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**Courting the Asian American Electorate:  
What Do They Care About?**

Findings from the 2012 National Asian American Survey and the  
2012 AAPI Post-Election Survey

**Abstract:** The 2012 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) is nationally representative survey of the policy priorities and issue preferences of Asian Americans conducted in ten Asian languages (Cantonese, Hindi, Hmong, Khmer, Korean, Japanese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese). Results from NAAS can be disaggregated to the top six largest ethnic Asian American groups – Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese. In 2012, we were able to survey an oversample of Native Hawaiians and Samoans but for the purposes of this report, we will be focusing on the Asian American communities. This report presents the results of 4269 telephone interviews of Asian American adults conducted between July 31, 2012 and October 20, 2012 (which we often refer to as the “pre-election survey”) and 6139 Asian American registered voters interviewed between November 7, 2012 and December 26, 2012 (which we often refer to as the AAPI Post-Election Survey, or AAPI PES).

**Keywords:** Asian Americans; 2012 election; public opinion.

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## 1 Executive Summary

The 2012 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) is nationally representative survey of the policy priorities and issue preferences of Asian Americans conducted in ten Asian languages (Cantonese, Hindi, Hmong, Khmer, Korean, Japanese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese). Results from NAAS can be disaggregated to the top six largest ethnic Asian American groups – Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese. In 2012, we were able to survey an oversample of Native Hawaiians and Samoans but for the purposes of this report, we will be focusing on the Asian American communities. This



report presents the results of 4269 telephone interviews of Asian American adults conducted between July 31, 2012 and October 20, 2012 (which we often refer to as the “pre-election survey”) and 6139 Asian American registered voters interviewed between November 7, 2012 and December 26, 2012 (which we often refer to as the AAPI Post-Election Survey, or AAPI PES).

In terms of the 2012 presidential vote:

- We estimate that Asian Americans constituted about 3% of voters.
- On average, 68% of the Asian American vote went to President Obama. Notably, Obama won every segment of the Asian American vote, including Vietnamese Americans who have traditionally voted Republican.
- Unlike the gender gap in voting for Whites, there was no difference between Asian American men and women in their presidential vote choice.

While most Asian American voters have low levels of party identification, *our report highlights challenges that the Republican Party will face* in appealing to the Asian American electorate based on particular issues.

- Sixty-seven percent of Asian Americans support raising taxes on high earners to reduce the deficit. Support for raising taxes on high earners is significant (62%) even among those with household incomes more than \$250,000.
- Only 35% of Asian Americans support a “cuts only” approach to the federal deficit. The top budget priorities for AAPIs are: public schools, health care, and economic assistance to needy people. Defense spending is a lower priority for Asian Americans than for the general population.
- Fifty-one percent of Asian Americans have a favorable opinion of the Affordable Care Act, nearly three times the proportion of those opposed (18%). This net level of support is much higher than it is for the general population, where opinion is about evenly split.
- Fifty-eight percent of Asian Americans support a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants in the US, a large increase from the 32% who supported such a policy in 2008.
- Education and school bullying emerge as key concerns. Forty-one percent were very concerned about the quality of schools, 35% about bullying in

school, 34% about the cost of college and 26% about college debt. Fifty-one percent of Asian American parents report that bullying in schools is a serious problem for their families.

The 2012 presidential election put a spotlight on Asian Americans, a community that has been growing by leaps and bounds over the last few decades and is finally starting to make its impact felt in electoral politics nationally and in various states. What triggered media interest in the 2012 Asian American vote was the group's high level of support for Barack Obama, and the Republican Party's worry that it had fell behind significantly with a group it once won by comfortable margins.

Despite this new attention, there is still a fair amount of uncertainty about the current and future political direction of the Asian American electorate, particularly with respect to party identification and preferences on important policy issues. In this report, we provide answers to these questions, relying on two surveys conducted by National Asian American Survey, a pre-election survey conducted from August to October 2012 and a post-election survey conducted in November and December 2012 (hereafter "pre-election survey" and "post-election survey"). Looking ahead, this report:

- provides a definitive look at how Asian Americans voted in 2012,
- shows that they still remain persuadable despite a strong time trend in Presidential voting towards the Democratic Party,
- shows where they stand on important policy issues, and
- discuss potential ways forward for party outreach and voter empowerment.

## 2 How did Asian Americans (Truly) Vote?

In the days and weeks after Election Day, news media were abuzz with the strong level of support that Asian Americans had given President Barack Obama over Governor Mitt Romney. The National Election Pool data, shared by sources ranging from the New York Times and CNN to ABC News and Fox News, indicated that 73% of Asian Americans had voted for Obama, a proportion second only to the 93% vote share among African Americans.<sup>1</sup> Just as important, prior exit polls from the National Election Pool had showed the Asian American vote for the Democratic presidential candidate as low as 32% in 1992, and 54% in 2000.

A key detail that was lost amidst the new interest in Asian Americans, however, was the fact that the National Election Pool was conducted only in English and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://elections.nytimes.com/2012/results/president/exit-polls>.

Spanish. By contrast, prior nationally-representative surveys of the Asian American electorate, such as the 2008 and 2012 National Asian American Survey and the 2012 Asian American Justice Center/APIA Vote/Lake Research Partners Survey,<sup>2</sup> found that upwards of 40% of Asian American citizens preferred to be interviewed in an Asian language. Importantly, many of these studies have found significant differences in the opinions of English- and Asian-language respondents.

From November 7, 2012 through December 26, 2012, National Asian American Survey, in conjunction with Asian American Justice Center, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, and Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote, conducted a nationally representative telephone survey of Asian American and Pacific Islander registered voters with support in nine Asian languages. The 2012 AAPI Post-Election Survey (or AAPI PES) was weighted to account for demographic differences between the sample and population parameters on gender, education, and nationality.<sup>3</sup>

The results of the 2012 AAPI PES indicate statistically significant differences in the vote choice of those who were interviewed in English vs. those interviewed in an Asian language (Figure 1). Indeed, among those interviewed in English, the presidential vote results (72% for Obama) were remarkably similar to the National Election Pool results and well within its margin of error.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, Obama's vote share among Asian-language respondents was significantly lower, at 65%. These findings are important because they indicate that English-only surveys of the Asian American population produce inaccurate results of a community that is still predominantly foreign-born, with significant language needs when it comes to survey research.

Another advantage of the 2012 AAPI Post-Election Survey is that the sample sizes are large enough to provide estimates of presidential vote share across national origin groups.<sup>5</sup> As we can see from Figure 2, Obama won every segment of the Asian American vote, including Vietnamese Americans who have, until

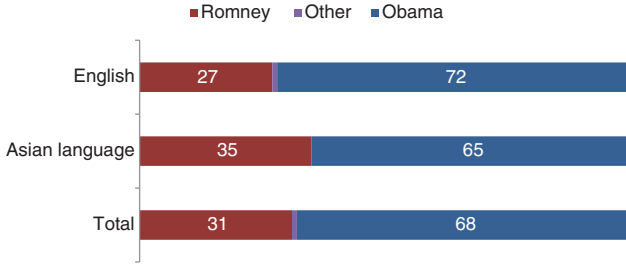
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<sup>2</sup> Asian American Justice Center, Asian Pacific Islander American Vote, and Lake Research Partners, *Asian American Survey: Findings from a Survey of 700 Asian American Voters nationwide plus 100 each in FL, IL, NV, and VA*, (Washington, DC, 2012), [www.advancingequality.org/files/AsianAmericanSurvey.f.050412.final.pdf](http://www.advancingequality.org/files/AsianAmericanSurvey.f.050412.final.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Asian American Justice Center, Asian Pacific Islander American Vote, and National Asian American Survey, *Behind the Numbers: Post-Election Survey of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in 2012* (Washington DC, 2012). <http://www.naasurvey.com/resources/Presentations/2012-aapipes-national.pdf>.

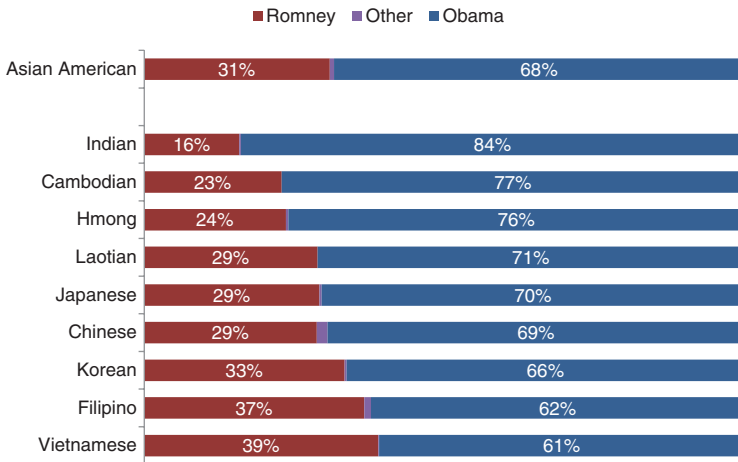
<sup>4</sup> Overall margins of sample error for Asian Americans are  $\pm 4\%$  for the National Election Pool survey and  $\pm 1.5\%$  for the AAPI Post-Election Survey.

<sup>5</sup> Sample sizes for Asian Americans in the survey ranged from 288 for Laotians (margin of error  $\pm 5.8\%$ ) to 1151 for Chinese Americans (margin of error  $\pm 2.9\%$ ).



**Figure 1:** Presidential Vote Among Asian Americans, by Language of Interview (in %).  
 Source: 2012 Asian American and Pacific Islander Post-election Survey (2012 AAPI PES).

recently, been voting Republican.<sup>6</sup> Obama’s strongest level of support was among Indian Americans, who are one of the largest Asian American groups in the country and also one of the most prosperous. However, support for Obama was also very strong among Southeast Asian refugee communities (Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian) who tend to fare much worse in terms of educational attainment and income.<sup>7</sup> As we explore later in our section on issue preferences, this high



**Figure 2:** Presidential Vote Among Asian Americans, by National Origin.  
 Source: 2012 Asian American and Pacific Islander Post-Election Survey (2012 AAPI PES).

<sup>6</sup> The shift of Vietnamese Americans away from the Republican Party is now apparent in four surveys from 2012: the Pew Research Center’s *Rise of Asian Americans*, the Asian American Justice Center/APIA Vote/Lake Research survey report from May 2012, and the two surveys conducted by National Asian American Survey.

<sup>7</sup> See various reports on educational attainment and poverty among Asian Americans at <http://aapidata.com/>.

level of Obama support across groups with dramatically different socioeconomic outcomes is also reflected in a high level of agreement across groups on matters such as raising taxes and the provision of health care.

### 3 Are Asian Americans a Lock for the Democratic Party?

Looking at the presidential vote patterns in 2012, or perhaps the dramatic shift among English-proficient Asian American voters from a 32% vote for Bill Clinton in 1992 to 73% for Obama in 2012,<sup>8</sup> one might conclude that they are strongly Democrat. At the same time, various surveys, from 2008 onwards indicate that the Asian American community continues to have a high proportion of registered voters who either identify as Independent, or who have not yet made up their minds with respect to party labels altogether.

As Table 1 indicates, high levels of non-party identification is true even among those groups who strongly supported Barack Obama in 2012. Overall,

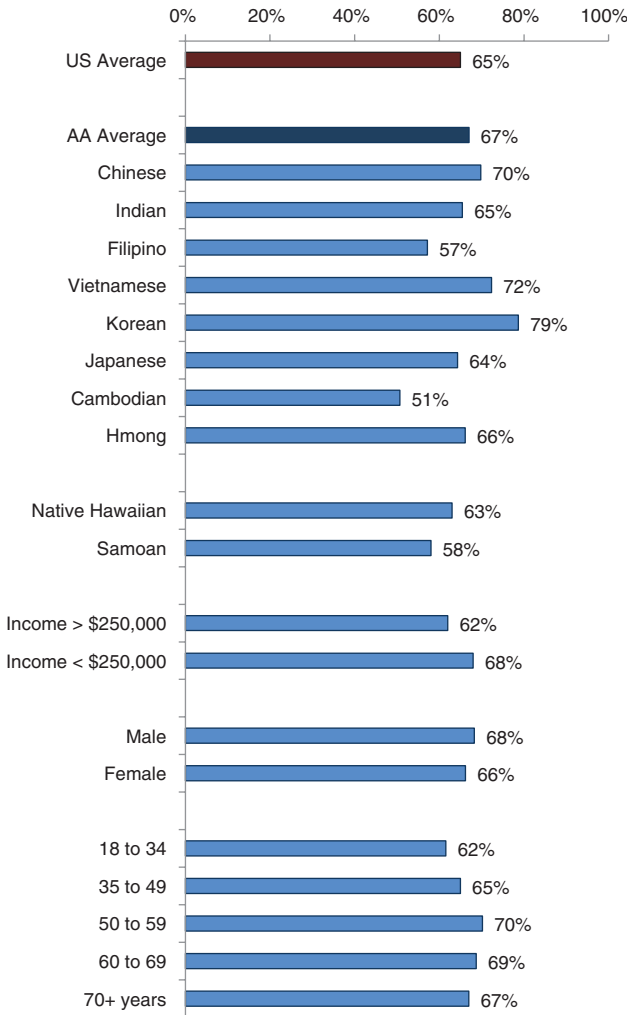
**Table 1:** Party Identification Among Asian American Registered Voters (in %).

	Democrat	Republican	Independent or Other Party	Don't Know or Don't Think in Terms of Party
Total	35	18	26	22
Cambodian	32	12	37	19
Chinese	25	15	22	38
Filipino	42	19	26	13
Hmong	55	12	19	14
Indian	50	11	30	9
Japanese	52	21	18	9
Korean	44	27	5	25
Laotian	29	8	38	26
Vietnamese	23	20	35	22

Source: 2012 Asian American and Pacific Islander Post-Election Survey (2012 AAPI PES).

<sup>8</sup> For possible explanations on this rapid shift in presidential vote preferences, see Taeku Lee and Karthick Ramakrishnan, "Asian Americans Turn Democratic," *Los Angeles Times* (November 23, 2012) and Karthick Ramakrishnan and Taeku Lee, "Asian Americans Voted Democrat: We Should Not Be Surprised," *The Monkey Cage* (political science blog) <http://themonkeycage.org/2012/11/29/asian-americans-voted-democrat-we-should-not-be-surprised/>.

only 53% of registered voters identify as Democrat or Republican, with a quarter identifying as Independent and about another fifth of registered voters stating that they do not know, or do not yet think in terms of political parties.



**Figure 3:** Support for Raising Taxes on High Earners to Reduce Budget Deficit.<sup>9</sup>  
Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey (Pre-election Survey).

<sup>9</sup> *The Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation Dimensions of Partisanship Survey, August 2012*, <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8341.cfm>.



Finally, the proportion of those who identify as Democrats is significantly lower (35% overall, or 40% if those non-identifiers who nevertheless “lean” towards the Democratic Party are included) than the proportion who voted for Obama (68%). This relatively weak level of party identification among Asian Americans suggests that issue preferences play an outsized role in their voting decisions.

## 4 Where do Asian Americans Stand on Key Issues?

### 4.1 Tax Increases and Spending Cuts

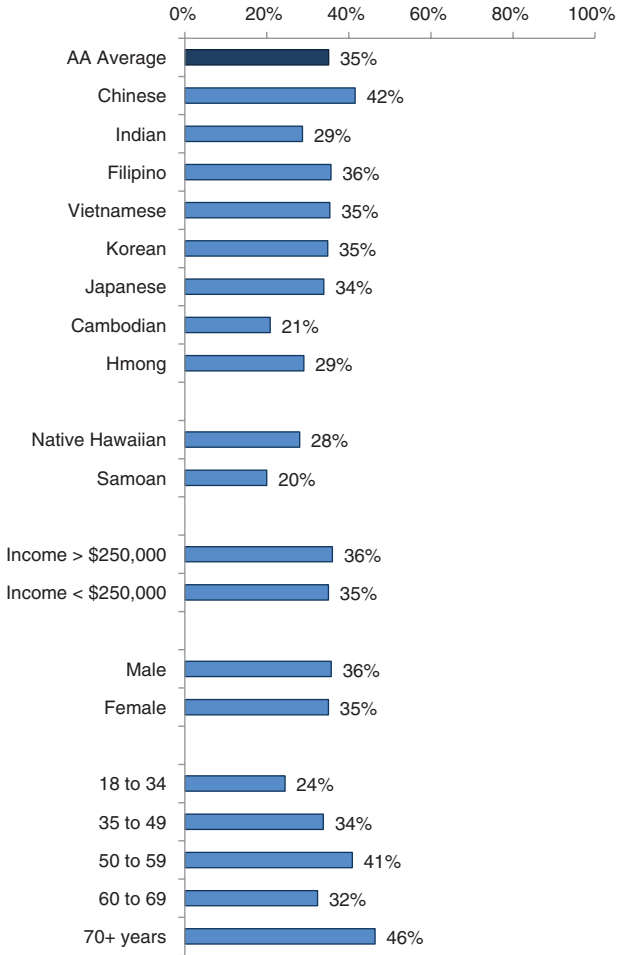
The policy debate on fiscal matters at the federal level is largely stalemated over the question of whether deficit reduction should be achieved primarily through higher taxes, through cuts in existing programs, or some combination of both. Our 2012 pre-election survey asked two questions relevant to this debate: “In order to reduce the national deficit” whether the federal government should “raise taxes on those earning more than \$250,000 a year” or whether it should “rely only on cutting existing programs.”

Mirroring a general national sentiment, two-thirds of NAAS respondents (67%) “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed with raising taxes on the rich (Figure 3).<sup>10</sup> By contrast, only about one-third (35%) “somewhat” or “strongly” favored an approach that relied only on cutting programs (Figure 4).

The support for deficit reduction by levying taxes on the wealthy is widespread across ethnic groups, gender, and age groups. Notably, even 62% of Asian Americans who reported earning a household income of more than \$250,000 in the last year supported this option, with 45% strongly supporting it and 18% somewhat supporting it. The “all-cuts” approach is broadly unpopular across income groups, gender, and ethnic origin. The one discernible pattern here is that elderly (70 years or older) Asian Americans are about twice as likely to support cutting programs (46%) as their 18- to 34-year-old counterparts (24%).

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<sup>10</sup> In August 2012, a *Washington Post*/Kaiser Family survey indicated that 63% of Americans supported raising taxes to increase for households with incomes of \$250,000 or more. *The Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation Dimensions of Partisanship Survey, August 2012*. Accessed online September 2012 at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8341.cfm>.



**Figure 4:** Support for Reducing Deficit with Spending Cuts Only.  
 Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey (Pre-election Survey).

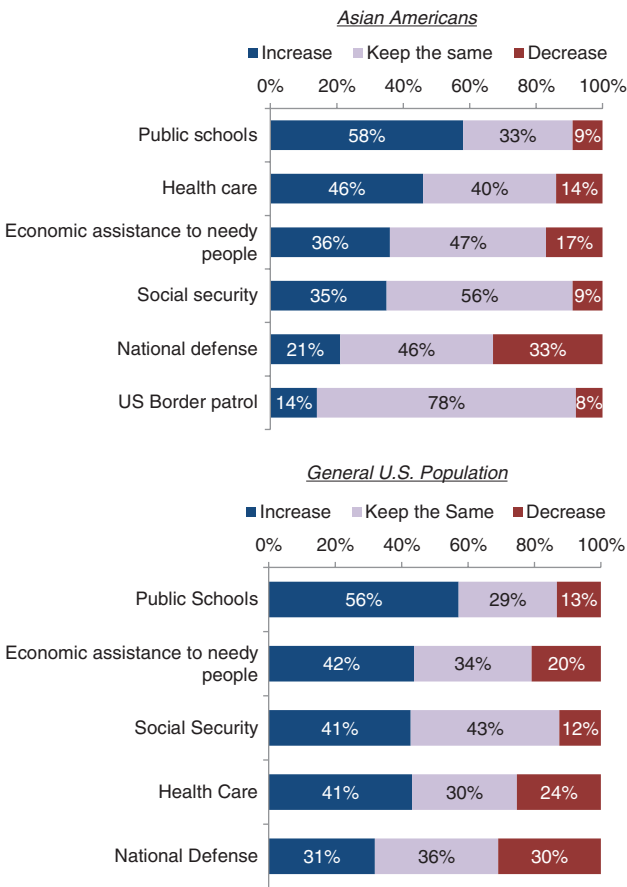
## 4.2 Federal Budget Priorities

Part of the ongoing budget debate involves questions about the spending priorities of Americans on matters ranging from defense to health care. Where do Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders stand on these issues?

To get a better picture of federal spending priorities, we replicated questions that have been asked of the general population by the Pew Research Center. In February 2011, a Pew survey asked “If you were making up the budget for the

federal government this year, would you increase spending, decrease spending or keep spending the same...” on 19 different programs, ranging from energy and scientific research to veterans benefits and environmental protection.

We used the same wording in our survey, but limited our inquiry to six program areas: 1) Social Security, 2) Health Care, 3) National Defense, 4) Public Schools, 5) The US Border Patrol, and 6) Economic Assistance to Needy People. We present the results in Figure 5 (see next page), with comparisons to priorities of the overall US population where applicable.



**Figure 5:** Federal Budget Spending Preferences.

Asian Americans: Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey (Pre-election Survey).

General US Population: Source: Pew Research Center, Changing Views of Federal Spending, Feb 10, 2011.

The top budget priorities for AAPIs are: public schools, health care, economic assistance to needy people, and social security, with increases in education and health care spending receiving especially strong support (56% and 46%, respectively).

When comparing to the general public, we find that Asian American budget priorities at the federal level are similar when it comes to spending on public schools, with a nearly identical proportion wanting to increase spending (58% for Asian Americans, 56% for the general public). Asian Americans are more likely than the general public to prefer increases in federal spending on health care (46% vs. 41%, respectively). Asian Americans are slightly less likely than the general public to favor increases in spending on economic assistance for needy people and on social security. The biggest difference, however, is on matters of defense spending. Asian Americans favor decreasing defense spending over increasing it by a 33% to 21% ratio, while the general public is evenly split between increasing and decreasing spending on defense.

There are also some significant national-origin differences on these budget priorities. On Social Security, Filipino Americans are most likely to favor an increase in spending (49%), while Korean Americans are the least likely to do so (24%). On health care, Indians are the most likely to favor more spending (55%), while Vietnamese and Korean Americans are the least likely to do so (37% each). On public schools, Korean Americans (37%) and Vietnamese Americans (44%) are less likely than the rest of the Asian American population to favor increases in federal spending, where support ranges from 57% among Chinese Americans to 71% among Hmong and Indian Americans. Support for increasing government spending on assistance for the needy is higher among Hmong (46%) than the average for Asian Americans noted in Figure 5 (36%).

### 4.3 Health Care and the Affordable Care Act

A key aspect to the issue of health care is public opinion on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), sometimes referred to as Obamacare. Surveys of the general population show that about 38% to 40% of Americans have a favorable impression of the law, and a greater proportion (43% to 44%) have an unfavorable impression.<sup>11</sup>

The 2012 NAAS asked “As you may know, Congress passed a sweeping health care law, [the Affordable Care Act/which some refer to as Obamacare],

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<sup>11</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/upload/8342-C.pdf>.

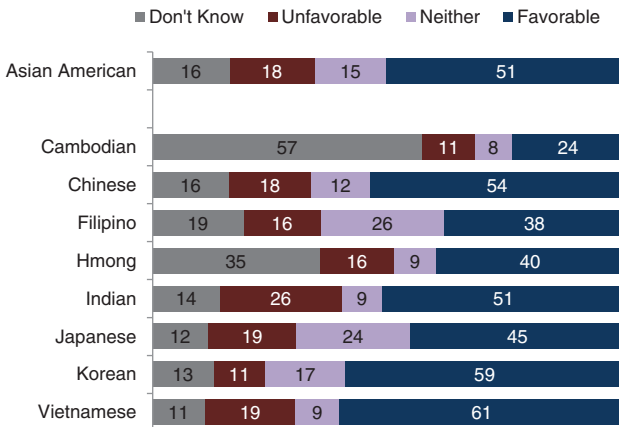
in 2010. It was then mostly upheld by the US Supreme Court. Given what you know about the law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?”

As the results indicate (Figure 6), Asian Americans are much more favorably inclined towards the law than opposed to it. About 51% had a favorable impression of the health care law, nearly three times the proportion of those who had an unfavorable opinion of it. Calling the law the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare did not significantly affect the level of support for health care reform.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, looking ahead to implementation of the Affordable Care Act, what is important to consider are the high levels “don’t know” reported. This suggests a need for greater community education and outreach, particularly among Southeast Asian refugee populations.

#### 4.4 Immigration

What are the views of Asian Americans on immigration reform? The 2012 NAAS asked two questions that are relevant to federal immigration policy: on support for a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, and on backlogs in visas.



**Figure 6:** Asian American Opinion Towards the Affordable Care Act (in %).

Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey (Pre-election).

<sup>12</sup> Fifty-three percent supported “Obamacare,” 18% opposed, 15% neither supported or opposed, and 14% did not know. Differences between these results and those presented in Figure 8 on the “Affordable Care Act” are all within the survey’s margin of error.

The issue of undocumented immigration has been widely covered in news stories and research reports, with an estimated 11 million in the US.<sup>13</sup> Less well covered, however, is the estimate that about 1.3 million of these unauthorized immigrants are from Asia.<sup>14</sup> Another pressing issue for the Asian American community is visa backlogs, particularly on family-sponsored visas.<sup>15</sup> There are an estimated 4.3 million individuals waiting abroad due to backlogs in the issuing of family visas. Of these, about 1.8 million are from Asian countries.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Asia now accounts for the largest share of immigration to the US, accounting for more than 40% of the foreign born arriving after 2008.<sup>17</sup>

On the topic of undocumented immigration in the 2012 pre-election survey, respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statement: “Undocumented immigrants should have the opportunity to eventually become US citizens.” This is similar to a question in the 2008 National Asian American Survey, where respondents were asked about their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement “The US should provide a path to citizenship for people in this country illegally.”

As Figure 7 indicates, a solid majority of Asian Americans (58%) support a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. By contrast, 26% oppose a path to citizenship, and the remainder (16%) are undecided on the issue.

This is a major change in opinion from 2008, when just about a third of respondents supported a path to citizenship and 46% were opposed.

In 2012, we gauged Asian American opinion on two other aspects of policies towards undocumented immigrants at the state level: the provision of in-state tuition (often referred to as “state DREAM Acts,” and driver licenses for undocumented immigrants. As Figure 8 indicates, there is strong *net* support for in-state

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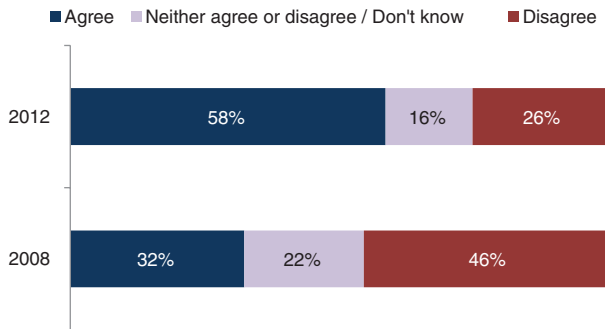
**13** Migration Information Source (see <http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=886#9>).

**14** Pew Hispanic Center, *Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010*. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/02/01/unauthorized-immigrant-population-brnational-and-state-trends-2010/>.

**15** Testimony from Asian American Justice Center, [http://www.advancingequality.org/files/AACAJ\\_Family\\_Unity\\_Waiver\\_Comments.pdf](http://www.advancingequality.org/files/AACAJ_Family_Unity_Waiver_Comments.pdf).

**16** U.S. Department of State, *Annual Report of Immigrant Visa Applicants in the Family-sponsored and Employment-based preferences Registered at the National Visa Center as of November 1, 2012*. <http://www.travel.state.gov/pdf/WaitingListItem.pdf>. Four of the five highest countries of origin facing backlogs are Asian countries: Philippines (423,449), India (306,789), Vietnam (267,067), and China (226,921).

**17** U.S. Census Bureau, *The Newly Arrived Foreign-Born Population of the US: 2010*. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acsbr10-16.pdf>.



**Figure 7:** Path to Citizenship for Undocumented Immigrants.

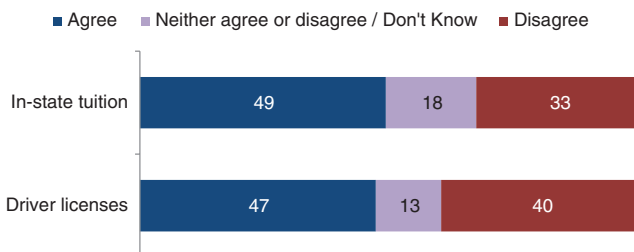
Source: 2008 National Asian American Survey and 2012 National Asian American Survey.

tuition for undocumented residents (49% agree while 33% disagree), and weaker but still positive net positive support for allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain state driver licenses (47% agree, 40% disagree).

In addition to asking respondents their opinions about undocumented immigrants, we also asked about the relevance of visa backlogs to their personal circumstances.

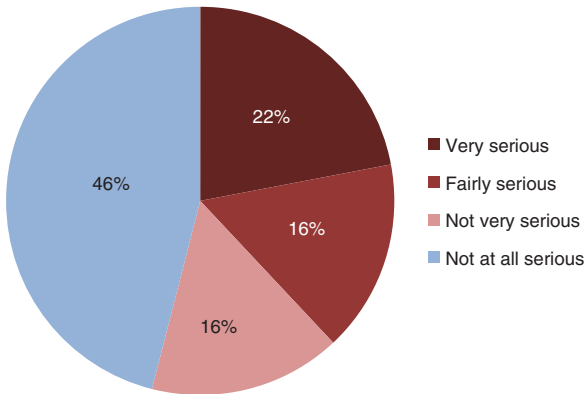
Respondents were given a list of issues “people have mentioned as challenges they face” and then asked to assess “how serious of a problem each is for you and your family.” The list included various measures of economic stress, and one on “the long time it takes for people to get visas.”

As Figure 9 indicates, 54% of Asian Americans indicate that visa backlogs are a problem, with 22% indicating that it is a very serious problem and an additional 16% indicating that it is a fairly serious problem. Concern about visa backlogs was most pressing for Indians (67% indicating it as “very” or “fairly” serious), followed by Hmong (66%), Vietnamese (51%), and Filipinos (48%).



**Figure 8:** In-State Tuition and Driver Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants (in %).

Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey (Pre-election Survey).



**Figure 9:** Severity of Problem for Self and Family: Visa Backlogs.  
Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey (Pre-election Survey).

## 4.5 Education and School Bullying

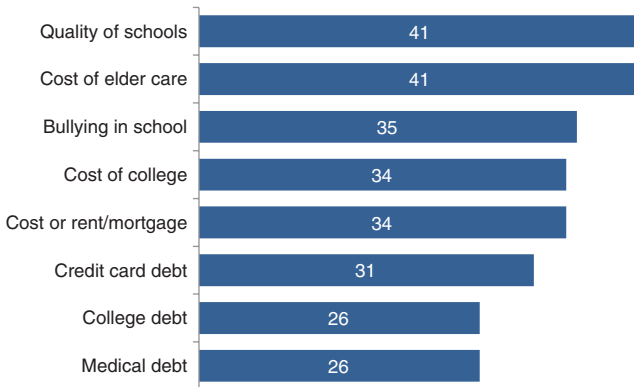
Finally, the 2012 NAAS asked respondents to rate how serious (from not at all to very serious) they and their family experience a series of challenges. We have already noted that 22% of Asian Americans view visa delays as a very serious problem. Among the rest of the problems that we asked about, education concerns topped the list in terms of what respondents identified as a “very serious” problem (Figure 10). 41% were very concerned about the quality of schools, 35% about bullying in school, 34% about the cost of college and 26% about college debt.

Research based on the 2009 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey, conducted jointly by the US Departments of Justice and Education showed that 54% of Asian American students were bullied in school compared to 31.3% of White students, 38.4% of Black students and 34.3% of Hispanic students. Relatedly, when we examine those in the 2012 NAAS pre-election survey with children under age 18, 52% replied that they were fairly concerned or very seriously concerned about school bullying.

## 5 Ways Forward on Party Outreach

How important was the Asian American vote in 2012, and what can we anticipate moving forward?





**Figure 10:** “Very Serious” Problems for Self and Family (in %).  
Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey (Pre-election Survey).

In 1996, the Asian American share of the electorate was just 1.6%; in 2000, 1.8%; 2004, 2.3%; and 2008, nearly 2.5%. In 2008, approximately 600,000 Asian Americans voted for the first time.<sup>18</sup> We anticipate the final breakdown of the 2012 election will show a similar gain. We estimate that Asian Americans will have cast at least 2.8% of 2012 votes.<sup>19</sup>

Using the final certified popular-vote tallies and our estimate of the Asian American share of the electorate (2.8%), we estimate that Asian Americans cast at least 3.6 million votes out of a total of approximately 129 million.<sup>20</sup> We further estimate that about 2.5 million Asian Americans voted for Obama while 1.1 million voted for Romney. We also estimate that 250,000 Pacific Islanders voted in 2012, with 170,000 voting for Obama, 75,000 for Romney, and the rest for another candidate.

Without Asian American and Pacific Islander support, Obama’s popular-vote margin of victory would have been 3.5 million. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders contributed a *net* of 1.5 million votes to Obama’s popular-vote margin of victory. The effect can be interpreted either as *augmenting Obama’s popular-vote margin of victory by 43%* (1.5 million contributed on top of 3.5 million votes separating Obama and Romney), or as accounting for about 30%

<sup>18</sup> Profile America: Facts for Features. [http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb13-ff09.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb13-ff09.html).

<sup>19</sup> Our estimated 2.8% share of the electorate is based on a linear projection of growth rates in the Asian American vote share from prior Current Population Survey Voting Supplement data.

<sup>20</sup> See Federal Election Commission, “Official 2012 Presidential General Election Results,” [www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/2012presgeresults.pdf](http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/2012presgeresults.pdf).

of Obama's vote margin of victory (1.5 million votes out of his 5 million-vote margin of victory).

That said, there is considerable room for improvement in voter engagement and party outreach. Prior studies based on the Current Population Survey have consistently shown that registration rates among Asian American adult citizens is considerably lower than the national average. In 2008, for example, the Current Population Survey showed a registration rate of 55% for Asian Americans when compared to 71% for the national average.

Even among registered voters, we find that election outreach is significantly lower for Asian Americans (29% in our pre-election survey) than among Whites (35%). A similar proportion of registered voters reported contact in our post-election survey (31%). Among those contacted, Democrats had an edge over Republicans (50% vs. 42%).

Taken together, these results indicate that there is still a considerable amount of work left to be done in terms of voter registration, in terms of party outreach, and in terms of Republican Party outreach in particular. The ability for Republicans to make inroads into Asian American voters is possible, given the relatively low rates of party identification among this group. However, there are a host of issues on which the positions of Asian Americans is closer to the Democratic Party's – on matters ranging from higher taxes to spending on health care and other aspects of the social safety net. However, if both parties are able to address these concerns, as well as concerns about education, bullying, and other aspects of discrimination in society, they can hope to attract greater support among Asian American voters moving forward.

## 6 About the Authors

This report, and all other reports and data from the National Asian American Survey are available online at <http://www.naasurvey.com/>.

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Ramakrishnan received his PhD in politics from Princeton University, and has held fellowships at the Russell Sage Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson

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