslim bigotry or discrimination since 9/11. Moreover, **83%** said that they know a Muslim who has personally experienced anti-Muslim bigotry or discrimination since 9/11.
5. **79%** of our respondents said that they witnessed or experienced increased anti-Muslim bigotry after the 9/11 attacks. **69%** said that they witnessed or experienced it after President Trump's Muslim Ban and **51%** stated that they witnessed or experienced it after the invasion of Iraq. [Note: Respondents were asked to check all that apply].
6. **34%** of those surveyed said that anti-Muslim rhetoric in the years since 9/11 has had an impact on their mental health [strongly agree (**14%**) and agree (**20%**)].

7. **47%** of Muslims reported feeling comfortable requesting a religious accommodation at school or work. **19%** said that they feel somewhat comfortable while **19%** do not feel comfortable.
8. African American Muslims are more likely to be comfortable requesting a religious accommodation at school or work (**58% strongly agree or agree**) and more likely to always feel comfortable wearing Islamic religious attire in public (**52%**) than other ethnic groups in the American Muslim community, including respondents who identify as White, African, Arab, South Asian, etc.
9. **72%** of Muslim women have personally experienced one or more incidents of anti-Muslim bigotry or discrimination since 9/11, compared to **67%** of Muslim men. Muslim women also reported feeling less accepted in American society (**56%**) compared to Muslim men (**65%**).
10. **63%** of Muslims report that their mosques have engaged in increased interfaith work since 9/11.

METHODOLOGY OF OUR SURVEY

The purpose of this survey was to better understand the lived experiences of American Muslims 20 years after 9/11. *How comfortable do American Muslims feel practicing their faith in public? Do American Muslims continue to feel singled out for discrimination? Which post-9/11 political event contributed most to anti-Muslim bigotry? What are their views on media coverage of Islam and Muslims 20 years after September 11, 2001? How do Muslim experiences in America differ based on gender and race?* These are a few of the many questions this poll sought to answer.

CAIR designed and conducted a questionnaire using SurveyMonkey, an online survey software used to create professional surveys. This software automatically analyzed our data and gave us valuable insights with breakdowns of answers and comparisons to respondents based on their demographic information. For the questionnaire, CAIR chose different topics that concern American Muslims today, including media, foreign policy, and discrimination. The majority of our questions took the form of a Likert scale with a few multiple-choice questions.

The survey was administered online using a generated link. In addition to emails sent to mailing lists used by Muslim Americans, social media platforms were used to advertise the survey. Platforms included Instagram and Twitter. The survey was also promoted through paid Facebook ads targeted at individuals in the United States who follow a number of Islamic organizations on Facebook. Survey respondents were first asked if they identified as Muslim. If they answered “NO,” the survey would end immediately. If they answered “YES,” respondents were asked 20 additional questions. CAIR staff also administered the survey at local mosques during Friday prayer services using a QR code.

The survey was open from August 12, 2021, until September 3, 2021 (11:59 PM). CAIR received a total of 1,338 responses to the survey. Of the 1,338 total responses, we received 1,053 complete responses with a completion rate of 79%. With an [estimated](#) national population of 8 million American Muslims, the poll’s margin of error is +/- 4%, with a confidence level of 95%.

Survey respondents included 610 men (58%), 432 women (41%) , and 11 (1%) individuals who preferred not to answer from across the nation. Those surveyed identified their race or ethnicity as being African (4.37%, 46), African American (8%, 88), Arab (25%, 261), South Asian (42%, 445), White/Caucasian (16%, 166), multiethnic (4%, 37), or other races and ethnicities. While the survey respondents’ racial or gender makeup does not exactly match the demographic composition of the American Muslim community, any notable differences in responses based on gender and ethnicity are highlighted in the survey analysis section.

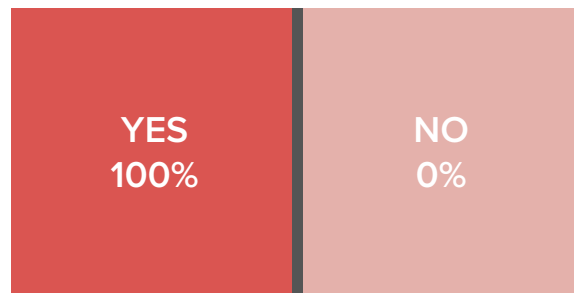
FULL SURVEY RESULTS

CAIR received a total of 1,338 responses to our survey, including 1,053 complete responses. Below, you will find our survey results with answer choices, responses (percentages), and total whole numbers.

QUESTION

01

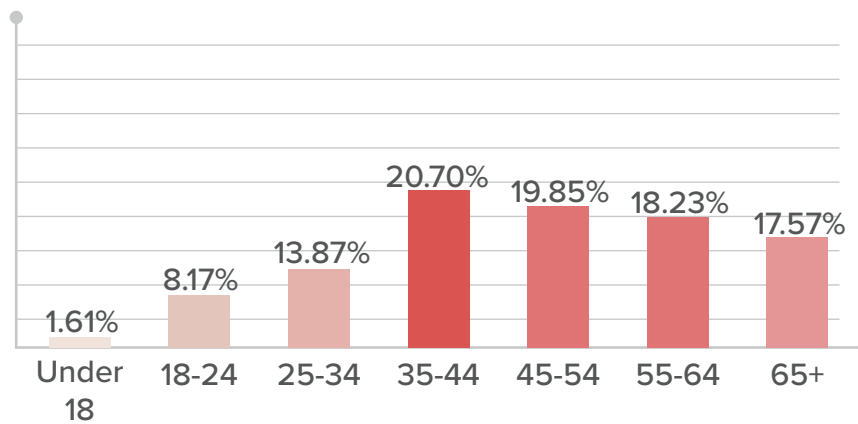
DO YOU IDENTIFY AS MUSLIM?



QUESTION

02

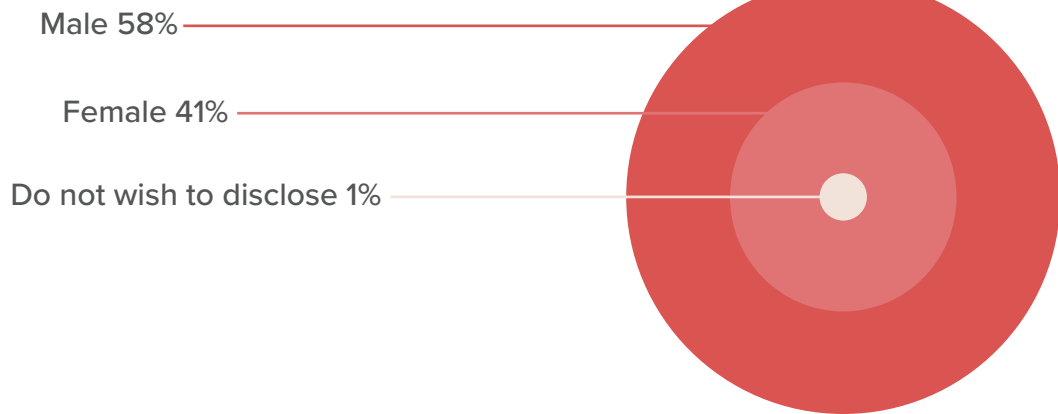
WHAT IS YOUR AGE GROUP?



QUESTION

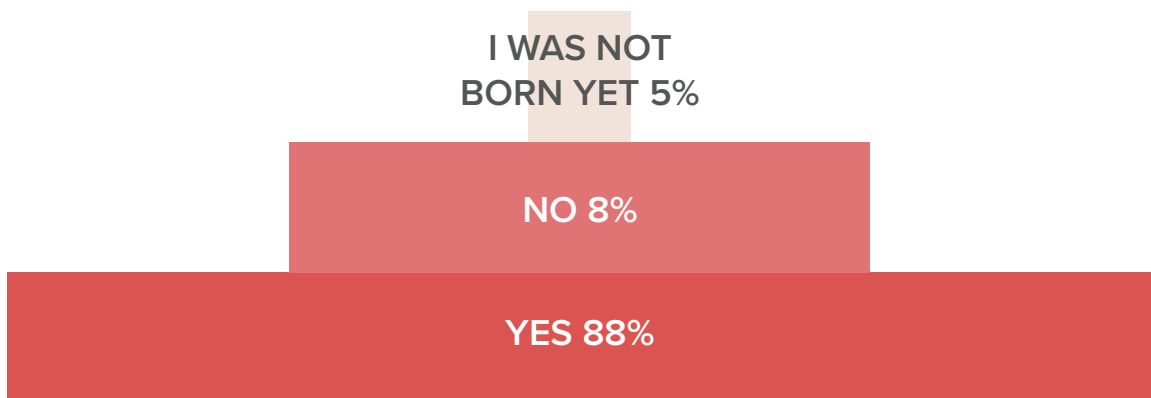
03

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?



QUESTION

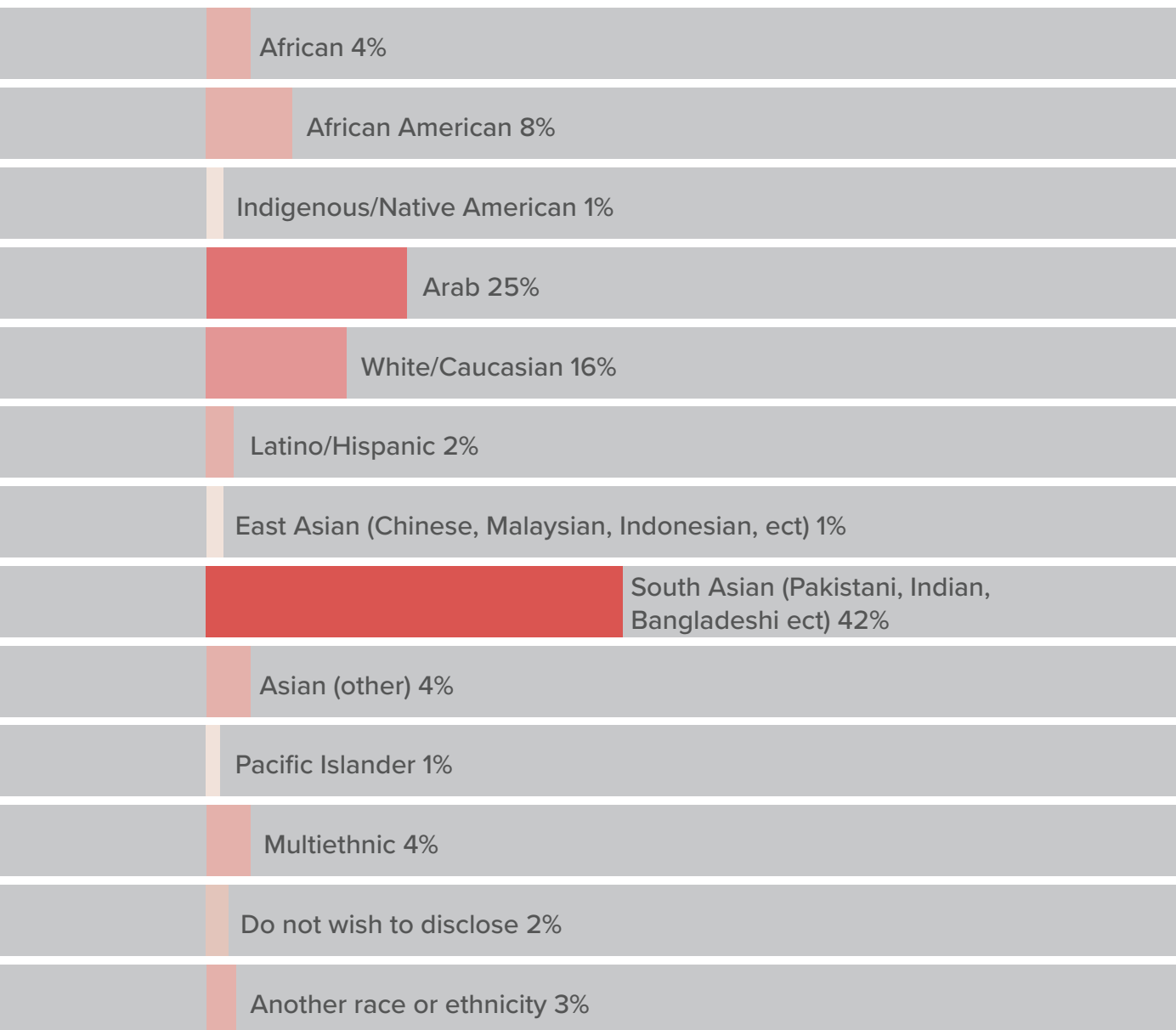
04

DID YOU IDENTIFY AS A MUSLIM
WHEN 9/11 OCCURRED?

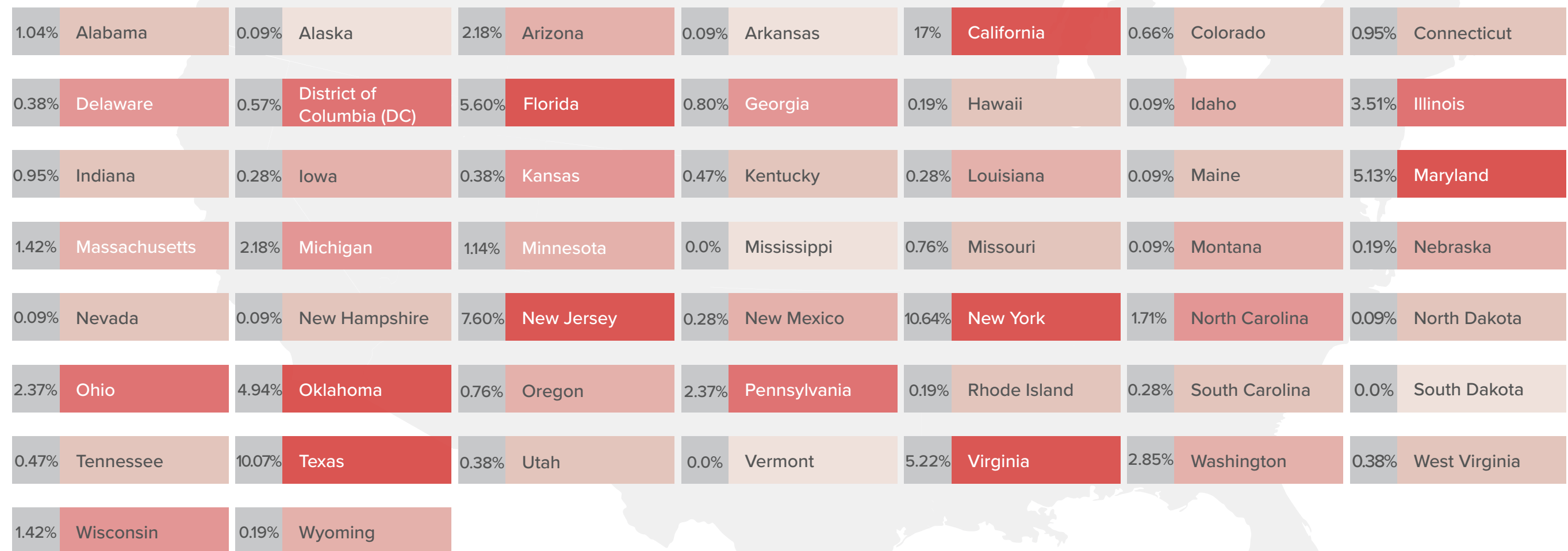
QUESTION

05

WHAT IS YOUR RACE OR ETHNICITY?
SELECT ALL THAT APPLY



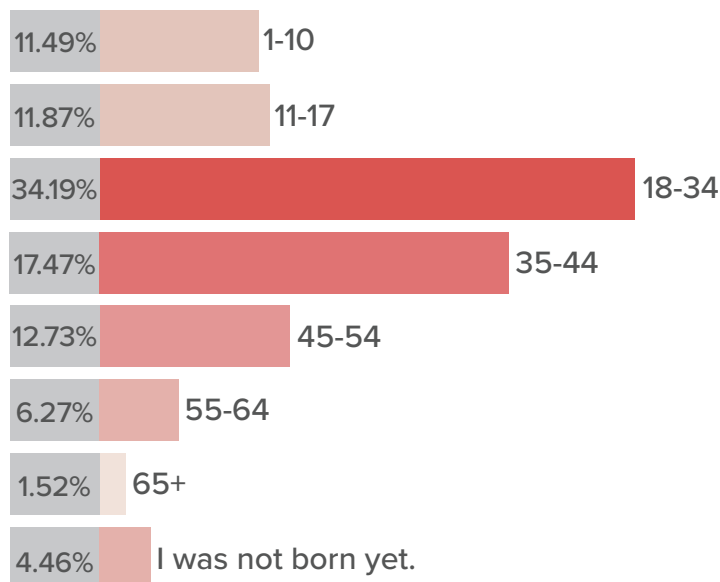
WHAT STATE DO YOU RESIDE IN?



QUESTION

07

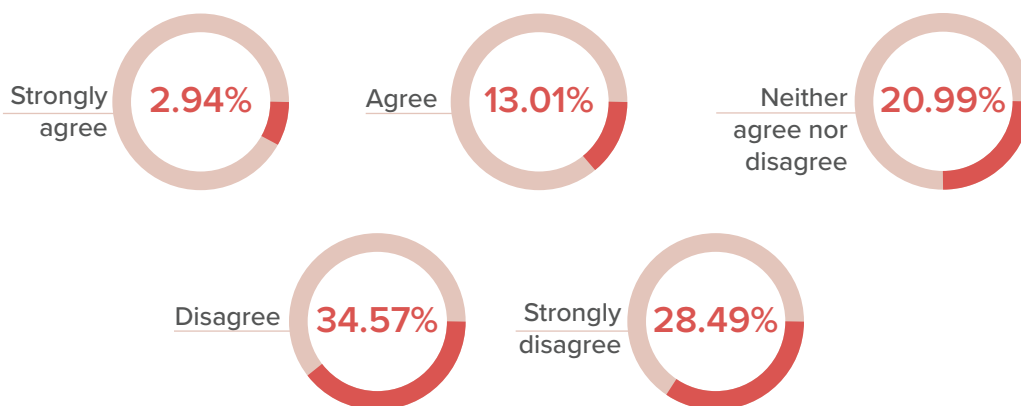
HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN 9/11
HAPPENED?



QUESTION

08

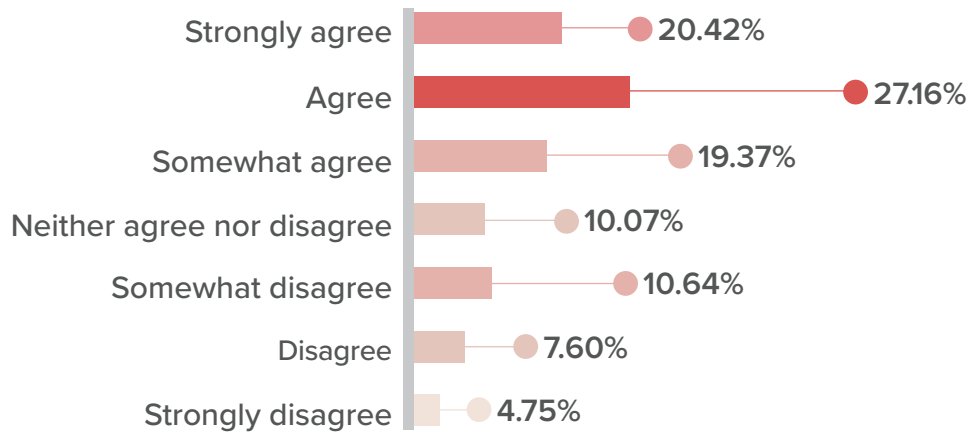
AMERICAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF
MUSLIMS HAS BECOME MORE
ACCURATE IN THE YEARS SINCE 9/11.



QUESTION

09

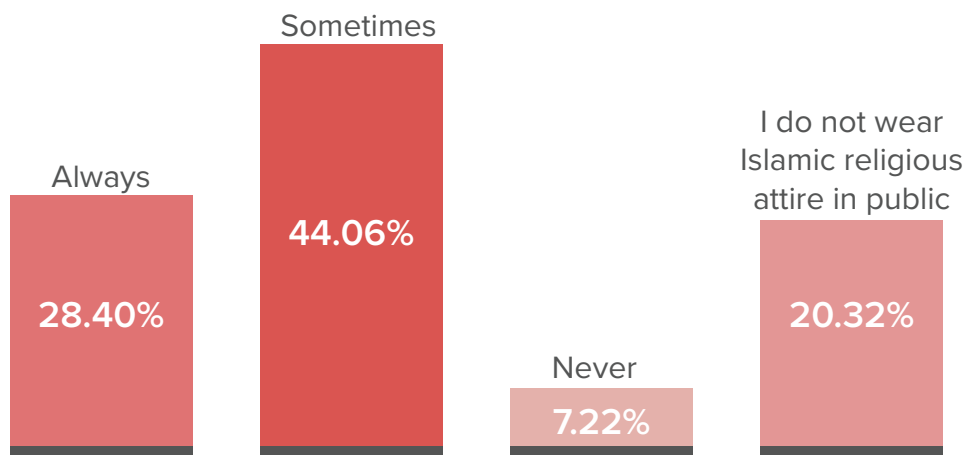
I AM COMFORTABLE REQUESTING A RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION AT SCHOOL OR WORK.



QUESTION

10

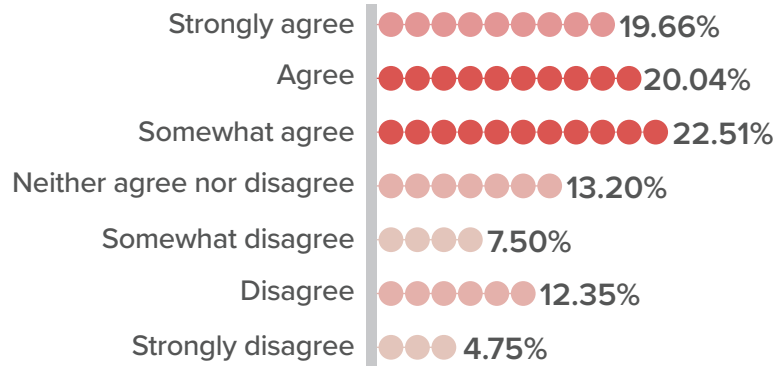
I AM COMFORTABLE WEARING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS ATTIRE IN PUBLIC.



QUESTION

11

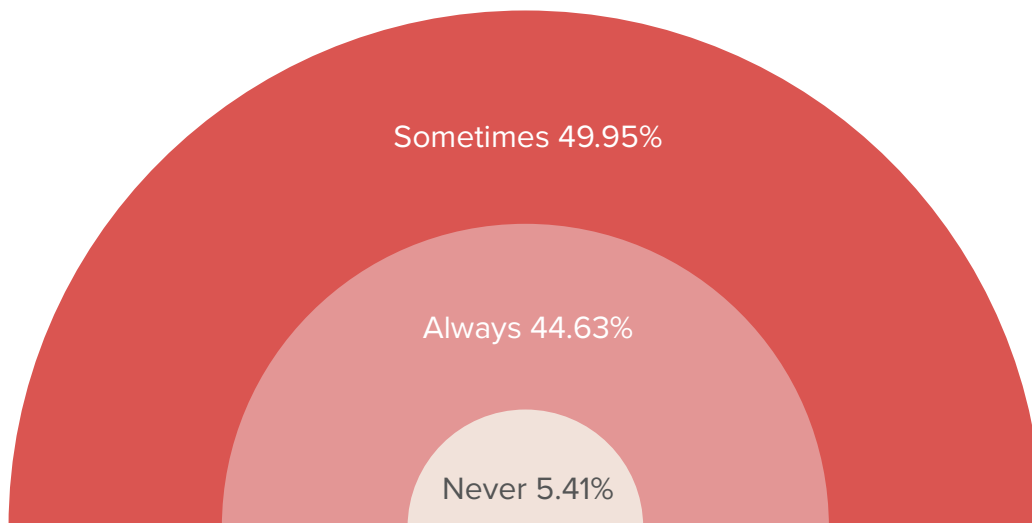
WHILE TRAVELING, I AM FREQUENTLY STOPPED FOR EXTRA SECURITY SCREENING OR QUESTIONING AT AIRPORTS.



QUESTION

12

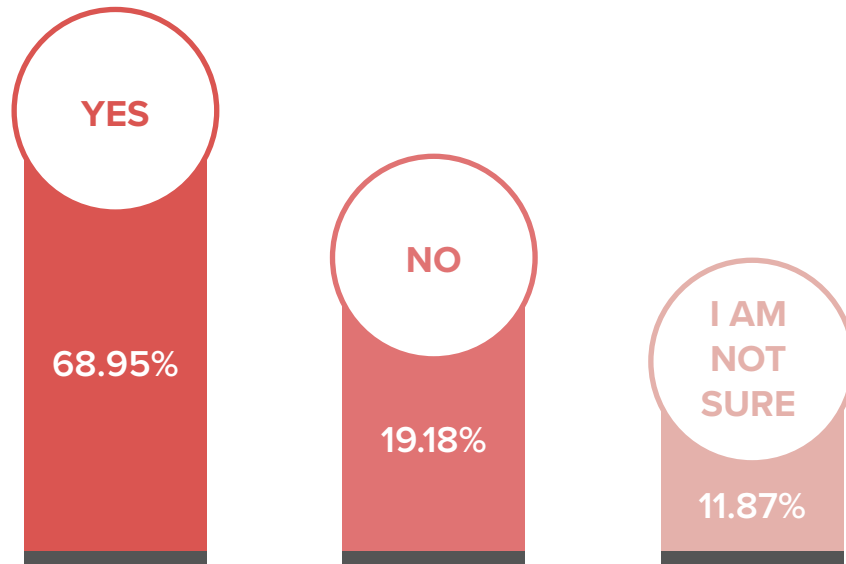
WHEN I HEAR NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT ISLAM AND MUSLIMS, I SPEAK OUT.



QUESTION

13

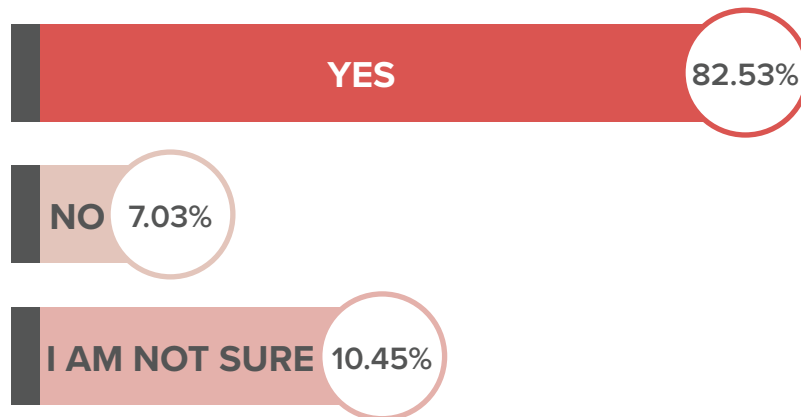
I HAVE PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED ONE OR MORE INCIDENTS OF ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY OR DISCRIMINATION SINCE 9/11.



QUESTION

14

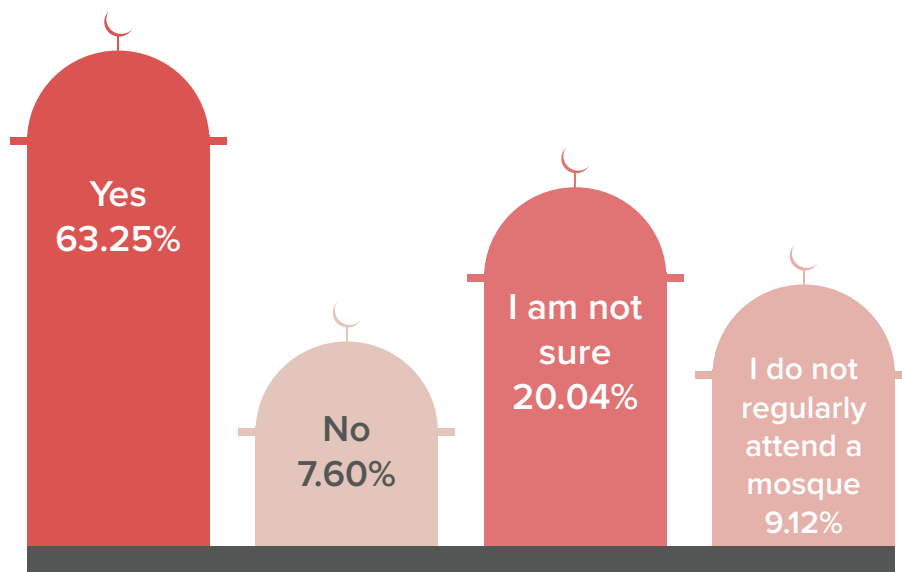
I KNOW A MUSLIM WHO HAS PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY OR DISCRIMINATION SINCE 9/11.



QUESTION

15

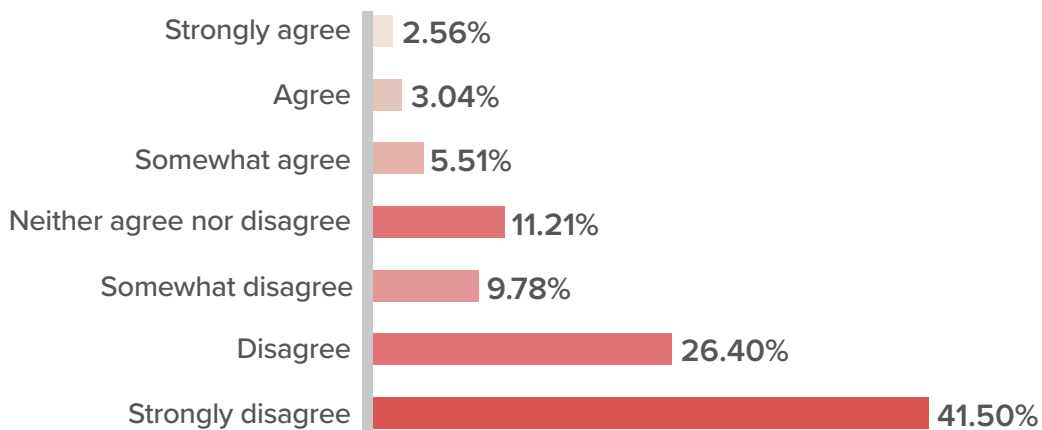
THE MOSQUES I ATTEND HAVE ENGAGED IN
INCREASED INTERFAITH WORK SINCE 9/11.



QUESTION

16

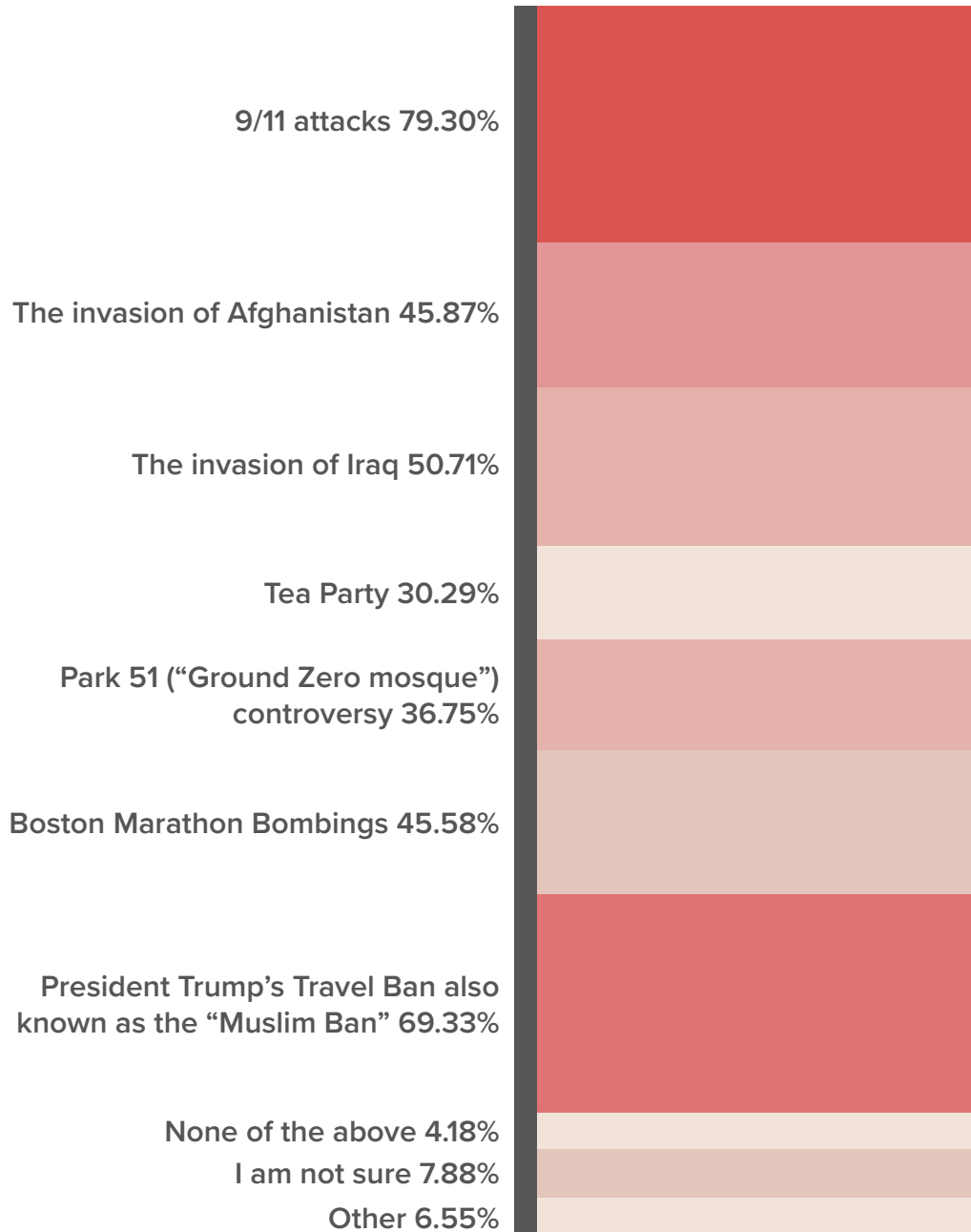
THE GOVERNMENT'S POST 9/11 SURVEILLANCE
POLICIES HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE.



QUESTION

17

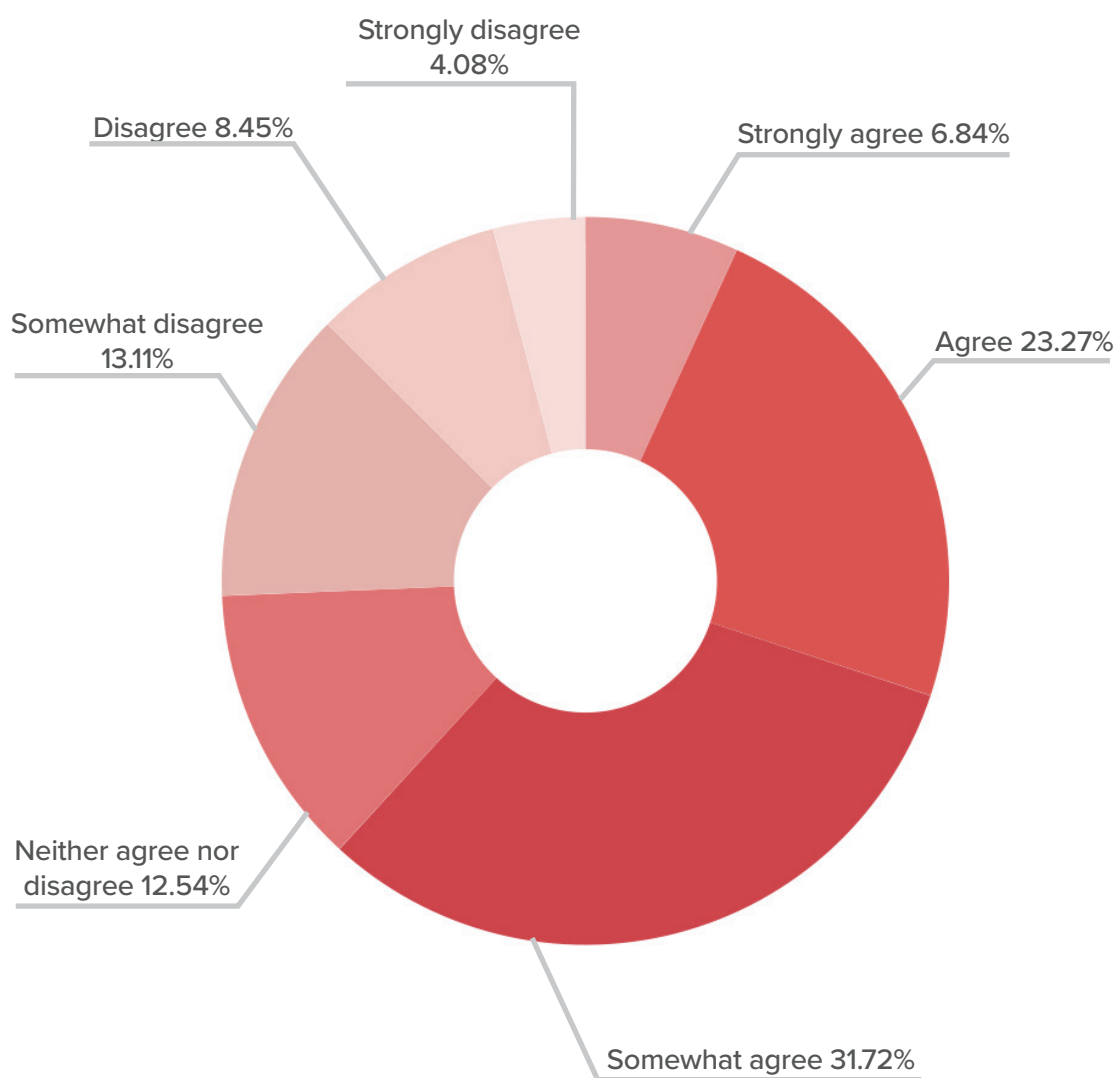
I EXPERIENCED OR WITNESSED INCREASED ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY IN RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING EVENTS (RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED TO CHECK ANY THAT APPLY):



QUESTION

18

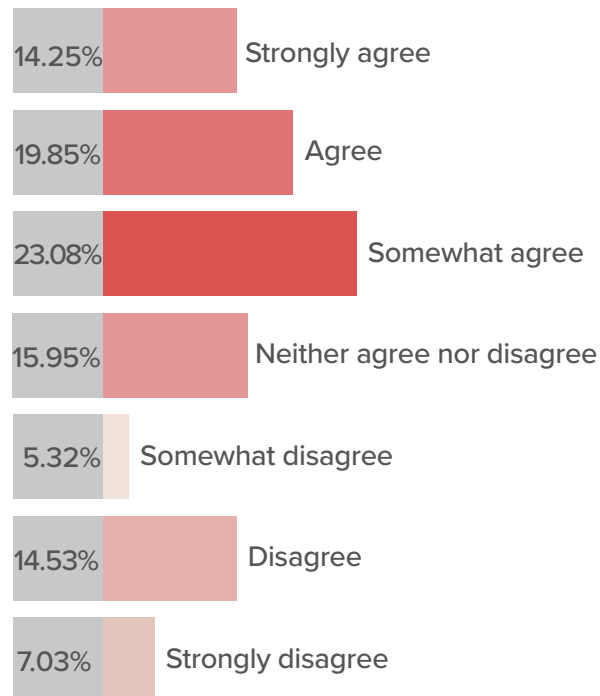
I FEEL ACCEPTED IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.



QUESTION

19

ANTI-MUSLIM RHETORIC IN THE YEARS
SINCE 9/11 HAS HAD AN IMPACT ON MY
MENTAL HEALTH.



SURVEY ANALYSIS

Overall, the results show that American Muslims have suffered unique, significant and ongoing harm as a result of the attacks and subsequent events over the past two decades. However, the report also shows that many American Muslims have met and overcome those legal, political and societal challenges. In addition, American Muslims tend to report significantly different post-9/11 experiences based on gender and ethnicity, particularly for Muslim women and African-American Muslims.

1. Perspectives and Experiences on Anti-Muslim Bigotry

How many American Muslims have witnessed or experienced anti-Muslim bigotry over the past **20 years**? **69%** of respondents said that they have personally experienced one or more incidents of anti-Muslim bigotry or discrimination since 9/11. Moreover, **83%** said they knew a Muslim who has personally experienced anti-Muslim bigotry or discrimination since 9/11.

Respondents were also asked if they experienced or witnessed increased anti-Muslim bigotry in response to specific political events. They were asked to “check all that apply.” **79%** of respondents said they faced increased anti-Muslim bigotry after the September 11, 2001 attacks and **69%** after President Donald Trump’s travel ban. 51% noted an increase in bigotry after the invasion of Iraq. Muslims also reported an increase at lower levels in regard to the Boston Marathon bombings, the Park 51 controversy, and the invasion of Afghanistan.

One of the most common complaints that CAIR receives involves discrimination at the hands of public officials and private citizens. The survey results reflect that this is a common experience for a significant portion of the community.

The survey found that **40%** of respondents either strongly agree (**20%**) or agree (**20%**) that they are frequently stopped for extra screening or questioning at airports because they are Muslim. If broken down by race, we discovered that Africans [33% strongly agree] are more likely to report being frequently stopped for extra security screening or questioning at airports compared to other groups including, South Asians [**22% strongly agree**], and Arabs [**21% strongly agree**]. African Americans [**15% strongly agree**] are least likely to report experiencing extra screening at airports.

These results serve as another reminder that the Department of Homeland Security needs to create an equal standard of screening or questioning regarding security. Singling out Muslims because of their faith continues to contribute to a mistrust of government institutions and services.

Media coverage of Muslims and Islam has also been a significant concern of the Muslim community. We discovered that **63%** of American Muslims either disagree (**35%**) or strongly disagree (**28%**) with the notion that American media coverage of Muslims has become more accurate in the years since 9/11.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

Of those surveyed, **58%** were male, and **41%** were female. One percent did not identify as either male or female. Female survey respondents were therefore underrepresented compared to their percentage in the general American Muslim population. It is therefore important to note the ways in which survey responses among Muslim women differed from men.

Over half of our total respondents still feel somewhat accepted in society. Overall, **55%** of Muslims said they agree (**23%**) or somewhat agree (**32%**) that they feel accepted in American society. However, only **56%** of Muslim women reported feeling accepted in American society, a lower number than Muslim men [**65%**] who report feeling accepted. A sizable number of our overall respondents [**25%**] do not feel accepted in American society.

By gender, Muslim women [**72%**] reported higher levels of discrimination experiences after 9/11 compared to their male counterparts [**67%**].

Some survey responses also varied significantly based on race. African American Muslims are more likely to be comfortable requesting a religious accommodation at school or work [**58% strongly agree or agree**] and more likely to always feel comfortable wearing Islamic religious attire in public [**52%**] than other ethnic groups in the American Muslim community, including respondents who identify as White, African, Arab, South Asian, etc.

According to our results, **7%** of respondents said that they were not Muslim when 9/11 occurred. In other words, **7%** became converts to Islam sometime after the attacks despite the rise in anti-Muslim sentiment they almost certainly witnessed.

We also found that **95%** of Muslims said that when they hear negative comments about Islam and Muslims, they either always **(45%)** or sometimes **(50%)** speak out. This is a positive data point within the American Muslim community. It illustrates that American Muslims are proud and confident of their faith despite the challenges of ongoing Islamophobia.

These figures indicate there is a near split in feeling accepted in American society. There is a clear need to do more work around the representation of American Muslims in media and entertainment. Although depictions of Islam and Muslims have slightly improved, it is imperative to consult with Muslim organizations, leaders, and experts in race and ethnicity to determine how the media and entertainment industry can better improve images and messaging around Islam and Muslims.

Lastly, we were interested in examining the relationship between anti-Muslim rhetoric and mental health. **34%** of our respondents said that they either strongly agree **(14%)** or agree **(20%)** that anti-Muslim rhetoric in the years since 9/11 has impacted their mental health.

CAIR believes it should be a priority among mental health professionals to further study the effects of anti-Muslim bigotry on mental health. According to a [study](#) done by JAMA psychiatry, U.S. Muslims are two times more likely to have attempted suicide compared with other religious groups. These figures are alarming and call for more mental health initiatives and interventions that can address topics at the intersection of race, religion, and gender.

IV. AMERICAN MUSLIM RESILIENCE

Despite the challenges of a post 9/11 world with institutionalized Islamophobia, American Muslims continue to thrive in all aspects of society. These areas include philanthropy, activism, media and entertainment, and civic engagement.

A hallmark feature of American Muslim activism is its demonstrated commitment to philanthropy. Since 9/11, numerous charitable and philanthropic organizations have resulted from the concept of zakat, Islam's third pillar of faith. LaunchGood, one of the largest Muslim-led crowdfunding platforms, boasts that Muslims have collectively [raised](#) over **255 million dollars**, with **33,000** campaigns and over **900,000 users**. In this way, Muslim activism finds its unique voice by its global commitment to share financial resources. This collective responsibility speaks to the psyche of American Muslims and the collective power of millions of diverse individuals to come together.

A growing number of Muslims are also becoming journalists and reporters to challenge the status quo. As a result, American Muslims are actively debunking the mainstream stereotypes about Islam and Muslims on screen. Some well-known figures include Mehdi Hasan, Rowaida Abdelaziz, Dena Tahruri, Asma Khalil, and more.

Muslim Americans have also increasingly made substantial contributions in the civic and political spheres. A [total](#) of 181 Muslim candidates in 28 states and Washington D.C. ran for public office in 2020, the highest number ever recorded. Of the Muslim Americans who ran a political campaign in 2020, 44% [won](#) their election. Muslim representation and visibility were also drastically increased with the [appointment](#) of 16 Muslim Americans by the new presidential administration.

In terms of civic engagement, more than **1 million Muslim Americans** [registered](#) to vote in 2020, effectively doubling the number of registered Muslim voters in America since the 2012 presidential election. The momentum behind this significant increase is partly due to former President Trump's infamous Executive Order in 2017 calling for a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslim immigration. The discriminatory nature of this "Muslim ban" propelled the Muslim American community to come together and vote in record numbers. Muslim groups [set up](#) registration booths at more than **2500** mosques, **500** schools, and many community centers to increase voter turnout.

In sum, Muslims have met and are working to meet many of the difficult challenges that September 11, 2001 created for both the American Muslim community and the country at-large.

CONCLUSION

This report aimed to provide a holistic understanding of American Muslim experiences in the **20 years since September 11, 2001**. It covered topics including government programs, hate crime trends, and our survey results.

After September 11, 2001, the government instituted several programs that eroded civil liberties of all Americans and targeted Muslims in America, including National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), the Patriot Act, the no-fly list, the watchlist, the Muslim Ban.

We also covered the trends in hate crimes after September 11, 2001. We found that hate crimes fluctuated in the years after 9/11, rising and levelling out before sharply increasing a decade after the attacks in response to various current events such as the invasion of Iraq, the mobilization of anti-Muslim hate groups against Park51, the rise of the Tea Party, terrorist attacks by extremist groups, and the presidential campaign of Donald Trump.

Lastly, this report features the results of a national survey to provide insights into the lived experiences of American Muslim. The survey of over **1,000 American Muslims** provided insights into the state of the community, including their perspectives on post-9/11 government activities such as wars overseas and surveillance policies here at home, their observations regarding issues such as anti-Muslim discrimination and media coverage of Islam, and how Muslims of different races and genders report different views and experiences.

Moreover, we also documented examples of American Muslim resiliency. For instance, in the years since 9/11, American Muslims have become more civically engaged now more than ever before. A total of 181 Muslim-identifying candidates in 28 states and Washington D.C. ran for public office in 2020, the highest number ever recorded. Of the Muslim Americans who ran a political campaign in 2020, **44 percent won their election**.

We hope this report will be utilized by the general audience, academics, non-profits, and religious institutions to bolster their understanding of the American Muslim community. Our survey findings suggest that there needs to be work done in several areas to improve the lived experiences of American Muslims, including more mental health initiatives, reliable reporting methods on hate crimes, and changes to government policies that negatively impact Muslims.

Although challenges remain, American Muslims have made a tremendous amount of progress in breaking barriers, countering bigotry, and overcoming tragedy in the years since September 11, 2001.



CAIR

453 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20003
Tel: (202) 488-8787
Fax: (202) 488-0833
www.cair.com