

ACCESS AMERICA

Arab Americans Can Sway Presidential Election

Virginia campaign forum aims to maximize participation, voting



Arlington, Virginia — As surrogates for Barack Obama and John McCain vied for Arab-American votes at a Virginia candidates forum sponsored by the Arab American Institute (AAI), the group’s leaders urged attendees to volunteer and make their voices heard, regardless of party affiliation.

James Zogby, AAI founder and president, told some 320 persons at the October 5 forum in Arlington that their votes, recruitment of other voters and campaign donations could play a decisive role in Virginia.

Arab Americans also could have a major impact in other “battleground” states, including Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan and Florida, Zogby said.

The event featured office-holders and candidates from both major political parties, led by Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, a Democrat, and Republican Congressman Tom Davis, who spoke for presidential hopefuls Obama and McCain respectively.

Also in this issue

From the IRC.....2
Election Night.....2
Alumni Spotlight.....4
Calendar.....4

Zogby set the tone by telling his audience it enjoys “growing influence in this state and, I think, in the country.” With Virginia a key 2008 battleground state, “every vote will count. New communities are going to be critical, and we are one of those new communities.”

AAI describes itself as a nonprofit organization committed to the civic and political empowerment of Americans of Arab descent, representing a constituency of almost 3.5 million nationwide. The event was part of its “Yalla Vote” effort. (“Yalla” is Arabic for “Let’s go.”)

Continued on PAGE 2

From the Ambassador

Thomas Jefferson, one of the drafters of the U.S. Constitution, declared: “Every man, and every body of men on Earth, possess the right of self-government.” This simple principle of participatory governance has guided US democracy since 1776. Every four years, Americans exercise this right of “self-determination” by going to the polls to select a new president. This year, Americans are profoundly aware of the importance of our elections – not just for the historic opportunity to elect a “ticket” with our first African American president or our first female vice president – but also because of the hundreds of other decisions that we will make. American voters will vote for new representatives in Congress, local judges and mayors, tax policies and a number of other ballot measures. The drafters of our Declaration of Independence stated that governments derive “their just powers from the consent of the governed.” On November 4, 2008, Americans will again demonstrate their belief in this principle by going to the polls to cast their votes.

—Robert F. Godec

From the IRC

Books:

Historical Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections

1788-2004

Archer, Clark, J., Stephen J. Lavin, Kenneth C. Martis, Fred M. Shelley
(REF 324.973 HIS)

Guide to U.S. Elections. 2 vols, 5th ed. CQ Press, 2005 (REF 324.973 GUI)

The Other candidates : third parties in presidential elections.

Smallwood, Frank
(324.973 SMA)

Elections A to Z. 3rd ed. CQ Press, 2008
Benenson, Bob
(REF 324.6097303 BEN)

— *Khaled Ben Bhouzid & the IRC team.*



Continued from PAGE 1

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN SURROGATES APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

Kaine, a national co-chair of the Obama campaign, termed this “a time of fundamental choice for our nation ... the most challenging set of circumstances since FDR became president in 1933.”

He lauded Obama as exemplifying excellence and being a “true unifier” and “the change maker that we need in this country.”

Davis, retiring at the end of 2008 from the House of Representatives after serving 14 years, cited energy independence, immigration reform and the mushrooming national debt as key issues that McCain is ready to address effectively. With respect to the debt, he said that “going the way we’re going means we’re the airplane flying into the mountain.”

CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES WEIGH IN

Other forum participants included Democratic Congressman Jim Moran and the challenger for his Northern Virginia seat, Republican Mark Ellmore. Both strove to connect with their Arab-American audience.

Ellmore reminded them, in Arabic, that his wife is Palestinian, and added, “My son is an Arab-American Palestinian American serving in the United States Air Force.”

He drew applause and cheers when he said, “We need to get back to the pre-‘67 borders for the Palestinian people,” and added, “We need to make it so we have peace. Arabs don’t hate Jews, they hate Zionism.”

Moran said the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “is at the heart of how so many people think of America, define America’s values.” Joining Ellmore’s call for a return by Israel to its 1967 borders, he urged “that we share Jerusalem as the capital city, that we get a truly economically viable Palestinian state, that the Golan Heights be controlled by Syria.”

“We can resolve this crisis, we can do that, [with] a president that’s determined to do that,” Moran said. “The American Jewish community wants peace.”

This article is adapted from an article on America.gov, a web site delivering information about current U.S. foreign policy and about American life and culture produced by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Information Program.

America votes! U.S. Election Night

November 4-5, 2008

Ramada Hotel, Gammarth

Please join U.S. Ambassador Robert F. Godec in celebrating American democracy in action!

Share refreshments and friendship at an **Election Celebration on Tuesday, November 4 beginning at 10:00 PM.**

Stay for as long as you like, even all night to watch the tallies state by state.

The next morning, come hear and discuss the results at an **Election Breakfast on Wednesday, November 5 from 6:00 to 8:00 AM.**

Open to the public

Info: 71.107.266/254



ALUMNI SPOT-LIGHT

Hatem Dhaker

Study of the U.S. Institute for Global Student Leaders (SUSI)

Home in the U.S.: Minneapolis – Minnesota

Home in Tunisia: Tunis

Fondest Memory of the U.S.:

Celebrating 4th of July in the US was absolutely unique. I loved the fireworks and the music concerts. The whole atmosphere was great!

My Experience:

We were privileged to be at the prestigious University of Minnesota's twin cities campus in Minneapolis, a very large and diverse campus with more than 80 different nationalities represented.

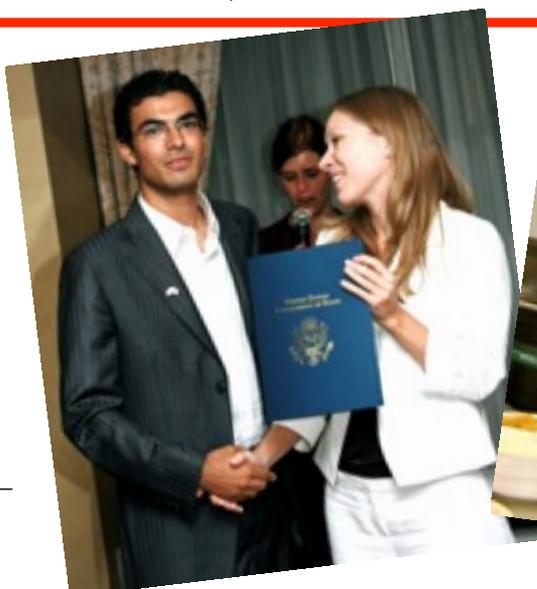
We started the program with a visit to the State Capitol and meeting with State representatives. We attended leadership training sessions, learned about American history and discussed current topics in politics, economics and media in our countries as well as the United States.

We took part in local community service activities: we volunteered at the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery and Feed My Starving Children in Minneapolis.

We also went on various site visits that involved traveling all over Minnesota and around the twin cities. We went to the Hennepin County Court House, the Center for Victims of Torture, Split Rock Lighthouse and The Natural Resource Research Institute in Duluth.

Lessons Learned:

I have learned to appreciate differences, to be more tolerant and more open-minded. I have also learned a lot about myself: Getting to experience a different society made me re-evaluate the way things work in our society and see what maybe needs to be changed.



At "Feed My Starving Children"

Advice for others:

Be open-minded and learn more about your culture.

What I miss most about the U.S.:

I miss my friends, my mentors, and my host family.

Program Announcements

Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program (FLTA)

An opportunity for young English language educators to refine their teaching skills and increase their English language proficiency and extend their knowledge of American culture and customs, while teaching Arabic at U.S. colleges and universities.

Length of program: One academic year

Deadline: November 21, 2008

Near East Asia Undergraduate Intensive English Language Study Program (NEA)

An opportunity for outstanding undergraduate students to study in the U.S. for two months during the summer of 2009.

Length of program: 2 Months

Deadline: November 21, 2008

The Near East and South Asia Undergraduate Exchange Program (NESA)

An opportunity for undergraduate students in any academic field of study to study in a U.S. College.

Length of program: 5 to 10 Months

Deadline: December 19, 2008

For more information contact Sami Saaied, at saaieds@state.gov or at 71-107-259

International Education Week

AMIDEAST Nov 17- Nov 21

Monday Nov 17:
30-4:00 Writing workshop: cover letter & CV

4:00-6:00 English conversation group: "Life after studies."

Tuesday Nov 18:
2:30-4:00 Round table :Exchange programs to the U.S.

4:00-6:00 Presentation + discussion: Meet former U.S exchange students .

Thursday Nov 19
2:30-4:00 Writing workshop: How to write a college essay
4:00-6:00 English conversation group : "Being a student in the United States."

Friday Nov 21
2:30-4:00 Workshop: "Making the Most of your College Search" How to navigate college websites (please confirm your participation in advance).

4:00-6:00 Film, *Mona Lisa Smile*, followed by discussion.

Every Morning
10:00-11:30
 Graduate studies in the U.S information session:How to apply?

Every Afternoon
12:30-2:00
 Undergraduate studies in the U.S information session: How to apply to graduate programs in the US?

The American Center

Invites you to participate in

The Alumni Essay Contest

WANTED :Your Opinion !

TOPIC:

What does democracy mean to me ?

PRIZES:

- First Prize: 100 TDN + a signed certificate
- Second Prize: 75 TDN + a signed certificate
- Third Prize: 50 TDN + a signed certificate
- Plus three Honorable mentions

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE :

All alumni of the Department of State: ages between 17 and 21.

DEADLINE: Dec 05, 2008

For more information about the contest please go to <http://tunis.usembassy.gov>

Calendar

Study in the USA Consultations

Every Tuesday-Friday
 AMIDEAST Advising Resource Library
 8:30 AM-3:30 PM

Browse materials from U.S. universities ;consult resources on applications and scholarships.

Study in the USA General Advising*

Every Wednesday & Friday
 AMIDEAST Advising Resource Library
 12:30 PM

Statement of Purpose Workshops*

Graduate Statement of Purpose workshop
 Undergraduate Statement of Purpose workshop
 *Please call or send an email to make an appointment *

Weekly Movies:

Fridays

American Corner at AMIDEAST
 4:00 PM

November's theme: Elections.

Free English Conversation

Every Tuesday & Thursday
 American Corner at AMIDEAST
 4:00 PM

Weekly discussions on topics from films and music to religion. Topics are posted weekly in the American Corner and at AMIDEAST.

Open Access

Every Monday-Friday
 American Corner at AMIDEAST
 10:00 AM-6:00 PM

Peruse books and magazines in English on topics from history to pop culture and more.

American Corner at AMIDEAST
 22, Rue Al Amine al Abassi, Cite des Jardins, 1002 Tunis-Belvedere, tel. 71-790-563 ext. 106



The American Center

U.S. Embassy Tunis
 Public Affairs Section
 Les Berges du Lac
 1053 TUNIS, Tunisia
 Tel. +216 71-107-000
 Fax +21671-963-263

E-mail:

tuniswebsitecontact@state.gov

Web site:

<http://tunis.usembassy.gov>