

NATIONAL KOREAN AMERICAN SERVICE & EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

NAKASEC

미주한인봉사교육단체협의회



MINKWON CENTER
For Community Action



Strengthening Organizing In
Our Community:
*Korean & Asian American Voters
2023 & 2024 Survey Results*

OUR PEOPLE, OUR POWER, OUR GROWING IMPACT

Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group and electorate in the United States. In the past four years, our number has grown by 15%, or about 2 million eligible voters.¹ By this November, Asian American adults will comprise 7 percent of the population² and an estimated 6.1 percent of all eligible voters.³ While a significant percentage of Asian Americans continue to reside in states with large immigrant populations like California, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois, the Asian American population has boomed exponentially along the diversifying Sunbelt and Midwest, including in critical states such as Texas and Virginia, where our uptick in votes has been enough to determine margins of victory in competitive races, and critically shift the political dynamics within a region.

Despite this, election discourse largely overlooks the remarkable—and widely underreported—surge of Asian American voters in 2020. While voter participation increased across all major racial groups in this historic election, Asian American voter turnout soared. Between 2016 and 2020, Asian American voters increased their turnout by an astounding rate of 47 percent compared to 12 percent for all other voters; so much so that TargetSmart attributes the margin of victory in multiple elections in 2020 to Asian American voters.⁴ Notably, no other major demographic group in recent history has increased their turnout so drastically between one election to the next. The electoral math is unmistakable: In a highly polarized country where the last two presidential elections were decided by less than 100,000 votes each, Asian American voters will be increasingly consequential in determining election results—and thus, in determining the future of this country we call home.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF ASIAN AMERICA

Despite our tremendous growth and increasing impact on American social, economic and political institutions, the Asian American community remains largely invisible, particularly as it comes to electoral mobilization. Only 35% of Asian American voters we surveyed from November 2023-January 2024 say they have been contacted by either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party regarding the November 2024 presidential election.

The NAKASEC Network has been involved in civic engagement efforts as a core

1. “Key facts about Asian American eligible voters in 2024,” Pew Research Center

2. “Appendix: Demographic profile of Asian American adults,” Pew Research Center

3. See note 1 above

4. “The Unprecedented Impact of the AAPI Vote on the 2020 Election,” TargetSmart

strategy to build Asian American political power since 1996. Over the years, our affiliates Hamkae Center (Virginia), HANA Center (Illinois), MinKwon Center for Community Action (New York/New Jersey), Woori Center (Pennsylvania) and Woori Juntos (Texas) have registered, educated, and mobilized hundreds of thousands of Korean and Asian American voters to participate in our democracy.

In the 2022 midterm elections, our affiliates became increasingly aware of mis- and disinformation being spread throughout our community, particularly on issues where the Asian American community has been weaponized as a wedge, such as immigration, affirmative action, public safety, economy, and LGBTQ+ rights. From our conversations while phone banking, door knocking, and at community events, we recognized the need to assess our community's stances and perspectives beyond anecdotal experiences both for our civic engagement programs and long-term organizing.

To get a pulse check on where our community is regarding the 2024 presidential election and on key issues in this moment, we worked with Dr. Tom Wong and the U.S. Immigration Policy Center (USIPC) at the University of California, San Diego to conduct (3) online and phone surveys. All surveys were available in English and/or Korean.

These subsequent findings deepen our network's understanding of our community's perspectives, the impact of mis- and disinformation, and education gaps. Importantly, these findings underscore the need for further research and testing – particularly around messaging – and deeper engagement of our Korean and Asian American communities to better organize and build the power of Asian America towards social, racial and economic justice.

This project and our work would not be possible without the support of our community members, affiliates and chapters, partners, stakeholders, and team members.

With gratitude,



Becky Belcore
NAKASEC co-director



Jung Woo Kim
NAKASEC co-director

METHODOLOGY

NAKASEC partnered with Dr. Tom Wong to conduct three online and phone surveys. Two surveys were fielded using L2 voter data:

- A random survey of 768 self-identified Korean American voters in 10 states: AZ, CA, GA, IL, NV, NJ, NY, PA, TX, and VA. The survey was in the field between November 27, 2023 and January 25, 2024 (margin of error of 3.53%).
- A random survey of 628 self-identified Asian American voters between the ages of 18 and 49 in IL, NJ, NY, PA, TX, and VA. The sample also includes an oversample of 128 Korean American voters (ages 18-49). The oversample of Korean American respondents allows the survey to report separate results for Korean American voters. The survey was fielded from August 3, 2024 to September 3, 2024. The margin of error for the entire sample is 3.91%. Responses are weighted by age, gender, party affiliation, and ethnicity.

The two surveys are not directly comparable because they sampled different populations of voters (e.g., different states, different ages). In addition, one is a weighted survey, and the other is not.

Dr. Wong also conducted a non-random survey of 1,049 NAKASEC Network members:

- The member survey represents a self-selected group of people (i.e., they appear on NAKASEC and NAKASEC affiliates' email lists). About 7.6% of members responded, so the member respondents themselves represent a self-selected subset of the larger self-selected group. The survey was in the field between November 28, 2023 and December 27, 2023 (margin of error of 2.91%).
- Because the member survey is not a random sample, these results will be used solely for internal purposes to inform our education and organizing work.

All surveys were conducted in English and Korean. Korean translations were provided by NAKASEC.

PRIMARY TAKEAWAYS

Korean and Asian Americans are fired up, enthusiastic, and ready to vote in November. 83.4% of Korean American voters said in Winter 2023 that they probably or definitely will vote in November. About 95% of Asian American voters said in August 2024 that they will "definitely" or "probably" vote in the upcoming November 2024 presidential election. 53.5% responded that President Biden's decision to not run for re-election increased their enthusiasm to vote in November.

Asian Americans more heavily favor Democratic candidate Kamala Harris over Republican candidate Donald Trump. 70.1% say that they would vote for Harris if the election were held today while 22.3% say that they would vote for Trump. Female voters (78.3%) are significantly more likely to say Kamala Harris compared to male voters (66.0%). As expected, self-identified liberal voters (94.7%) are also significantly more likely to say Kamala Harris compared to self-identified conservative voters (22.2%). The majority of self-identified moderate voters (60.0%) also say Kamala Harris. 73.9% think the country is ready for a female president, and 70% think the country is ready for a Black and Asian person to be president.

When Asian American voters were asked which is the top issue "that is influencing which presidential candidate you intend to vote for in the upcoming November 2024 presidential election," **the top issue was the economy (22.9%), followed by reproductive rights (15.9%), and inflation (12.7%).**

On Project 2025, 66.9% of Asian American respondents had heard about Project 2025. Of those who had heard about Project 2025, 81.3% identified as liberal. Of those who had not heard about Project 2025, 62.9% identified as conservative.

Asian American respondents think everything has gotten worse over the last three years. 57.3% think the economy has gotten worse, 76.4% think healthcare costs have gotten worse, 92.9% think housing costs have gotten worse, and 59.2% think access to education has gotten worse.

Korean and Asian Americans overall support initiatives that address the root causes of crime such as housing and job insecurity.

PRIMARY TAKEAWAYS

Korean and Asian Americans support refugee rights and a pathway to citizenship for immigrants without citizenship. However, inflammatory, divisive, zero-sum rhetoric is also resonating with and affecting our communities.

Despite their population size and enthusiasm, Korean and Asian Americans are a mostly untapped voting bloc, unrecognized or invested in by either major political party. In Winter 2023, only 31.3% of registered Korean American voters said they've been contacted by a political party. In Fall 2024, only 35% of Asian American voters said "yes" when asked if they've been contacted by either political party.

It's important to note that **the depiction of a China as a threat to the U.S. weighs heavily on the minds of Asian American voters.** 68.8% of Asian American voters say "definitely yes" or "probably yes" when asked, "Do you believe the depiction of China as a threat to the U.S. has a negative impact on Asian Americans?"

Korean and Asian American voters feel a sense of linked fate – that is, what happens generally to Asian people in this country will affect what happens in their lives. A majority of Asian American voter respondents in August 2024 reported a sense of linked fate, with 55% saying "a great deal" or "a lot." However, there is an ideological split with self-identified liberal voters (69.3%) much more likely to feel a sense of linked fate, and self-identified conservative voters (25.9%) much less likely to do so.

ISSUE AREA: IMMIGRATION

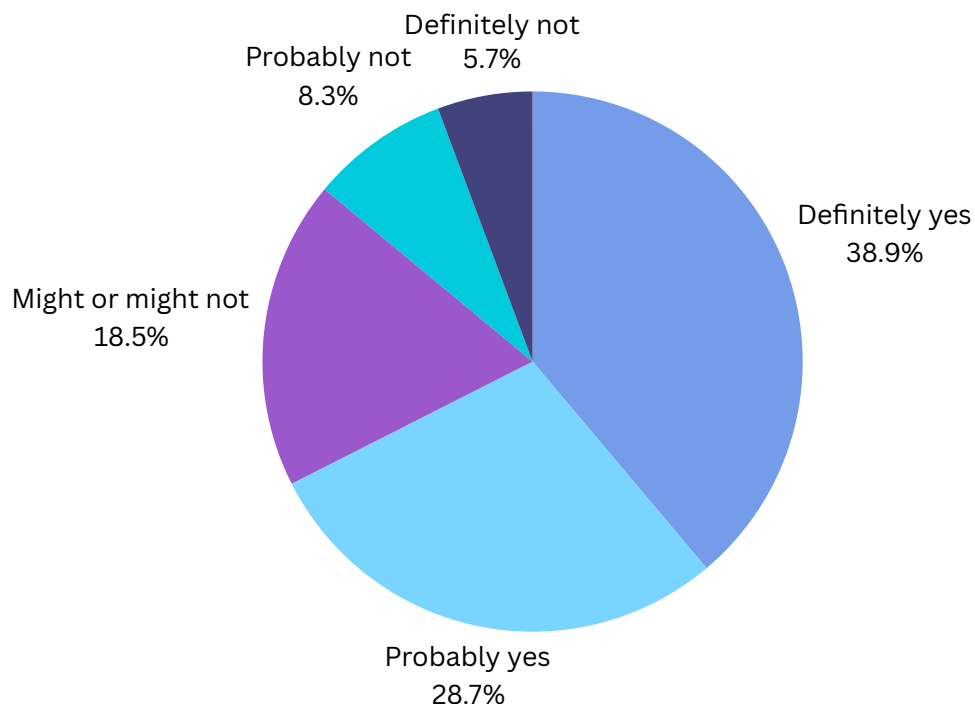
TOPLINES: The majority of Korean and Asian Americans support legalization of undocumented immigrants and strengthening our legal immigration systems, and anti-immigrant border rhetoric has been impactful on our community.

While immigration was picked as the fourth most important issue (tied with U.S. foreign policy), 48.4% of Asian American voters responded that a presidential candidate's position on immigration will influence their vote in November a lot or a great deal, and 35.7% responded it would influence their vote a moderate amount.

67.6%

of Asian American respondents believe we need immigration policies that provide **more** visas and green cards for people so they can work in the U.S. and reunite with their families.

Do you believe that we need immigration policies that provide more visas and green cards for people so that they can work in the U.S. and reunite with their families?



ISSUE AREA: IMMIGRATION

About two thirds of Korean American voters indicate support for either greater funding for legal immigration pathways or equal funding increases for legal immigration pathways and border enforcement. Only a small percentage of respondents indicate support only for more funding for more border enforcement at the U.S.-Mexico border (18.8%). Support for this was highest among self-identified Republicans (57%).

8 in 10

Korean American voters (84%) support some form of legal status for immigrants without citizenship. Support ranged from allowing undocumented immigrants a temporary form of work or education permits (e.g. DACA), to a full path to citizenship.

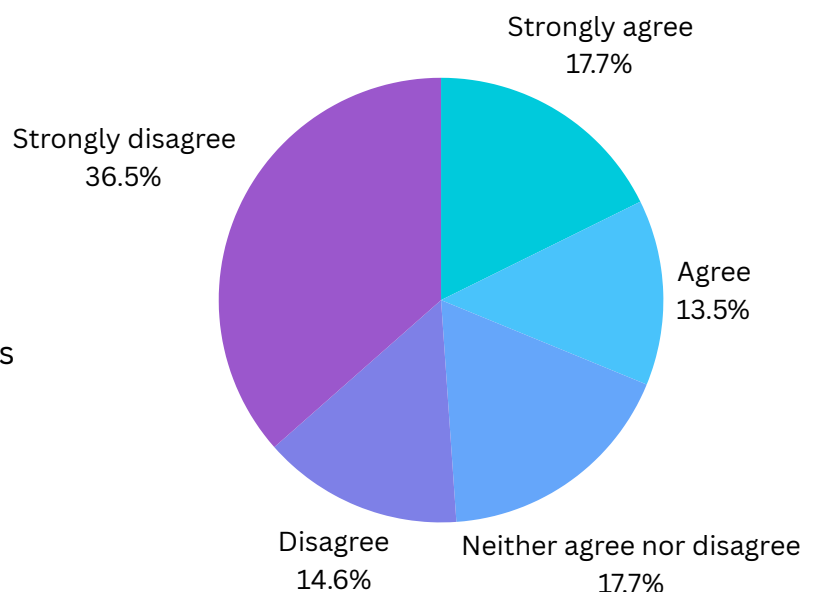
2 in 3



Korean American voters support the U.S. being a safe haven for refugees.

51.1%

of Korean American respondents disagree or strongly disagree with southern border “invasion” rhetoric. Agreement was strongest among older voters (50+), higher income votes (\$100,000+), and self-identified Republicans.



ISSUE AREA: PUBLIC SAFETY

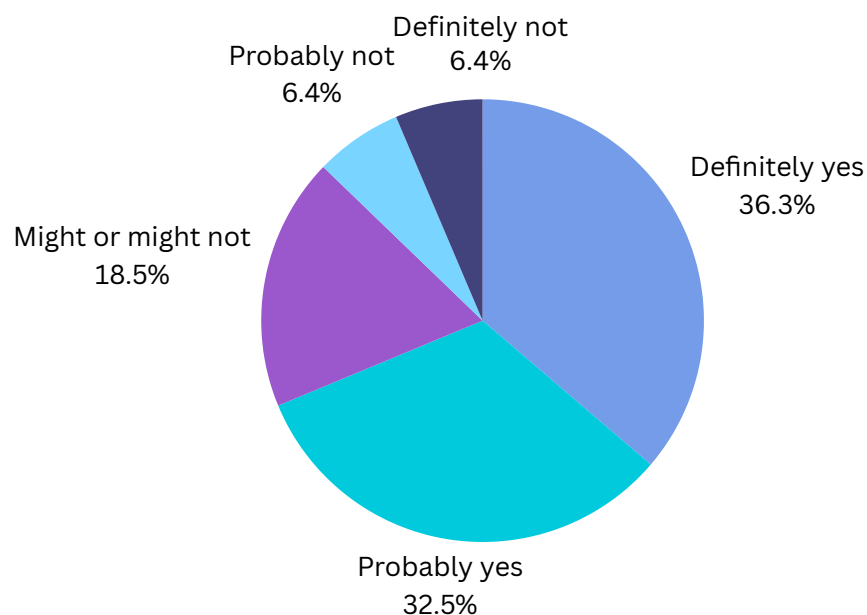
TOPLINES: Korean Americans support more funding towards addressing material needs and less towards guns and police. Asian American voters connect anti-China rhetoric to anti-Asian American violence.

Regarding public safety concerns around crime and crime response, 30.2% of Korean American respondents say that police use excessive force.

51.1% of Korean American voters support or strongly support reducing the budget of the police department in their community, “even if that means fewer police officers, if the money is shifted to programs related to mental health, housing, and education?” 41.7% oppose or strongly oppose, while 7.3% neither support nor oppose.

When asked a question about public safety for Asian Americans in particular, 68.8% of Asian American voters say "definitely yes" or "probably yes" when asked, "Do you believe the depiction of China as a threat to the U.S. has a negative impact on Asian Americans?"

“Do you believe the depiction of China as a threat to the U.S. has a negative impact on Asian Americans?”

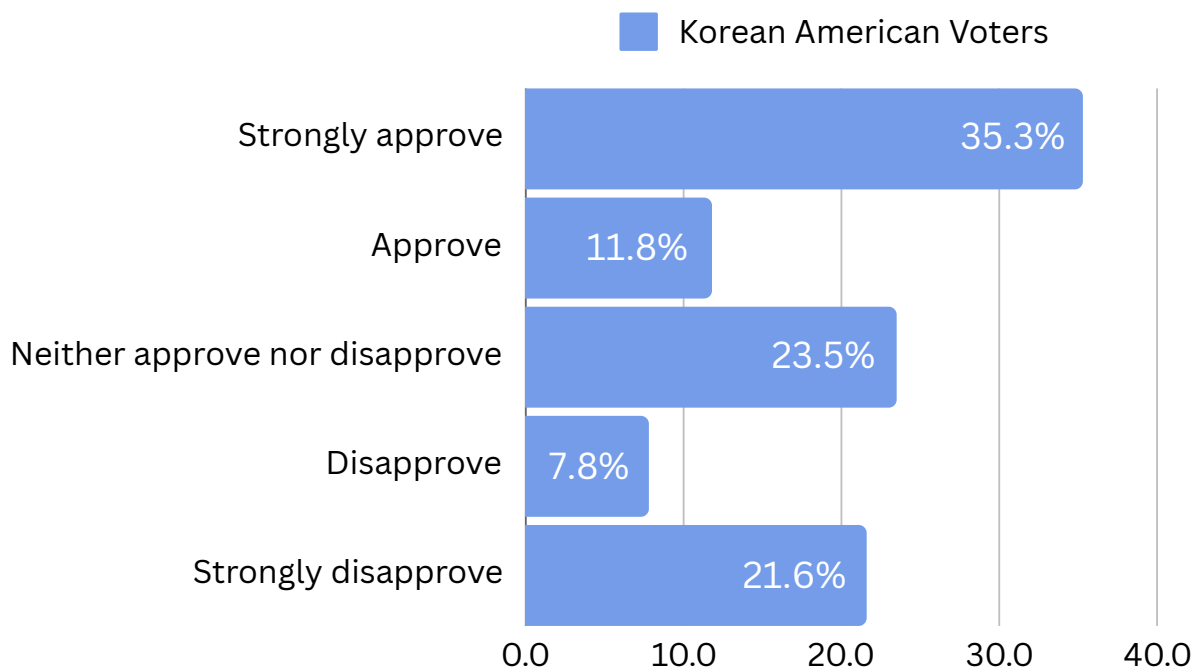


ISSUE AREA: EDUCATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

TOPLINE: About half of Korean Americans do not support affirmative action.

47.1% of Korean American voters strongly approve or approve of the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action, while 29.4% disapprove or strongly disapprove. Republicans were significantly more likely to approve (47.6%).

Do you approve or disapprove of the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action, which ruled that colleges are not allowed to consider an applicant's race when making decisions on admissions?



ISSUE AREA: LGBTQ+ RIGHTS AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

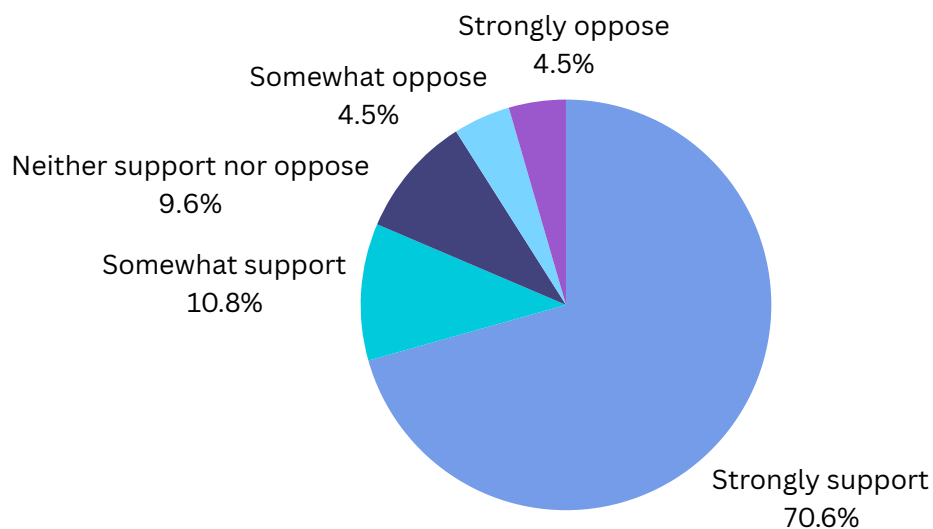
TOPLINES: A slim majority of Korean Americans support LGBTQ+ community rights. A strong majority support reproductive healthcare and rights.

Nearly two in three Korean American respondents support same-sex marriage. (65.3%)

Nearly 60% of Korean American voters support allowing transgender people to use the bathrooms of their identified gender (58.7%).

55.8% of Korean American voters agree that business owners who provide wedding-related services should be allowed to refuse services to same-sex couples “if same-sex marriage violates their religious beliefs.”

81.5% of Asian American respondents strongly supports or somewhat supports “every woman having access to reproductive/abortion healthcare and rights.”



This support is higher among female voters (88.4%) and younger voters (85.5%). Self-identified liberal voters (97.4%) are significantly more likely to support compared to self-identified conservative voters (44.4%). The large majority of self-identified moderate voters (78.2%) also express support.

ASIAN AMERICAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

TOPLINE: Korean and Asian Americans believe civic participation can make a difference and we are ignored by the larger political landscape.

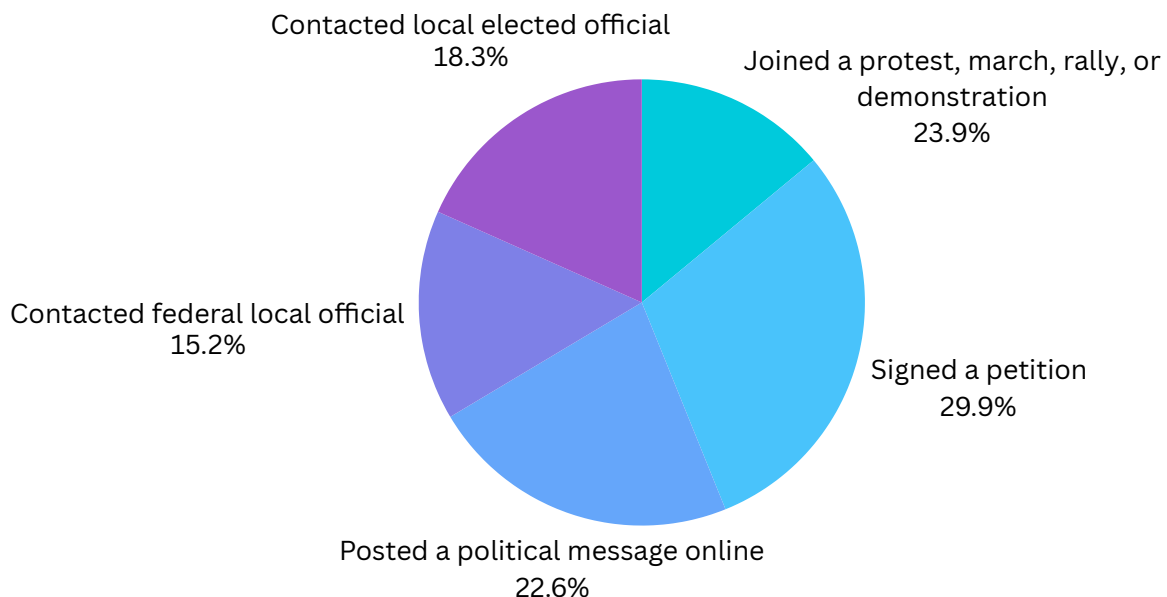
Korean American voters indicate they are excited to vote in 2024. In the survey fielded November 2023-January 2024, 83.4% say they probably or definitely will vote in November, with foreign-born voters and self-identified Democrats most likely to say they will probably or definitely not vote in November 2024.

Korean American voters indicate that they feel their vote can make a difference in politics, with 51% saying that their vote can make a “big difference.” Voters with a bachelor’s degree or higher were least likely to say voting won’t make a difference.

7 out of 10

Korean American voters said Asians have too little influence in politics.

Korean American respondents report varying levels of personal advocacy and engagement, such as about half who say they had signed a petition in the past year and about a third who say they have contacted a local official. However, relatively few voters in this group say they’ve been contacted by either political party (31.3%) as of Winter 2023/24.

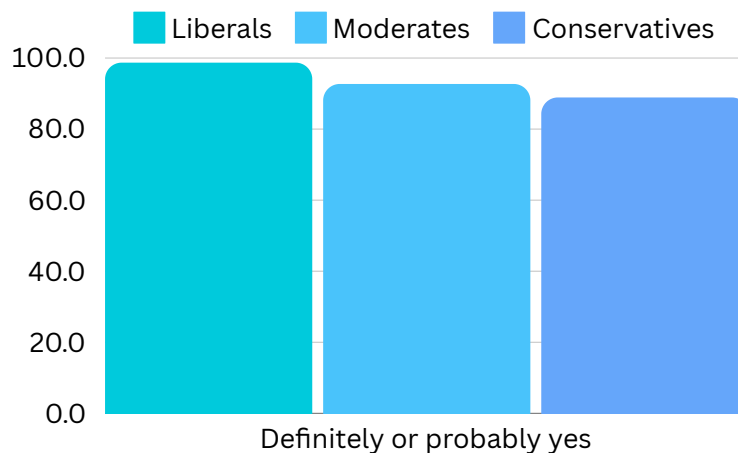


ASIAN AMERICAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

94.9%

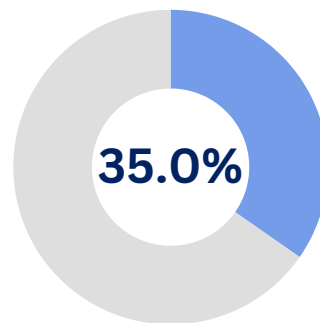
of Asian American voters say that they will "definitely" or "probably" vote in the upcoming November 2024 presidential election.

Female voters are slightly more likely to vote (96.6%) compared to male voters (92%). There is a wide enthusiasm gap by political ideology. Self-identified liberal voters (98.7%) are significantly more likely to say "definitely yes" or "probably yes" compared to self-identified conservative voters (88.9%).

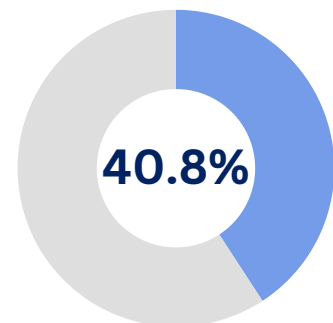


Only **35%**

of Asian American voters say they have been contacted by either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party regarding the November 2024 presidential election as of Fall 2024.



Contacted by the
Democratic Party or
Republican Party



Contacted by an
organization

Younger Asian American voters (71.1%) are more likely to say that neither of the major parties has contacted them than older voters (58.1%). When asked if "has any organization contacted you to talk about the upcoming November 2024 presidential election," only 40.8% said yes.

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