

Joe Biden and the Arab American Community: A Plan for Partnership

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris recognize that the contributions of Arab Americans are essential to the fabric of our nation. As President, Biden will fight bigotry at home and around the world and stand with the millions of Arab Americans who help strengthen America every day. Anti-Arab bigotry has been used in attempts to exclude, silence, and marginalize an entire community, and Biden believes it must be rejected whenever it surfaces, including when it emanates from elected officials or those seeking public office. Biden embraces the partnership of Arab Americans in his campaign and will include Arab Americans across his administration. A Biden-Harris Administration will restore our values as a nation of immigrants, defend the civil rights of all Americans, provide equal opportunity for every American, and champion democracy and human rights globally.

Restoring our Values as a Nation of Immigrants

- On day one, Joe Biden will rescind the un-American Muslim travel and refugee bans and will cease the immoral family separation policy. Biden will reestablish the United States as a welcoming destination for those seeking to pursue the American dream, including immigrants from the Arab world. Prohibiting the populations of entire countries from coming to the United States is morally wrong, does not make our nation more secure, and is yet another abuse of power by the Trump Administration.
- With almost [80 million displaced people](#) in the world today, this is a moment that demands American leadership. Offering hope and safe haven to refugees is part of who we are as a country. Trump has reduced the refugee resettlement ceiling to its lowest levels in decades and slammed the door on thousands of individuals suffering persecution, many of whom face threats of violence or even death in their home countries. Biden embraces the core values that have made us who we are and will prioritize setting the annual global refugee admissions cap to 125,000, seeking to raise it over time commensurate with our responsibility, our values, and the unprecedented global need, and he will work with Congress to create a minimum admissions number of at least 95,000 refugees annually.
 - Biden will protect Dreamers and their families and order an immediate review of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for vulnerable populations who cannot find safety in their countries ripped apart by violence or disaster. He will also put real political capital into passing legislative immigration reform that provides a roadmap to citizenship for nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants enriching our communities, including Arab American Dreamers.

- Biden will reverse Trump’s public charge rule, which runs counter to our values as Americans and to the history of our nation. Allowing immigration officials to make an individual’s ability to receive a visa or gain permanent residency contingent on their use of government services such as SNAP benefits or Medicaid, their household income, and other discriminatory criteria undermines America’s character as land of opportunity that is open and welcoming to all, not just the wealthy.

Defending the Civil Rights of All Americans

- Joe Biden will be unflinching in confronting the systemic racism that is built into our laws, policies, and institutions and take aggressive action to correct them — ripping out inequities in housing, health care, education, the economy, and our criminal justice system.
- A Biden-Harris administration will confront discriminatory policies that single out Arab Americans and cast entire communities under suspicion. Additionally, the new administration will work to protect communities that are under siege from the growing threat of violence from white supremacists and incitement to violence by far-right extremists. Biden will end the Trump Administration’s Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Program, and, before developing new prevention programs, he will conduct a thorough review of past programs and regularly consult with leaders from historically targeted communities, including Arab Americans, to ensure that civil rights are protected. He will ensure that programs are properly oriented towards actual threats based on data. This will include creating a dialogue with Arab American community leaders on issues of surveillance, policing, and counterterrorism, in tandem with other communities historically affected by securitized relationships with the U.S. government.
- Joe Biden will instruct the Department of Homeland Security to undertake a review of “watchlist” and “no-fly list” processes to ensure that they do not have an adverse impact on individuals or groups based on national origin, race, religion or ethnicity, and improve the process to remove names, when justified, from these lists.
- As President, Biden will directly address the rise in hateful attacks, fix long-standing issues with how the government documents hate crimes, and enact legislation prohibiting someone convicted of a hate crime from purchasing or possessing a firearm. Biden will order his Justice Department to focus additional resources to combat hate crimes — including religion-based hate crimes — and to confront white nationalist terrorism. Biden will appoint leadership at the Department of Justice who will prioritize the prosecution of hate crimes.

- Joe Biden will work to root out systemic racism across our laws and institutions, including in policing. He will pursue vital police reforms like banning chokeholds, ensuring prosecutors in police-involved killings are independent, collecting data regarding police use of force and violations of use of force standards, and requiring training for officers regarding racial, ethnic, and religious bias and their duty to intervene if another officer is abusing his or her power. Biden will also ensure the Department of Justice has subpoena power for pattern or practice investigations into systemic misconduct by police departments. He will not defund the police. Instead, he will condition federal funding on departments undertaking reforms. And, he will invest an additional \$300 million in community-oriented policing, so officers can get out of their cruisers and get to know the communities they serve.
- As President, Biden will strengthen our democracy by guaranteeing that every American's vote is protected. He will start by working to sign into law the House passed [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act](#) to update section 4 of the Voting Rights Act and to develop a new process for pre-clearing election changes. He also will ensure that the Justice Department challenges state laws suppressing the right to vote. Biden supports automatic voter registration, same-day voter registration, and many more steps to make exercising one's right to vote easier. Biden will ensure that the Justice Department has the resources and authority to enforce laws that protect our voting rights. Biden believes we need to end gerrymandering, and we must protect our voting booths and voter rolls from foreign powers that seek to undermine our democracy and interfere in our elections. And, the Biden-Harris administration will incentivize states to automatically restore voting rights for individuals convicted of felonies once they have served their sentences.
- As President, Biden will ensure that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel abide by professional standards and are held accountable for inhumane treatment of individuals. He will increase resources for training and demand transparency in, and independent oversight over, ICE and CBP's activities. Under a Biden Administration, there will be responsible, Senate-confirmed professionals leading these agencies, and they will answer directly to the president.
- Biden will work with Congress to pass two critical pieces of legislation, both cosponsored by Senator Harris: the [Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer NO HATE Act](#), which would improve national hate crime reporting and data collection, as well as victim assistance and support; and the [End Racial and Religious Profiling Act](#), which [according](#) to the Human Rights Campaign "would prohibit federal, state, and local law enforcement from targeting a person based on actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation."
- Joe Biden will protect the constitutional right of our citizens to free speech. He also does not support efforts by any democracy to criminalize free speech and expression, which is why he spoke out against Israel's decision to deny entry to American lawmakers

because they favor boycotting Israel. However, Biden has been unequivocal in condemning calls in the United States to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel.

Advancing Equal Opportunity for all Americans

- For families with young children, finding high quality pre-K is a major financial, logistical, and emotional burden, with potentially life-long consequences for their children. As President, Biden will work with states to offer pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds. This investment will ease the burden on our families, help close the achievement gap, promote the labor participation of parents who want to work, and lift our critical early childhood education workforce out of poverty.
- Biden will ensure and expand protections for students against bullying, violence, and discrimination in schools, and he has already put forward a number of proposals to reduce online harassment among young adults. In this vein, Biden will also support passage of the [Safe Schools Improvement Act](#), which requires school districts to develop bullying and harassment policies.
- As President, Biden will make public colleges and universities tuition-free for all students whose family incomes are below \$125,000, as well as providing two years of community college or other high-quality training program without debt for any hard-working individual. Biden has also proposed forgiving all undergraduate tuition-related federal student debt from two- and four-year public colleges and universities, as well as private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and private, underfunded Minority-Serving Institution (MSIs), for debt-holders earning up to \$125,000, with appropriate phase-outs to avoid a cliff.
- Joe Biden will also create more opportunities for high school students to take practical classes that lead to credentials. Biden will invest in, and allow, Pell Grants to be used for dual-enrollment programs, so high school students can take classes at a community college and earn college credits or a credential prior to graduating from high school.
- Biden will build on the Affordable Care Act by giving Americans more choice, including the choice to purchase a public health insurance option like Medicare, which will reduce costs and improve the efficacy and quality of care. He will also expand access to Medicare by lowering the eligibility age to 60. And he will ensure everyone has [access](#) to free COVID-19 testing, treatment, and a safe and effective vaccine, when one is available.
- Joe Biden has taken on the National Rifle Association (NRA) on the national stage and won – twice. In 1993, Biden shepherded through Congress the Brady Handgun Violence

Prevention Act, which established the background check system that has since kept more than 3 million firearms out of dangerous hands. In 1994, he helped secure the passage of 10-year bans on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. As President, Biden will defeat the NRA again. He will seek to ban the manufacture and sale of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, buy back the assault weapons and high-capacity magazines already in our communities, reduce stockpiling of weapons, require background checks for all gun sales, [and more](#).

- Biden will spur public-private investment through a small business opportunity plan that will fund successful state and local investment initiatives and make permanent the highly effective New Markets Tax Credit. He will work to expand access to low-interest business loans and eliminate barriers to technical assistance and advisory services by investing in a national network of cost-free business incubators and innovation hubs.
- Joe Biden will oppose including citizenship questions on the U.S. Census, and support the creation of a new Middle East North Africa (MENA) category, which was recommended by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2017, so that Arab Americans can be more fairly counted and their needs studied and considered alongside other minorities. The Trump Administration politicized the 2020 Census, putting marginalised communities at risk of a drastic undercount, and abandoned the addition of a MENA category on the Census.
- Biden will commission an independent study that will make recommendations on possible additional categories of socially disadvantaged groups, such as MENA, for purposes of ensuring equitable access to federal procurement opportunities.

Championing Democracy and Human Rights Globally:

As President, Joe Biden would help the people of the Arab world address the challenges they face, whether they are rising up in protest, suffering from repression, or living through civil war. Although each country faces its own unique issues, the core complaints of poverty, corruption, and a scarcity of freedom are a common challenge.

Human rights are at the core of the very idea of America, and the United States is safer when fundamental rights are protected worldwide. As President, Biden will take immediate steps to demonstrate that the United States is prepared to lead the world again, and to defend and advance human rights and the other democratic values that we hold dear. Biden will also prioritize efforts to resolve conflicts through negotiations and use the full range of our diplomatic tools and foreign assistance to protect and advance human rights and development, and actively combat violence and discrimination.

Biden knows that the United States cannot dictate the outcomes in complex societies -- especially not by force. But he believes that, as the world's leading democracy, we have a

responsibility to defend and advance rights and dignity, and work towards a more peaceful, more secure world. He believes that what we say and do matters, and that we must not refrain from condemning violations of universal rights or from supporting economic and political reforms.

- A Biden Administration's relationships with Middle Eastern states led by authoritarian leaders will take into greater consideration human rights and democratic principles. It undermines our moral standing globally, and endangers dissidents, when President Trump excuses Saudi abuses, panders to authoritarian leaders, or calls Egypt's president "my favorite dictator."
- Joe Biden believes in the worth and value of every Palestinian and every Israeli. He will work to ensure that Palestinians and Israelis enjoy equal measures of freedom, security, prosperity, and democracy. His policies will be grounded in a commitment to a two-state solution, where Israel and the future viable state of Palestine will live together in peace, security, and mutual recognition. Biden opposes any unilateral steps by either side that undermine a two-state solution. He opposes annexation and settlement expansion and will continue to oppose both as President. As President, Biden will take immediate steps to restore economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, consistent with U.S. law, including assistance to refugees, work to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, reopen the U.S. consulate in East Jerusalem, and work to reopen the PLO mission in Washington.
- Joe Biden will direct his administration to work with civil society and the citizens of Lebanon to assist them as they develop and implement an economic and political future for their country, free of corruption, and inclusive of all stakeholders. The U.S. will continue to support the Lebanese Armed Forces as an essential pillar of stability for the entire country, while also providing support and solutions for recovery from the explosion at the Beirut port this summer and for the extraordinarily large number of refugees and their host communities in Lebanon. A Biden administration will continue to support Lebanese civil society to help strengthen the country.
- Donald Trump has given the government of Saudi Arabia a blank check to pursue a disastrous set of policies, including the ongoing war in Yemen, the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, and the crackdown on dissent at home, including the targeting of female activists. Biden will review the U.S. relationship with the government of Saudi Arabia and end support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen.
- The Trump administration has repeatedly fallen short on U.S. policy in Syria. Biden would recommit to standing with civil society and pro-democracy partners on the ground. He will ensure the U.S. is leading the global coalition to defeat ISIS and use what

leverage we have in the region to help shape a political settlement to give more Syrians a voice. Biden would press all actors to pursue political solutions, protect vulnerable Syrians, facilitate the work of non-governmental organizations, and help mobilize other countries to support Syria's reconstruction. He would recommit the United States to lead on humanitarian issues.