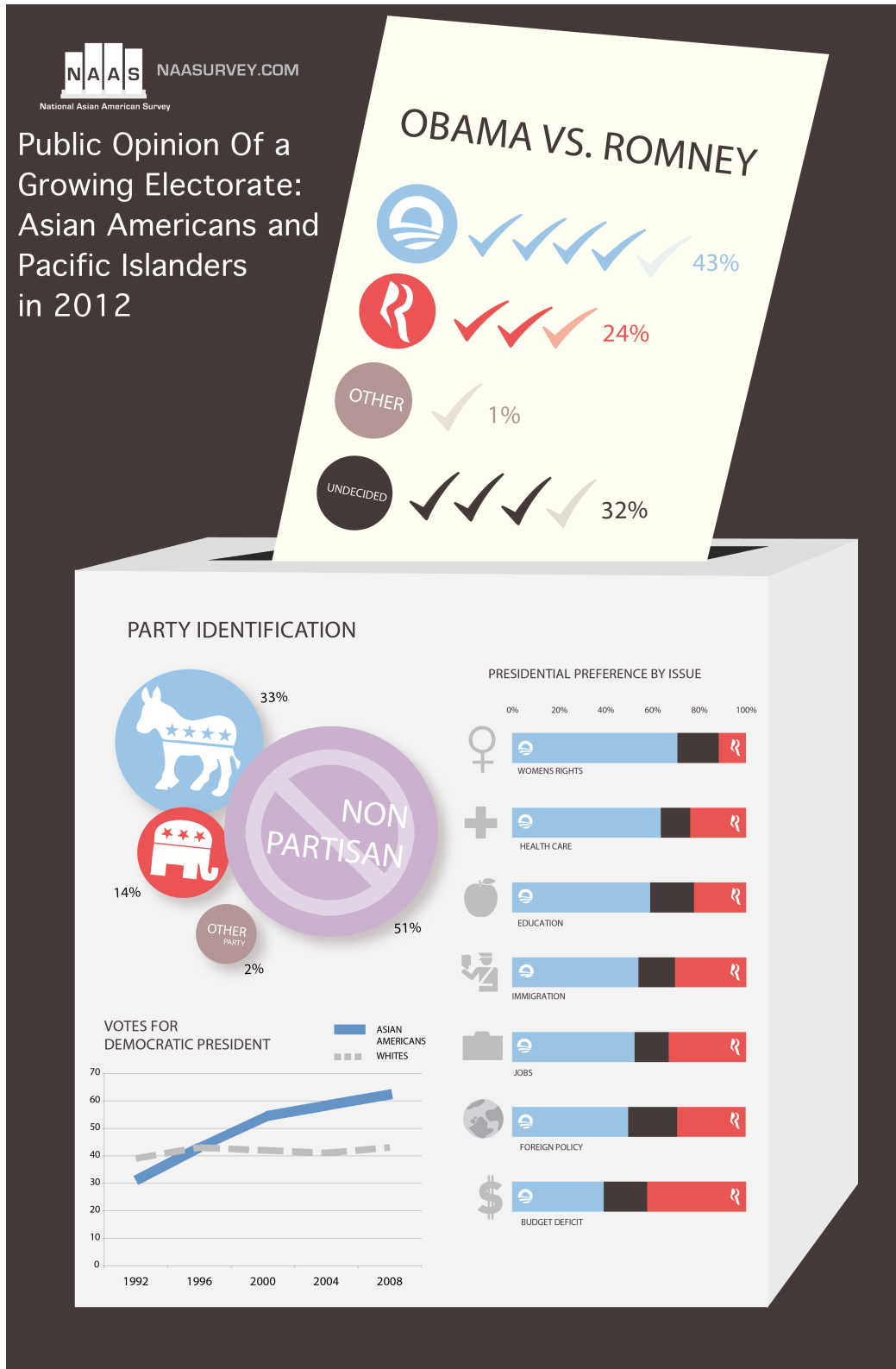


**September 25, 2012**  
(revised Oct 8, 2012)



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are one of the fastest growing populations in the United States. Between 2000 and 2010, the Asian American population grew faster than any other racial group, at a rate of 46%. They are also an important and growing political constituency, as 600,000 new Asian American voters entered the electorate in 2008 and a similar number is expected to do so in 2012.

Their growing political influence is already apparent in many states and metropolitan areas, including key presidential battleground states such as Nevada and Virginia. As of 2010, AAPI residents exceeded the 5% threshold in roughly one in four Congressional Districts and in nearly 600 cities. In 2012, there are also a record number of Asian Americans running for Congress in 2012, and AAPIs occupy key positions in Washington, D.C. and in various state capitols.

The National Asian American Survey (NAAS) conducted the first nationally representative survey of the political views of Asian Americans in 2008. In 2012, we are conducting a tracking survey with the addition of even more Asian ethnic groups than in 2008 (Hmong and Cambodian, in addition to Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese) and with the addition of Pacific Islander groups such as Native Hawaiians and Samoans. This report presents the results of 3,376 interviews conducted through September 19, 2012.

The data reveal that:

- Among Asian American citizens, 45 percent can be described as “likely voters.” Japanese and Filipino Americans are the most likely to vote (64% and 52%, respectively), and Hmong and Cambodian Americans are among those least likely to vote (26% each). 62% of Native Hawaiians and 54% of Samoans are likely voters.
- Among likely voters, 43% of Asian Americans support Barack Obama while 24% support Mitt Romney. There are some considerable differences by ethnic group, with Indian Americans showing the strongest support for Obama (68%), and Filipinos showing the strongest support for Romney (38%).
- Nearly one-third (32%) of likely Asian American voters remain undecided. By comparison, recent surveys of the general population show that undecided voters are roughly 7 percent of the electorate.
- One in six Asian Americans (17%) lives in a battleground state during the 2012 presidential election. Indian and Korean Americans constitute a greater share of the battleground state population than their respectively national population shares, and Chinese and Filipino Americans constitute a relatively smaller share in battleground states.

- A high proportion of Asian Americans are non-partisan (51% are Independent or do not think in terms of party identification). This figure is higher than the average for the national population (as high as 40%), and is comparable to the proportion of non-partisans among Latinos.
- Democrats have a 33% to 14% advantage among Asian Americans and, when we add Independents who "lean" towards a party, the difference is 46% to 23%.
- Party identification varies across ethnic groups, with Hmong, Indian, and Korean Americans most strongly identified with the Democratic Party, and Filipino and Vietnamese Americans most strongly identified with Republicans.
- In a significant shift from prior surveys, Filipinos who identify as Republicans outnumber those who identify as Democrats. Indeed, a larger proportion of Filipinos now identify with the Republican Party than any Asian American group.
- Vietnamese Americans, previously the staunchest Republicans, are now somewhat less likely to identify as Republicans than in 2008 and more likely to identify as Independents.
- Asian Americans give significantly higher job approval ratings to President Obama than the national average (59% vs. 50%, respectively), and they have a considerably less favorable impression of Mitt Romney than the national average (30% vs. 45%, respectively). Asian Americans also have a more favorable impression of Democrats in Congress than the national average (43% vs. 34%, respectively).
- The issue priorities of the Asian American and Pacific Islander populations are similar to those of the rest of the country. The economy and jobs are by far the most important issues, followed by health care and education.
- Women's rights, health care, and the budget deficit are important issues that differentiate support for Obama and Romney: the first two issues favor President Obama among Asian Americans, while the deficit favors Mitt Romney.
- Asian Americans actively follow political affairs in their countries of origin, but this attention is not a deterrent to their political involvement in the United States. Indeed, those involved in their countries of origin were slightly more likely to have voted in the 2008 presidential election than those who were not (73% versus 70%).

## BACKGROUND: THE AAPI ELECTORATE

### Demographics

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are one of the fastest growing populations in the United States. Between 2000 and 2010, the Asian American population grew faster than any other racial group, at a rate of 46%. They are also an important and growing political constituency, as 600,000 new Asian American voters entered the electorate in 2008.

Their growing political influence is already apparent in states such as California and New Jersey, and metropolitan areas such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, Houston, and Washington, D.C. At the same time, AAPI populations are also growing in “new destination” states like North Carolina, Nevada, and Virginia. As of 2010, AAPI residents exceeded the 5% threshold in roughly one in four Congressional Districts and in nearly 600 cities.

The Asian American population is also characterized by historic patterns of geographic concentration, emergent patterns of geographic dispersion, and a continuing pattern of striking demographic diversity.

- Asian Americans exhibit patterns of concentrated geographic settlement in particular states and regions. Five states (California, New York, Texas, Hawaii, and New Jersey) account for about 60% of the national Asian American population. California is by far the largest state for Asian Americans, accounting for one third of all Asian American adults.
- Within California, Asian Americans are 15% of the state's resident population. They constitute a majority of the population in Hawaii (57%), and are also a significant portion of the state populations New Jersey (9%), Washington (9%), New York (8%), and Virginia (7%).
- The Asian American population is also growing rapidly beyond the “traditional gateways.” Between 2000 and 2010, the Asian American population has grown by more than two-thirds in 15 states. In fact, the electoral battleground states of Nevada, North Carolina, and Virginia are home to some of the fastest growing Asian American populations in the country (growth rates of 116%, 85%, and 71%, respectively, between 2000 and 2010).
- Asian Americans are remarkably diverse in terms of ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, cultural orientation, socioeconomic status, and immigration histories. Focusing on regions and countries of origin alone, Asian Americans have shifted from a population of primarily working-age men from China and Japan in 1900 to a population today that is composed of six groups whose populations account for 86 percent of the Asian American population in the United States (22% Chinese, 20% Indian, 18% Filipino, 11% Vietnamese, 10%

Korean, and 5% Japanese). The three next largest groups, Pakistanis, Hmong, and Cambodians together account for another 6% of the Asian American population.

- The Pacific Islander population is even more concentrated in particular groups: Native Hawaiians and Samoans account for a majority of the Pacific Islander population, accounting for 31% and 20%, respectively, of the national resident population. Tongans, Gauamanians, Fijians, and other Micronesian and Melanesian groups constitute the rest of the Pacific Islander population in the United States.
- On average, Asian Americans have high rates of educational attainment (86% have completed high school, and 49% have a Bachelor's degree or higher). However, these averages mask significant diversity within the population. Southeast Asian groups, in particular, have rates of high school completion well below the national average of 85% (61% for Hmong, 62% for Cambodians, and 72% for Vietnamese). And Pacific Islanders have high school completion rates on par with the national average, but college graduation rates that are significantly lower (17%, compared to the national average of 28%).
- Rates of health insurance also vary widely across these various groups. In general, lower-income Asian American and Pacific Islander groups have higher rates of uninsurance, although Korean Americans have among the highest rates of uninsurance (22%) despite earning incomes on par with the national average.<sup>1</sup>
- These various groups also have different rates of civic and political participation, and patterns of public opinion, as we outline in this report.

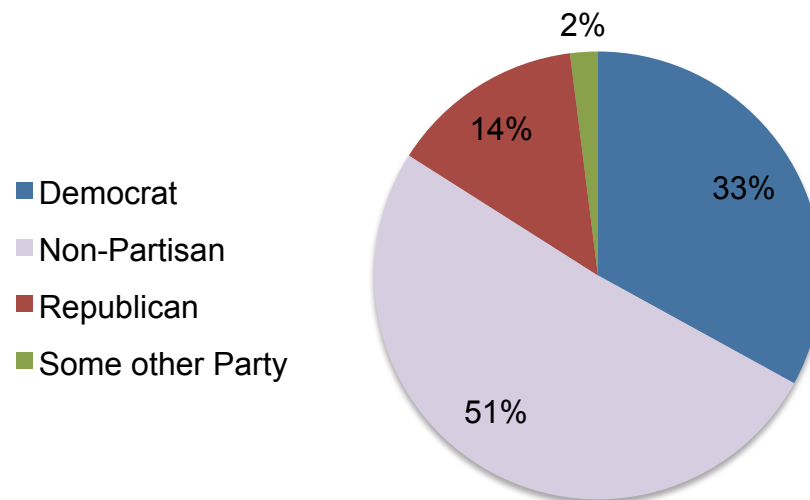
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<sup>1</sup> Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, *A Community of Contrasts: Asian Americans in the United States, 2011* (Los Angeles, CA, 2011).

## High Proportion of Non-Partisans

We can better understand the political orientations of Asian Americans by first examining their patterns of party identification. Over the past three decades, the American electorate has been characterized by a growing proportion of Independent voters, reaching as high as 40 percent of voters in 2012.<sup>2</sup> Among Asian Americans, the proportion of adult citizens who choose not to identify as Republican or Democrat is even greater, at 51 percent, which is similar to the proportion of political Independents among Latinos.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1: Party Identification Among Asian Americans<sup>4</sup>**



Unlike for whites and African Americans, for Asian Americans the high proportion of Non-Partisans is driven not only by those who positively affirm their identification as Independents, but also "non-identifiers" -- those who "don't know" how they identify, or do not yet think in terms of U.S. political parties. Our measure of Non-Partisans in Figure 1 includes both Independents and non-identifiers. Indeed, when we asked a portion of our respondents an alternative version of the party identification question that allowed them to say that they do not think in terms of political parties, the proportion of Non-Partisans rose to 55%.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones, *Record-High 40% of Americans Identify as Independents in '11* (Princeton, NJ: Gallup, January 29, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones, *Half of U.S. Hispanics Identify as Political Independents* (Princeton, NJ: Gallup, May 2, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Question: "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or in terms of some other party?" ["don't know" and refusals are labeled as "Non-Partisan"].

<sup>5</sup> Building on the work of Zoltan Hajnal and Taeku Lee (*Why Americans Don't Join the Party?* Princeton University Press, 2011), we asked about partisanship in three different ways: with an explicit option to state

## Party Advantage Varies By Group

Among those who do identify with the political parties, considerably more identify as Democrats (33%) than as Republicans (14%). However, this is a general picture that masks significant variation within the community by national origin group, gender, and nativity. (See Table 1)

**Table 1. Party Identification by Ethnicity, Gender, and Nativity<sup>6</sup>**

|                        | Democrat | Republican | Independent /<br>Non-Partisan |
|------------------------|----------|------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Chinese</b>         | 29%      | 9%         | 58%                           |
| <b>Indian</b>          | 50%      | 3%         | 47%                           |
| <b>Filipino</b>        | 24%      | 27%        | 45%                           |
| <b>Vietnamese</b>      | 16%      | 20%        | 64%                           |
| <b>Korean</b>          | 46%      | 18%        | 34%                           |
| <b>Japanese</b>        | 37%      | 18%        | 45%                           |
| <b>Cambodian</b>       | 26%      | 5%         | 68%                           |
| <b>Hmong</b>           | 52%      | 7%         | 41%                           |
| <b>Native Hawaiian</b> | 41%      | 14%        | 40%                           |
| <b>Samoan</b>          | 57%      | 16%        | 24%                           |
| <b>Male</b>            | 31%      | 14%        | 53%                           |
| <b>Female</b>          | 35%      | 14%        | 50%                           |
| <b>Foreign Born</b>    | 33%      | 13%        | 52%                           |
| <b>Native Born</b>     | 36%      | 20%        | 41%                           |

- Japanese Americans have traditionally had the strongest identification with the Democratic Party, but we find that Hmong, Indians, and Korean Americans are even more strongly identified with the Democratic Party.
- In a significant shift from prior surveys, Filipinos who identify as Republicans outnumber those who identify as Democrats. Indeed, Filipinos now have the highest proportion of Republican identifiers, a designation that has applied to Vietnamese Americans ever since public opinion polling has been conducted on these groups.
- Vietnamese Americans have gone from being the group with the strongest Republican partisanship (in our 2008 survey, 29% identified as Republican), to a

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that respondents "don't think in terms of political parties," without that option but with interviewers allowed to code it as a volunteered response, and without that volunteered coding response.

<sup>6</sup> Numbers total 100% per group when "Some Other Party" is included (figures not shown).



group whose members are most likely to identify as Independent or Non-Partisan. Republicans still outnumber Democrats (20% vs. 16%), but this trend over time suggests the party preferences of this community are shifting.

- Cambodian Americans are the group least likely to identify with a major party (68% are non-partisans). Chinese Americans are also heavily non-partisan, continuing a pattern we found in 2008.<sup>7</sup>
- Both women and men are more likely to identify as Democrats than Republican, although women have an even stronger identification with the Democratic Party than men. This finding that is similar to the general population, although the gender gap is not as strong among Asian Americans as among whites, where surveys have found gaps in the magnitude of 10 percentage points.<sup>8</sup>
- Finally, there is a big gap in party identification by nativity: the foreign born are much more likely to identify as Independent or Non-Partisan (52%) compared to the native born (41%).

Finally, when we take into account those political Independents who lean towards either party, we continue to find a significant advantage for Democrats over Republicans by a 2-to-1 margin (See Table 2). With this party measure, a majority of Indians, Koreans, Japanese, and Hmong Americans identify with the Democratic Party, and the Republican Party gets higher party identification from Filipinos (39% vs. 33%) and Vietnamese Americans (33% vs. 30%). Also, with this measure that incorporates "party leaners," there is no gender gap in party identification among Asian Americans, and the native born are far less likely to identify with the Republican Party than the foreign born.

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<sup>7</sup> Jane Junn et al., *Asian Americans and the 2008 Election* (Riverside, CA: National Asian American Survey, October 6, 2008), <http://www.naasurvey.com/resources/Presentations/NAAS-National-report.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Newport, *Women More Likely to Be Democrats, Regardless of Age* (Princeton, NJ: Gallup, June 12, 2009).

**Table 2. Party Identification (including Leaners) by Ethnicity, Gender, and Nativity<sup>9</sup>**

|                               | Democrat / Lean Dem | Republican / Lean Rep |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Asian American Average</b> | <b>46%</b>          | <b>23%</b>            |
| Chinese                       | 46%                 | 17%                   |
| Indian                        | 58%                 | 7%                    |
| Filipino                      | 33%                 | 39%                   |
| Vietnamese                    | 30%                 | 33%                   |
| Korean                        | 59%                 | 26%                   |
| Japanese                      | 52%                 | 27%                   |
| Cambodian                     | 46%                 | 12%                   |
| Hmong                         | 63%                 | 12%                   |
|                               |                     |                       |
| Native Hawaiian               | 48%                 | 24%                   |
| Samoaan                       | 62%                 | 20%                   |
|                               |                     |                       |
| Male                          | 46%                 | 26%                   |
| Female                        | 47%                 | 20%                   |
|                               |                     |                       |
| Foreign Born                  | 49%                 | 35%                   |
| Native Born                   | 46%                 | 20%                   |

### Voters in 2008

According to the Current Population Survey Voter Supplement, 47% of Asian American adult citizens and 51% of Pacific Islanders voted in the 2008 election.<sup>10</sup> This compared to a self-reported voter participation rate of 66% among whites, 65% among blacks, and 50% among Latinos.

In our 2012 survey, we asked respondents if they voted in the 2008 elections and, if so, who they voted for (See Table 3). 67% of Asian Americans indicated they voted for Barack Obama, 29% said they voted for John McCain, and the rest said they voted for someone else. This compares to the National Election Pool results of 62% for Obama and 35% for McCain, with 3% indicating someone else.<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that the NEP surveys are conducted only in English and Spanish, and sampling frames are designed to represent the overall electorate and provide reliable results for a variety of

<sup>9</sup> Question (asked of self-identified Independents): "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?"

<sup>10</sup> Authors' analysis of individual-level data from the Current Population Survey Voter Supplement, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> As reported in CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls/#USP00p1>

state and local races, and thus are less likely to be nationally representative of small minority groups such as Asian Americans.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 3. Presidential Vote Choice in 2008<sup>13</sup>**

|                        | <b>Obama</b> | <b>McCain</b> | <b>Other</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>US Average</b>      | 53%          | 45%           | 2%           |
| <b>AA Average</b>      | 67%          | 29%           | 3%           |
| <b>Chinese</b>         | 74%          | 21%           | 5%           |
| <b>Indian</b>          | 93%          | 4%            | 3%           |
| <b>Filipino</b>        | 50%          | 46%           | 4%           |
| <b>Vietnamese</b>      | 50%          | 48%           | 2%           |
| <b>Korean</b>          | 67%          | 32%           | 1%           |
| <b>Japanese</b>        | 69%          | 29%           | 2%           |
| <b>Cambodian</b>       | 81%          | 13%           | 6%           |
| <b>Hmong</b>           | 94%          | 6%            | 1%           |
| <b>Native Hawaiian</b> | 42%          | 23%           | 2%           |
| <b>Samoan</b>          | 48%          | 23%           | 1%           |

### Approval of President Obama

Asian Americans have a significantly higher approval of the job performance of President Barack Obama than the national average. As Table 4 indicates, 59% of Asian American adults approve of the way the President is handling his job as President, nearly 10 points higher than the current national average. Approval of the President's job is particularly high among Indian Americans (82%), and is conspicuously low among Filipinos (45%) and Samoans (41%).

### Favorability Ratings for Obama, Romney, Democrats and Republicans

Barack Obama's relatively high approval rating among AAPIs is also matched by higher favorability ratings than the national average (See Table 4). While 51% of the national population has a favorable impression of Barack Obama, 59% of Asian Americans do so. The favorability rating is particularly high among Indian Americans (88%) and

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of sampling difficulties and errors in the National Election Pool data with respect to Latinos in 2004, see David L. Leal et al., "The Latino Vote in the 2004 Election," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 38, no. 01 (2005): 41–49; Darry Fears, "Pollsters Debate Hispanics' Presidential Voting," *Washington Post*, November 26, 2004, sec. A; Roberto Suro et al., *Hispanics and the 2004 Election: Population, Electorate and Voters* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, June 27, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Numbers may not total 100% due to rounding.

Korean Americans (76%), and is particularly low among Vietnamese Americans (20%) and Filipino Americans (46%).

**Table 4. Job Approval and Favorability Ratings<sup>14</sup>**

| <b>Presidential Approval</b> |            | <b>Favorability</b> |               |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                              |            | <i>Obama</i>        | <i>Romney</i> | <i>Democrats in Congress</i> | <i>Republicans in Congress</i> |
| <b>US Average</b>            | <b>50%</b> | <b>51%</b>          | <b>45%</b>    | <b>34%</b>                   | <b>23%</b>                     |
| <b>AA Average</b>            | <b>59%</b> | <b>59%</b>          | <b>30%</b>    | <b>43%</b>                   | <b>24%</b>                     |
| Chinese                      | 55%        | 60%                 | 22%           | 45%                          | 19%                            |
| Indian                       | 81%        | 88%                 | 30%           | 66%                          | 25%                            |
| Filipino                     | 45%        | 46%                 | 37%           | 33%                          | 30%                            |
| Vietnamese                   | 52%        | 20%                 | 25%           | 24%                          | 18%                            |
| Korean                       | 61%        | 76%                 | 38%           | 47%                          | 32%                            |
| Japanese                     | 56%        | 47%                 | 40%           | 34%                          | 29%                            |
| Cambodian                    | 56%        | 63%                 | 10%           | 37%                          | 10%                            |
| Hmong                        | 59%        | 55%                 | 18%           | 43%                          | 23%                            |
| Native Hawaiian              | 55%        | 62%                 | 44%           | 48%                          | 31%                            |
| Samoan                       | 56%        | 72%                 | 37%           | 74%                          | 39%                            |
| Male                         | 59%        | 59%                 | 31%           | 42%                          | 24%                            |
| Female                       | 59%        | 58%                 | 29%           | 44%                          | 24%                            |
| 18 to 34                     | 66%        | 70%                 | 27%           | 45%                          | 22%                            |
| 35 to 49                     | 55%        | 53%                 | 34%           | 35%                          | 26%                            |
| 50 to 59                     | 57%        | 60%                 | 28%           | 44%                          | 24%                            |
| 60 to 69                     | 55%        | 53%                 | 32%           | 40%                          | 26%                            |
| 70+ years                    | 55%        | 46%                 | 31%           | 38%                          | 22%                            |

Asian Americans' favorability rating of Mitt Romney is considerably lower, about half of the level for Barack Obama (30% vs. 59%). A third of this difference is due to a higher

<sup>14</sup> Question on presidential approval: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?" Question on candidate and party favorability: "We'd like now to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and organizations in the news these days. For each, please tell me whether you have heard of the person, and if your impression is very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable. If you have no opinion, or have never heard of the person or organization, just let me know." National averages on Presidential approval and favorability ratings on Obama and Romney shown in Table 4 are obtained from an average of polls in *RealClearPolitics*, September 24, 2012. Favorability ratings on parties in Congress obtained from March 2012 ABC News/Washington Post poll.

level of Asian Americans who don't know how to rate Romney vs. Obama (20% vs. 9%, respectively). Filipinos, Korean Americans, and Japanese Americans give Romney the highest favorability ratings, although even in these cases the levels do not rise above 50%.

Finally, Asian Americans give Democrats in Congress much higher favorability ratings than Republicans in Congress (43% vs. 24%, respectively). This is true for all subgroups in the population, and the 19-point gap between the two parties in Congress is higher than the national average (34% vs. 23% for Democrats and Republicans, respectively).

### Likely Voters in 2012

The problem of misreporting one's voter registration status, or of overestimating the likelihood of voting, is by now well known. As with other pre-election surveys, we use a model to predict likely voters. Here, we create an index using political interest, plans to vote in 2012, self-reported voting in 2008, and voter registration status, and create cutoff points based on voter turnout rates in 2008.

When we do so, we arrive at a likely voter figure of 45% for the Asian American population, 40% for Chinese, 39% for Indian, 52% for Filipino, 46% for Vietnamese, 45% for Korean, 64% for Japanese, 26% for Cambodian, and 26% for Hmong.

## HOW WILL ASIAN AMERICANS VOTE IN 2012?

How are Asian Americans likely to vote in the 2012 presidential elections? The results from our study show two important patterns of the Asian American electorate (Table 5):

- Likely voters favor Barack Obama over Mitt Romney by a wide margin—43% to 24%.
- At the same time, a very large proportion of likely voters (32%) is undecided.
- The party conventions did not decrease the proportion of undecided voters. For those Asian American respondents who were interviewed after September 6, 2012, 32% were undecided; 45% supported Obama; 22% supported Romney).

**Table 5. Voter Preference for President Among Likely Voters (Asian Americans)<sup>15</sup>**

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| <b>Obama</b>     | 43% |
| <b>Romney</b>    | 24% |
| <b>Other</b>     | 1%  |
| <b>Undecided</b> | 32% |

### Voter Preferences by Ethnic Groups, Gender, and Age

As we noted in our discussion of partisanship, it is very important to consider ethnic group differences within the Asian American population. Our headline results – that Asian Americans favor Barack Obama over Mitt Romney by a wide margin – varies when we look into voter preferences by ethnic groups (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2 shows that:

- Indian Americans are by far the strongest supporters of Barack Obama, giving him an edge of 68% to 5%, with 25% undecided and the rest voting for another candidate. Thus, while Governors Bobby Jindal (R-LA) and Nikki Haley (R-SC) are among the strongest critics of Barack Obama, they seem to be in a relatively small minority of Indian Americans who support Mitt Romney.
- Surprisingly, Vietnamese Americans are not the strongest supporters of Mitt Romney, despite their historically strong ties to the Republican Party. Most Vietnamese Americans now say that they are undecided. Among those who have decided, they favor Obama over Romney. As we from elsewhere in this report, shifts in party identification among Vietnamese and their high level of

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<sup>15</sup> Question: "For President of the United States, do you plan to vote for Barack Obama, the Democrat, Mitt Romney, the Republican, some other candidate, or are you still unsure how you will vote?" with randomization over whether Obama or Romney is mentioned first and randomization over whether each candidate is identified with a partisan cue.

support for health care reform may be playing an important role in accounting for this shift from 2008.<sup>16</sup>

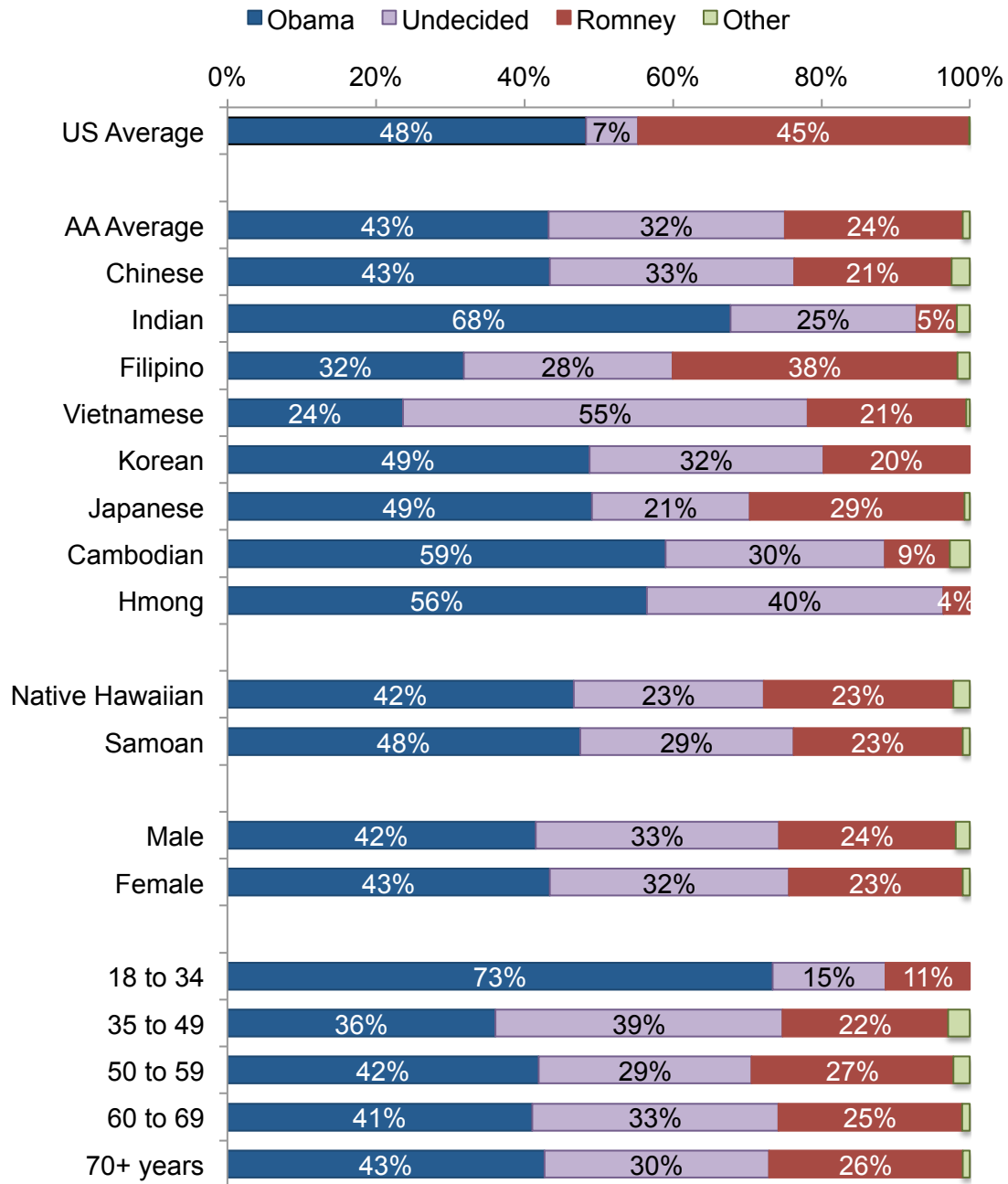
- In another important development, Filipinos are now emerging as a constituency that offers more support to Republicans than Democrats. In 2008, Filipinos had favored Barack Obama over John McCain, albeit by margins that were much smaller than for other Asian American groups (by 6 percentage points in our 2008 pre-election survey). In 2012, the pattern is reversed: Filipinos give Romney his highest level of support among Asian Americans (38%), a six-point advantage over Barack Obama.
- Obama has widened his electoral advantage from 2008 among Korean Americans (11 percentage points then, 29 points now) but his lead among Chinese Americans has grown smaller (29 points then, 22 points now).

Finally, Obama draws a disproportionate share of support among young Asian American adults (73% of likely voters age 18 to 34), and sizable leads in all other age categories, including among the elderly—a pattern that is not found among the general population. Unlike in the general population, however, there is no significant gender gap in the Presidential vote—Asian American men are just as likely to declare their support for Obama over Romney (42% vs. 24%) as women (43% vs. 23%).

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<sup>16</sup> It is also possible that John McCain's connection to the Vietnam War drew larger-than-expected support for his candidacy among Vietnamese Americans, but our survey does not have questions from 2008 and 2012 that can enable us to answer this question.

**Figure 2. Voter Preference for President Among Likely Voters, Key Subgroups<sup>17</sup>**



<sup>17</sup> U.S. Average obtained from an average of polls in *RealClearPolitics*, September 24, 2012



## Who Are Undecided Voters?

Are particular groups within the Asian American community more likely than others to be undecided, and perhaps more amenable to campaign appeals and mobilization efforts? As Figure 2 indicates:

- Young adult Asian Americans (aged 18 to 34) are significantly less likely to be undecided (15%) than any other age group; respondents aged 35 to 49 are most likely to be undecided (39%).
- Japanese and Indian Americans are among those least likely to be undecided, (21% and 25%, respectively) whereas Hmong (40%) and Vietnamese Americans (55%) are among those most likely to be undecided.

## Voter Preferences by Partisanship

Not surprisingly, the expected vote choice of Asian Americans varies strongly by partisanship. Table 6 shows the relationship Asian Americans have with political parties in four categories: (1) self-identified Democrats; (2) self-identified Republicans; (3) self-identified Independents; (4) "non-identifiers." Non-identifiers are individuals who indicate that they simply do not think in partisan terms, do not know how to answer the question, or refuse to answer the question. As a reminder, our measure of Non-Partisans in Figure 1 includes both Independents and Non-Identifiers.

**Table 6. Voter Preferences by Party Identification (Asian Americans)**

|                  | <b>Likely Voters</b> | <b>Democrats</b> | <b>Republican</b> | <b>Independent</b> | <b>Non-Identifiers</b> |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Obama</b>     | 43%                  | 77%              | 7%                | 30%                | 24%                    |
| <b>Romney</b>    | 24%                  | 2%               | 66%               | 23%                | 22%                    |
| <b>Other</b>     | 1%                   | 2%               | 0%                | 2%                 | 0%                     |
| <b>Undecided</b> | 32%                  | 19%              | 27%               | 45%                | 54%                    |

The results from Table 6 show that each party's candidate is doing a successful job in attracting votes from their own party's identifiers, although Obama is doing a better job of this than Romney.

- Among Democrats, Asian American likely voters overwhelmingly support Barack Obama over Mitt Romney by a 77% to 2% margin, with 19% undecided and 2% choosing some other candidate.
- This partisan preference is less strong among Republican likely voters, who prefer Mitt Romney over Barack Obama 66% to 7%, but a higher proportion are undecided (27%).
- Obama has a lead among Independent likely voters (30% to 23%), but most Independents who we identify as likely voters are undecided on how they will vote (45%).
- Finally, the proportion of undecided voters is highest among non-party identifiers.

## Voter Preferences by Past Voting

In addition to partisanship, another key indicator of likely vote choice is one's previous votes. In Table 7, we show Asian American voters' preferences, broken down by how respondents reported voting in the 2008 presidential election.

**Table 7. Voter Preferences in 2012 among Likely Voters, by Vote in 2008 (Asian Americans)<sup>18</sup>**

|                       | Obama | Romney | Other | Undecided |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|-------|-----------|
| <b>Voted in 2008</b>  | 43%   | 24%    | 1%    | 32%       |
| <b>- Voted Obama</b>  | 69%   | 5%     | 1%    | 26%       |
| <b>- Voted McCain</b> | 5%    | 67%    | 2%    | 26%       |

Table 7 shows a clear pattern between Asian Americans' votes in the 2008 presidential race and their current intentions in 2012:

- Likely voters who reported voting for McCain in 2008 are much more likely to favor Mitt Romney over Barack Obama by a margin of 67% to 5%.
- Obama is retaining a nearly identical share of his 2008 Asian American supporters (69% to 5% for Romney).
- Still, more than one-in-four of both 2008 Obama supporters and McCain supporters remain undecided between the major party candidates in 2012.

## Voter Preferences in Battleground States

Finally, it is important to consider how the voter preferences of the Asian American electorate differ across different regions of the United States. As we note in the "Background" to this report, the Asian American population is growing rapidly in states outside of the traditional destinations of California, New York, and New Jersey. Many of these newer Asian American destinations also happen to be battleground states, including Nevada, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Based on recent polls of the general population as identified in *Real Clear Politics*, we identify the following as battleground states: Ohio, Virginia, Florida, New Hampshire, Iowa, Colorado, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Nevada, and North Carolina.

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<sup>18</sup> Question: respondents were first asked, "Thinking about past elections, did you vote in the 2008 U.S. presidential election?" and then asked, if yes, "Do you recall who you voted for? Was it Barack Obama, the Democrat, John McCain, the Republican, or someone else?"

**Table 8: Proportion of Respondents Living in Battleground States**

|                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Asian American Average</b> | <b>17%</b> |
| Chinese                       | 13%        |
| Indian                        | 26%        |
| Filipino                      | 15%        |
| Vietnamese                    | 16%        |
| Korean                        | 15%        |
| Japanese                      | 12%        |
| Cambodian                     | 13%        |
| Hmong                         | 32%        |
|                               |            |
| Native Hawaiian               | 13%        |
| Samoan                        | 14%        |

About 17 percent of the eight Asian American groups represented in our survey resides in these battleground states (Table 8). By contrast, 34% of the U.S. white population lives in these battleground states, followed by 32% of African Americans, and 20% of Latinos. Among Asian American groups, two in particular stand out with a high proportion living in battleground states: Hmong, who have sizeable populations in Wisconsin and North Carolina, and Indians, who have sizeable populations in Florida, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Michigan.

A second cut at the Asian American population in battleground states is the ethnic composition of likely voters in those states (Table 9). Chinese and Filipino Americans constitute a smaller share of the likely voter population in battleground states than their national averages (21% vs. 25% for Chinese Americans, and 19% vs. 25% for Filipino Americans). Indian Americans and Korean Americans constitute a larger share of the battleground states than their national averages.

**Table 9: Ethnic Composition of Asian American Likely Voter Population Living in Battleground States**

|                   | <b>National</b> | <b>Battleground State</b> | <b>Not a Battleground State</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Chinese</b>    | 25%             | 21%                       | 25%                             |
| <b>Indian</b>     | 13%             | 22%                       | 11%                             |
| <b>Filipino</b>   | 24%             | 19%                       | 25%                             |
| <b>Vietnamese</b> | 14%             | 13%                       | 14%                             |
| <b>Korean</b>     | 11%             | 14%                       | 11%                             |
| <b>Japanese</b>   | 10%             | 8%                        | 11%                             |
| <b>Cambodian</b>  | 1%              | 2%                        | 1%                              |
| <b>Hmong</b>      | 1%              | 2%                        | 1%                              |

Finally, how do Asian American voters in battleground states compare to those in non-battleground states? Our survey reveals that voting patterns among Asian Americans are virtually the same in battleground states (43% vs. 26% for Obama) as in non-competitive states (42% vs. 23% for Obama). These differences are within the survey's margin of error.

## BEHIND THE ASIAN AMERICAN VOTE

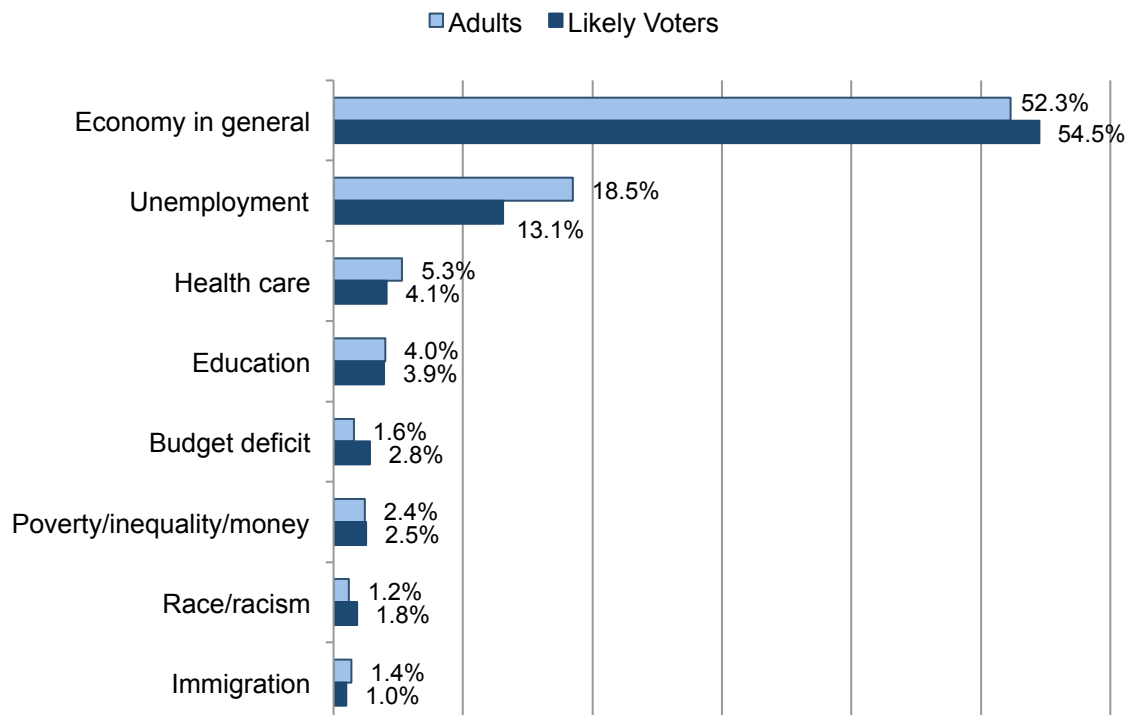
What are the issue priorities for Asian Americans and how do these issues influence their support for Barack Obama and Mitt Romney? This section provides information about issue salience and the policy agenda of Asian Americans.

### Policy Priorities

Respondents were asked what they felt was "the most important problem facing the United States today." The survey allowed people to name up to two issues.

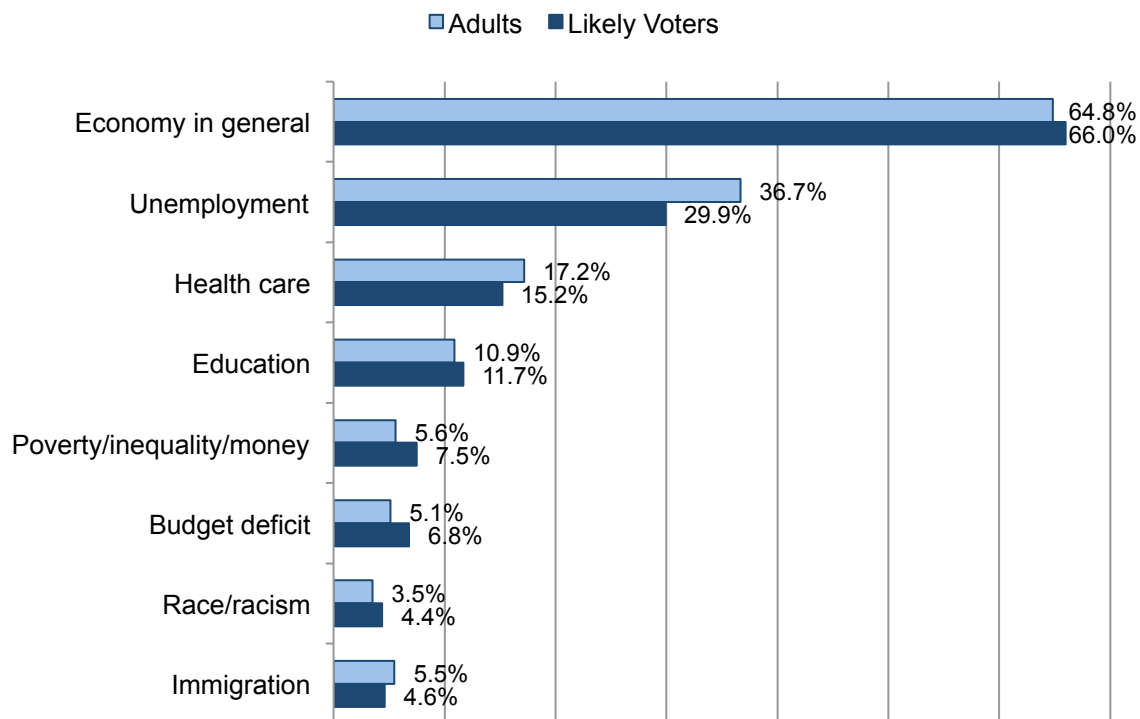
Figure 3 below compares the proportion of Asian American likely voters and all respondents in the 2012 NAAS on this question. The economy is, unsurprisingly, the most commonly cited national problem, named by a majority of both likely voters and all respondents. Following a distant second is the related issue of unemployment and jobs, with health care and education running third and fourth. Very few respondents mentioned issues like the budget deficit, poverty and inequality, race and racism, or immigration as a most important national problem. While there are few differences between the full 2012 NAAS sample and identified likely voters, likely voters are less likely to mention unemployment as a critical problem.

**Figure 3: Most Important Problem in the United States (1<sup>st</sup> Mention)**



While most surveys of the “most important problem” only record the first mention made by respondents, the 2012 NAAS allowed respondents to name another issue that ranked very high in their minds. In our survey, 82 percent mentioned two issues as “most important.” The basic rank order of issue priorities remains mostly unchanged in this expanded measure of issue priorities, but the number of mentions of issues other than general economic concerns increased noticeably (Figure 4). Roughly one in three mention unemployment and jobs as a critical issue, although likely voters remain less concerned than non-voters. We also find that nearly one in six likely voters cite health care as a key issue, with education running closely behind.

**Figure 4: Most Important Problem in the United States (Any Mention)**



### The Asian American Policy Agenda

The 2012 NAAS also asked its respondents to name the *one* issue that was most important to them *personally* (that is, compared to “the most important problem facing the United States”). As in 2008, we use this measure to gain some sense of what an Asian American agenda might be, through the process of aggregating the most important problems mentioned by Asian American adults.

By this personalized measure of issue priorities, general concerns about the economy were still prominent, but noticeably less so than when defined as a national problem (47 percent among likely voters). Unemployment and jobs remains unchanged in its position as the second most commonly identified personal priority. The discernible shifts in the policy agenda for Asian Americans is seen with a greater attention to health care (12

percent among likely voters) and, to a very modest extent, education (6 percent among likely voters).

## Issue Priorities and the Presidential Election

To better gauge the electoral importance of different issues, the 2012 NAAS next asked respondents, "When it comes to this year's presidential elections, please tell me how important the candidates' views on each of the following questions is in your deciding how to vote: The most important issue, fairly important, not that important, not at all important." Respondents were asked about unemployment and jobs, health care, education, the budget deficit, foreign policy, women's rights, immigration, and a couple of lower salience issues.

**Figure 5: Key Electoral Issue Among Likely Voters, by Candidate of Choice**

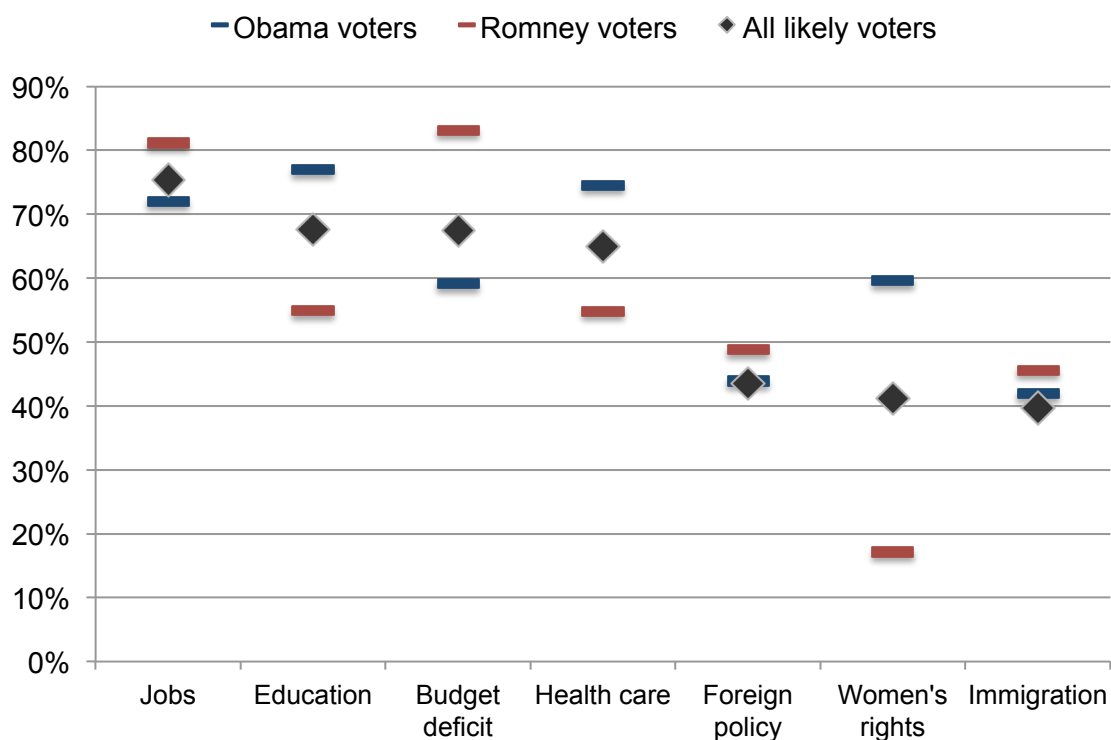


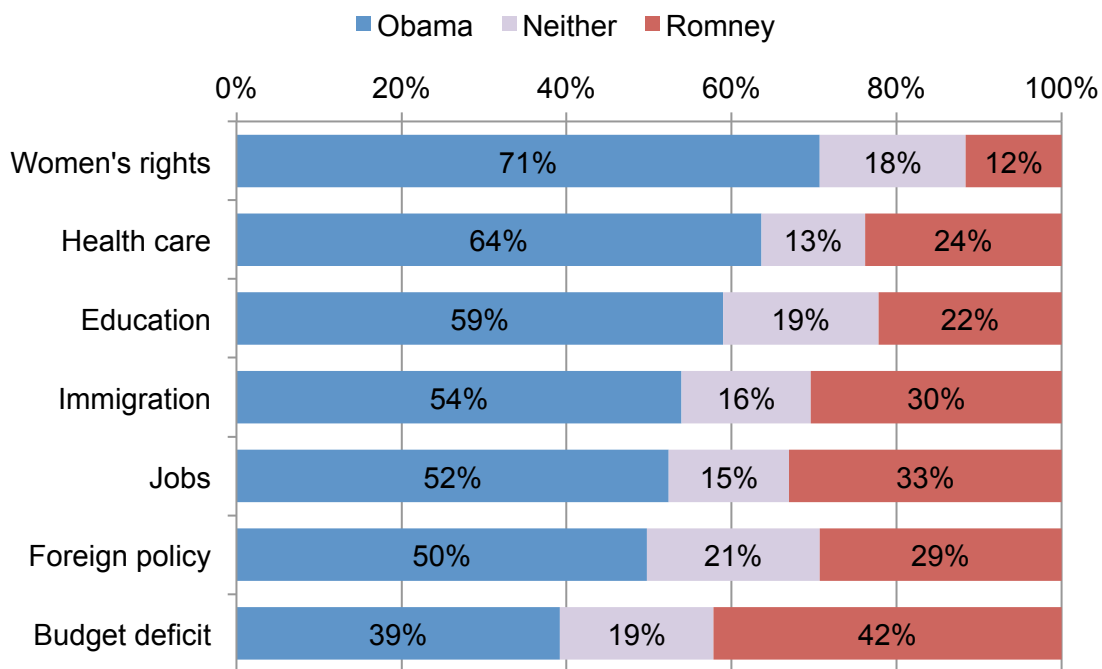
Figure 5 shows the percentage of likely voters who identify each of these issues as among the "most important" to deciding how they will vote. While unemployment and jobs is most commonly identified as a key electoral issue (75%), there is little difference between likely voters favoring Obama and Romney on this issue. On immigration and foreign policy, there is also little difference between Obama and Romney supporters. By contrast, the biggest gaps are visible on women's rights, the budget deficit, education, and health care. While 41% of all likely voters view women's rights as a most important electoral issue, only 17 of Romney supporters do so (compared to 60% of Obama supporters); similarly, Romney supporters are far less likely to name education or health care as a key issue in vote decision. The budget deficit, however, is one issue that

Romney supporters are far likelier to identify as most important (83%) than Obama supporters (59%).

### Presidential Candidate Proximity On Key Issues

In our survey, whenever respondents mentioned an issue as "the most important" to how they will decide to vote, they were then asked which presidential candidate was closer to their views on that issue. Here, too, the most eye-catching differences are with women's rights and the budget deficit. Among likely voters who see women's rights as "most important" to their vote decision, 71 percent see Obama as closer to their views on women's rights. Of those who see the budget deficit as key to their vote, more likely voters see Romney as closer to their views than their counterparts who see Obama as closer to their views. A very high proportion of likely voters who identify education and health care as key electoral issues also see Obama as falling much closer to their views than see an affinity with Romney.

**Figure 6: Which Candidate is Closer on Key Issues?**



The implications from these findings for the presidential candidates and their campaigns are unmistakable. Romney's best hope to win over Asian American voters on an issue basis would be to mention the economy in general and then to focus on the budget deficit and, to a lesser extent unemployment and jobs. Obama's strategy has to include mention of the economy (given its very high overall priority as an issue), but his comparative advantage with Asian American likely voters is likely to be on women's rights, health care, and education.



## MOBILIZATION AND PARTICIPATION BEYOND VOTING

### Mobilizing Likely Voters

One of the key factors in voter turnout is mobilization – being recruited to register to vote and being asked to participate on Election Day. 2012 NAAS respondents were asked if they were contacted by anyone about registering or turning out to vote. Overall, only 28 percent of 2012 NAAS respondents and 35 percent of likely voters reported being contacted by someone about registering or turning out to vote for the November elections. Of likely voters who were mobilized, that contact is about as likely to have come from a party or candidate than by an independent group, community organization, or some other entity.

**Table 10. Mobilization of Likely Voters, Levels and Sources<sup>19</sup>**

|                        | <b>Any<br/>Contact</b> | <b>Parties or<br/>Candidates</b> | <b>All Other<br/>Sources</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Asian Americans</b> | <b>35%</b>             | <b>20%</b>                       | <b>20%</b>                   |
| Chinese                | 48%                    | 31%                              | 24%                          |
| Indian                 | 16%                    | 6%                               | 13%                          |
| Filipino               | 26%                    | 14%                              | 14%                          |
| Vietnamese             | 33%                    | 10%                              | 25%                          |
| Korean                 | 42%                    | 24%                              | 24%                          |
| Japanese               | 43%                    | 34%                              | 15%                          |

There are some striking differences across groups in how often they are mobilized and by whom. Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans are most likely to be contacted about the election, while Asian Indians appear relatively neglected. These differential rates of mobilization are mirrored in the relative attention of political parties and candidates, who reach out to Chinese and Japanese Americans at rate far higher than other groups and who rarely reach out to Indians or Vietnamese. Interestingly, independent groups, community organizations, and other entities fill-in some of this gap, especially among Indians and Vietnamese, who are more likely be mobilized by one of these other sources than they are by parties or candidates.

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<sup>19</sup> Question: "Over the past 12 months, were you contacted by anyone to register or to vote in this year's election?" Respondents who were contacted were then asked, "And who was it that contacted you?" Then, if respondents mentioned being contacted by a candidate, campaign, or party representative, respondents were asked, "Were you contacted by the Democrats, Republicans, both parties, or by representatives of other parties?"

Columns 2 and 3 may total more than Column 1 because multiple responses on mobilization sources are possible.

These rates of mobilization fall noticeably shy of that for the general electorate. The 2008 American National Election Study showed that political parties mobilized just about 50 percent of self-reported voters with nearly 20 percent of self-reported voters who were mobilized by someone other than a political party. Perhaps even more striking, reports of mobilization among Asian Americans living in presidential battleground states is not higher than those living in noncompetitive states.

How successful are political parties and other organizations at targeting Asian American likely voters? Table 11 shows that political parties and candidates are fairly successful while other groups were less so. While 55 percent of all 2012 NAAS respondents were likely voters, 68 percent of those mobilized by a candidate or political party were likely voters; only 58 percent of those mobilized by other groups were likely voters. It still remains an open question, however, whether parties and other organizations target those who are *already* likely voters, or if individuals *become more likely* to vote if they are mobilized by one of these groups.

**Table 11. Likelihood of Voting by Mobilizing Citizens**

|                  | <b>Any<br/>Mobilization</b> | <b>Mobilized by<br/>Candidate or<br/>Party</b> | <b>Mobilized by<br/>Other<br/>Organization</b> |
|------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Contacted</b> | <b>55%</b>                  | <b>68%</b>                                     | <b>58%</b>                                     |
| Not contacted    | 39                          | 40   | 42   |

The 2012 NAAS also shows an interesting relationship between recruitment into politics and one's expected vote choice in the November presidential election. Table 12 shows that mobilization by a candidate or party brings support levels for Romney much closer to Obama, but without any appreciable decline in the high proportion of undecided voters. This effect is not a direct result of which party is mobilizing Asian Americans. Only 27 percent of those recruited were contacted by a Republican candidate or party representative. By contrast, 37 percent were contacted by a Democratic candidate or party representative. Mobilization by other groups, however, has little effect on the two-way split between Obama and Romney.

**Table 12. Mobilization by Candidate Support**

|                          | <b>Total</b> | <b>Mobilized by<br/>Candidate or<br/>Party</b> | <b>Mobilized by<br/>Other<br/>Organization</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| <b>Obama supporters</b>  | 43%          | 34%  | 42%  |
| <b>Romney supporters</b> | 24           | 30   | 19   |
| <b>Undecided</b>         | 33           | 35   | 40   |

## Political Participation beyond Voting

Voting is just one of many different ways that Americans express themselves politically and become politically engaged. For a population like Asian Americans with a substantial proportion of non-citizens, attention to these non-voting modes of participation is especially important. Table 13 makes clear that a majority of Asian Americans discuss politics with family and friends, with Japanese (72 percent) and Koreans (64 percent) especially likely to talk politics. These levels are somewhat higher than for the general U.S. population; the 2008 ANES finds that 45 percent of the public discussed the election with someone else.

**Table 13. Non-Voting Participation by Ethnicity<sup>20</sup>**

|                            | <b>Discussed<br/>Politics</b> | <b>Worked<br/>Campaign</b> | <b>Gave<br/>Money</b> | <b>Contacted<br/>Govt.</b> | <b>Protested<br/>&amp; Rallied</b> | <b>Online<br/>Activity</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Asian<br/>Americans</b> | <b>55%</b>                    | <b>5%</b>                  | <b>11%</b>            | <b>11%</b>                 | <b>5%</b>                          | <b>8%</b>                  |
| Chinese                    | 56%                           | 5%                         | 10%                   | 11%                        | 5%                                 | 7%                         |
| Indian                     | 41%                           | 6%                         | 10%                   | 11%                        | 4%                                 | 8%                         |
| Filipino                   | 59%                           | 7%                         | 13%                   | 15%                        | 6%                                 | 10%                        |
| Vietnamese                 | 56%                           | 5%                         | 10%                   | 7%                         | 10%                                | 8%                         |
| Korean                     | 64%                           | 3%                         | 9%                    | 11%                        | 3%                                 | 8%                         |
| Japanese                   | 72%                           | 5%                         | 17%                   | 16%                        | 5%                                 | 10%                        |
| Cambodian                  | 39%                           | 2%                         | 5%                    | 5%                         | 3%                                 | 9%                         |
| Hmong                      | 33%                           | 3%                         | 11%                   | 3%                         | 4%                                 | 10%                        |

Table 13 also shows levels of campaign volunteerism and monetary contributions that are quite similar to the general U.S. public. The 2008 ANES found that 11 percent reported contributing money to a campaign and 4 percent reported engaging in some work for a campaign (other than attending a rally or wearing campaign paraphernalia). Japanese-Americans appear especially likely to contribute to a campaign.

Table 13 also shows Asian Americans' levels of engagement in three non-electoral activities -- contacting elected representatives of government officials, attending a protest or demonstration rally, and engaging in politics online. Levels of contact with government are somewhat low, especially among Southeast Asian groups. Other

<sup>20</sup> Question: "People take part in many types of civic and political activities . In the last 12 months, have you ... Discussed politics with family and friends ... Discussed this year's election with family and friends ... Worked for a candidate, political party, or some other campaign organization ... Contributed money to a candidate, political party, or some other campaign organization ... Contacted your representative or a government official in the U.S. ... Posted a comment about politics on a blog, Facebook page, or website? ... Attended a protest march, demonstration, or rally." Respondents were also asked whether they "Worked with others in your community to solve a problem" and whether they donated money to a religious organization or some other charitable cause.

notable findings here are the discernibly higher rates of protest politics among Vietnamese Americans, and levels of online activity (defined here quite narrowly as posting a "comment about politics on a blog, Facebook page, or website") are roughly comparable across ethnic groups.

### Attention to Home Country Politics

In addition to the political engagement of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in domestic politics, the 2012 NAAS also asked questions on involvement in immigrant countries of origin. Some media accounts and scholarly articles suggest that Asian Americans participate less in American politics because of their focus on the politics of their home countries. The survey included questions on whether respondents they have been in contact with friends and family, whether they follow news on politics, whether they are attentive to U.S. foreign policy, and whether they send money vis-à-vis their countries of origin.

**Table 14. Non-Voting Participation by Ethnicity<sup>21</sup>**

|                        | <b>Contacted<br/>Friends &amp;<br/>Family</b> | <b>Followed<br/>Political<br/>News</b> | <b>Followed<br/>US Foreign<br/>Policy</b> | <b>Sent Money</b> |
|------------------------|---|--|---|-------------------|
| <b>Asian Americans</b> | <b>74%</b>                                    | <b>51%</b>                             | <b>47%</b>                                | <b>38%</b>        |
| Chinese                | 72%   | 67%                                    | 61%                                       | 28%               |
| Indian                 | 87%   | 31%                                    | 29%                                       | 43%               |
| Filipino               | 74%   | 52%                                    | 48%                                       | 53%               |
| Vietnamese             | 69%   | 55%                                    | 54%                                       | 52%               |
| Korean                 | 84%   | 55%                                    | 48%                                       | 28%               |
| Japanese               | 57%   | 40%                                    | 38%                                       | 21%               |
| Cambodian              | 63%   | 28%                                    | 26%                                       | 53%               |
| Hmong                  | 35%   | 12%                                    | 13%                                       | 35%               |

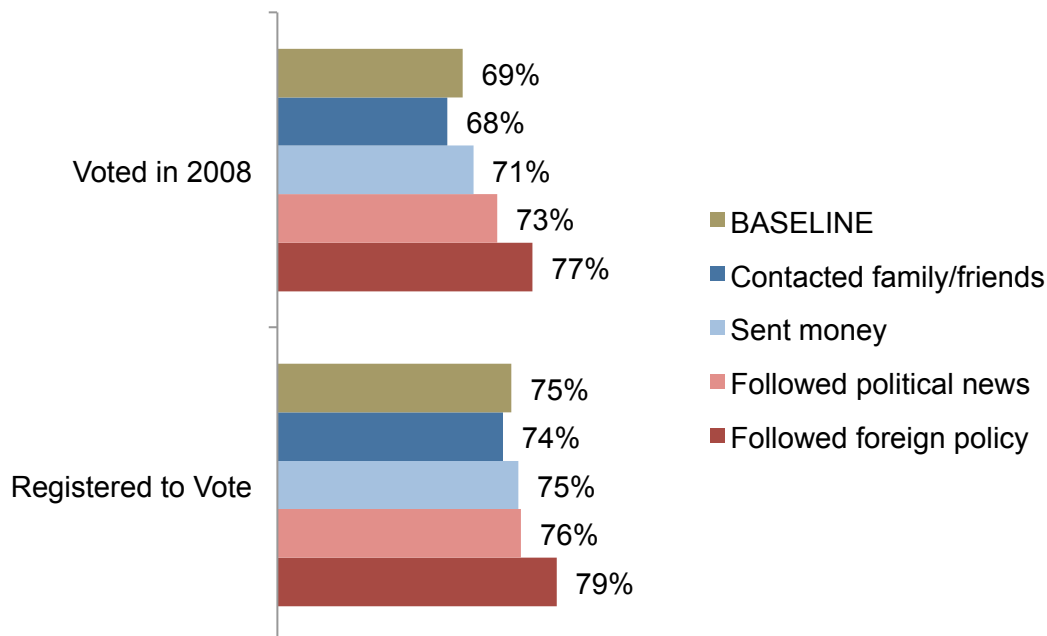
Overall there are pretty significant levels of contact and communication with Asian Americans' country of origin. Nearly three quarters of respondents have been in contact with friends and family; roughly half follow news of politics and U.S. foreign policy involving their home country; more than a third report sending money to someone in their country of origin. Taken together, 85 percent of all respondents engage in at least one of these modes of transnational activity.

<sup>21</sup> Question: "Now I have a few questions about the country where you or your ancestors are from. In the past 12 months, have you ... Sent money to people in that country ... Closely followed news about politics in that country ... Been in contact with family or friends in that country ... Paid close attention to U.S. foreign policy towards that country?"

There are some cross-ethnic differences worth noting. Hmong-Americans are, by far, least likely to be engaged with their home country (only 47 percent engage in at least some kind of transnational activity). Japanese-Americans and Cambodians are two other groups that are less active transnationally.

More importantly, among citizens in the 2012 NAAS, there are some modest relationships between levels of attentiveness to one's country of origin and participation in electoral politics in the United States. Figure 7 shows that contact with family and friends and making remissions of money to one's home country have nearly no effect on either one's likelihood of being vote registered or having voted in the 2008 presidential elections. Slightly more discernible effects are found with attention to news about the politics of one's home country and fairly large effects are present with attention to U.S. foreign policy affecting one's home country. Contrary to common misconceptions about a trade-off between political engagement in one's country of origin and engagement in U.S. politics, transnational political activity appears to boost participation in activity in America. Figure 7 shows that citizens in the 2012 NAAS who followed U.S. foreign policy in their countries of origin were 4 percent more likely to be registered to vote and 8 percent more likely to have reported voting in the 2008 elections.

**Figure 7. Home Country Activity and Voter Participation in the US (Asian Americans)**



## APPENDIX

### Methodology

This report is based on data collected from 3,034 telephone interviews of adults in the United States who identify themselves as Asian American, which in the broadest sense includes people with any family background from countries in Asia. We also conducted 342 interviews with Pacific Islanders. Interviews were conducted by telephone from July 31, 2012 through September 19, 2012. Additional interviews are ongoing through October 2008, and a total of roughly 5,000 interviews will complete the data collection.

The breakdown of the sample by ethnic background is as follows:

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Chinese         | 529 |
| Indian          | 386 |
| Filipino        | 396 |
| Vietnamese      | 425 |
| Korean          | 463 |
| Japanese        | 407 |
| Cambodian       | 197 |
| Hmong           | 231 |
| Native Hawaiian | 272 |
| Samoan          | 70  |

Respondents were offered a choice of language to be interviewed in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Thai, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

The randomly drawn list sample was obtained from TargetSmart with ethnicity coded by Ethnic Technologies (and Catalist for the Hmong sample, for which TargetSmart does not have an ethnic classification). The listed samples include those not registered as well as those who are registered. Registered voter lists are obtained from state registrars, matched to consumer information data, and updated for address changes. The party registration characteristics of our survey sample are in line with estimates from previous studies of Asian Americans in particular states. The survey was conducted by Interviewing Services of America, Inc. (ISA) of Van Nuys, California, under the supervision of Francine Cafarchia, John Roses, and Frank Weimer. Mobile phones were included in the dialing procedure. Interview translations were conducted by Accent on Languages of Berkeley, California, and audited by a team of bilingual staff in partner organizations.

Sampling error of the groups reported in this survey are as follows:

Overall sample of Asian Americans: +/- 2%

Overall sample of Pacific Islanders: +/- 6%

Asian Americans:

Chinese +/- 5%

Indian +/- 5%

Filipino +/- 5%

Vietnamese +/- 5%

Korean +/- 5%

Japanese +/- 5%

Cambodian +/- 7%

Hmong +/- 7%

Native Hawaiians +/- 6%

Samoans +/- 12%

Sampling error from the size of our sample is only one type of error possible in surveys like the 2012 NAAS. Findings may also be subject to variation from question wording, question order, and the time and date when the survey was conducted.

The sampling frame was drawn primarily from commercial vendor lists of “very likely” and “likely” Asians. We used Census data from the 2010 decennial census and the 2010 American Community Survey to set sample targets for ethnic sub-groups. Ethnic sub-group targets were set to provide adequate representation for the largest Asian American groups, but also to provide as much statistical power to as many groups as possible.

The findings in this report are weighted statistically to account for any demographic differences of interest between the sample and population parameters for analyses of the national Asian American population, as well as for subgroups of the population, on the following dimensions: size of group within a state, educational attainment, gender and nativity. Nativity was not included in the post-stratification weight calculations for Pacific Islanders, given the rarity of foreign-born NHPs in the population, and in our survey.

The National Asian American Survey is the collaborative effort of Karthick Ramakrishnan at University of California-Riverside and Taeku Lee at University of California-Berkeley. Questions about sample design should be directed to Karthick Ramakrishnan at [karthick@ucr.edu](mailto:karthick@ucr.edu).

## Glossary of Terms and Concepts

### Ethnic subgroups

Respondents in our survey were asked: "What is your ancestry or ethnic origin?" Those that specified an ancestry or ethnic origin to a prior question on racial identification were assigned that ancestry or ethnic origin. For response choices, we used the U.S. Census classification system of Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other national origins such as Bangladeshi, Cambodian, etc. Based on the distribution of responses in our survey, we report data on Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Cambodian, and Hmong.

### "Battleground states"

We distinguish between "toss-up" states in which the difference in poll numbers in voter preferences are razor thin and, for a given survey, do not exceed the margin of error, and "leaning" states in which there is a discernible preference for either Barack Obama or Mitt Romney, but the difference in poll numbers is not decisive. Based on recent polls of the general population as identified in *Real Clear Politics*, we identify the following as battleground states: Ohio, Virginia, Florida, New Hampshire, Iowa, Colorado, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Nevada, and North Carolina.

## Revision Notes

Oct 8, 2012: Labels in Table 9 corrected (left column and top row)

: Table 10 numbers for party and other mobilization corrected to include multiple mentions



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## 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/>.

*Karthick Ramakrishnan* is associate professor of political science at the University of California, Riverside. His research focuses on civic participation, immigration policy, and the politics of race, ethnicity, and immigration in the United States. Ramakrishnan directs the National Asian American Survey and is writing a book on the rise of state and local legislation on immigration over the past decade.

Ramakrishnan received his Ph.D. in politics from Princeton University, and has held fellowships at the Russell Sage Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the Public Policy Institute of California. He has received several grants from sources such as the James Irvine Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation, and has provided consultation to public officials at the federal and local levels. His articles and books on immigration and politics can be found at [www.karthick.com](http://www.karthick.com).

*Taeku Lee* is Professor and Chair of Political Science and Professor of Law at UC-Berkeley. He has authored and edited numerous books on race and ethnic politics, immigration, political parties, and public opinion. Lee serves on the American National Election Studies Board of Overseers and on the Council of the American Political Science Association.

Lee studies political partisanship among Asian Americans as they compare to partisanship for whites, Latinos, and African Americans. He also specializes on the role that identity and civic engagement play in bringing Asian Americans into the political arena. Lee's work has earned him three book awards and several fellowships.

Together, Ramakrishnan and Lee have had extensive experience in survey design and analysis and expertise on public opinion and racial politics. They have collectively written 7 books and dozens of articles on racial/ethnic politics, and have conducted 17 surveys, eight of which have included multiple language support for Asian Americans. They have also overseen several successful research projects and their dissemination to policy-relevant audiences.