

Could the Muslim vote swing the US election?

Muslim Brotherhood-linked group calls on American Muslims to 'turn your Islamic centers and mosques into voter registration centers.'



American Muslims protest against Donald Trump in NYC

Reuters

Nihad Awad, Executive Director of CAIR (The Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Muslim Brotherhood-linked group), has called on the growing numbers of American Muslim voters to increase and utilize their electoral power.

Specifically, Awad said that the increasing Muslim populations in eight "swing" states should take advantage of their strength for the upcoming presidential elections.

"What Muslims do and do not do in 2016," Awad stated at an annual Muslim American Society and Islamic Circle of North America conference in Chicago a month ago, "can influence not only the future of America itself, but also the future relationship between America and the Muslim world. Your votes are your negotiating power; if you don't like Islamophobia, or what [candidates] Donald Trump or Ben Carson said, get busy in 2016õ register to vote!"

But that's not enough, according to Awad's vision: "Register other people to vote! Turn your Islamic centers and mosques into voter registration centers and polling stationsõ This is the time to show our presence. Train yourself into how to get involved in the political processõ No party should take us for granted."

A six-state survey released by CAIR shows that 73% of registered Muslim voters say they will go to the polls in upcoming primary elections - and that no fewer than two-thirds will vote for Democratic Party candidates.

The survey covered the six states with the highest Muslim populations: California, New York, Illinois, Florida, Texas, and Virginia. Two of these are the "swing" states that Awad said American Muslims should specifically target.

"Our numbers, as American Muslims, are growing," Awad said. "I believe we have at least one million eligible Muslim voters in this country. We have to register every single Muslim to vote in 2016!" He then listed the eight key states in which the "Muslim vote can be the swing vote:" Florida, Ohio, Virginia, Colorado, Nevada, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania.

"The numbers of Muslims in these states are growing," Awad said. "We're going to meet with presidential and local candidates and negotiate with them on issues of concern to American Muslims. We've done it in many elections, and we're going to do it in this one. And based on that, a decision will be made— it will be conveyed in the social media to the Muslim community."

The Muslim population in the United States is estimated at 3.3 million, about 1% of the total American population. A Pew Forum report found that Muslims accounted for 0.9% of American adults in 2014, up from 0.4% in 2007, due largely to immigration.