



Introduction

Voting is a key way that citizens shape the future of their communities, cities, and country. For the Muslim community in Michigan, participating in the electoral process not only contributes to the broader society but also allows the community to advocate for policies that align with its values. This election booklet aims to empower Michigan's Muslim population with the necessary knowledge about the election process, key dates, and how to vote. By engaging in the political landscape, Muslims can strengthen their voice and influence decisions that impact their lives and future generations.

The Importance of Civic Engagement

Civic engagement involves more than just casting a vote; it includes all activities that contribute to the public good. For Michigan Muslims, participating in civic life is a way to fulfill the Quranic call for justice and responsible stewardship. Whether it's volunteering for a local campaign or educating others about voting, being active in the political process ensures that diverse voices are heard and represented in policies that affect civil rights, social services, and more.

The Role of the Mosque and Community Centers in Voter Mobilization

Mosques and community centers across Michigan, such as the Islamic Center of Detroit (ICD) and the Muslim Community of Western Suburbs (MCWS), play a pivotal role in informing and mobilizing voters. These institutions can host voter registration drives, organize informational workshops, and distribute resources about the election process. Some mosques may also serve as polling locations, making it easier for community members to vote in familiar and trusted spaces.

Key Election Dates and Deadlines in Michigan

Voter Registration Deadlines

- **Online Registration Deadline:** 15 days before Election Day (October 21, 2024, for the general election).
- **In-Person Registration:** Michigan allows in-person voter registration up until 8 PM on Election Day at your local clerk's office.

Early Voting Periods

- **Early Voting in Michigan:** Michigan Early Voting begins on October 26th, and ends November 4th. You may vote early by visiting your local city clerk and filling out a ballot.

Election Day Information

- **Election Day:** November 5, 2024. Polls are open from 7 AM to 8 PM. If you are in line by 8 PM, you have the right to vote.
- **Polling Locations:** Verify your polling location using the Michigan Voter Information Center: MVIC - MichiganVoter Information Center.

Absentee and Mail-In Voting Deadlines

- **Request Absentee Ballot Deadline:** Applications must be received by 5 PM on the Friday before Election Day (November 1, 2024).

- **Return Absentee Ballot Deadline:** Absentee ballots must be returned to your local clerk by 8 PM on Election Day (November 5, 2024).

Why Voting Matters for the Muslim Community

In Michigan, the Muslim community has a unique opportunity to shape policies that affect local and national issues, from healthcare access to civil rights protections. By voting, Muslims can advocate for equitable policies that reflect their values and promote justice. Active participation is critical for ensuring that Muslims are represented in decisions about education, immigration, and more.

Voting as a Civic Duty and Islamic Responsibility

Islam promotes participation in activities that promote justice and fairness. Voting is an opportunity to fulfill this responsibility by influencing policies that affect not just Muslims, but all marginalized communities. It is both a civic duty and an Islamic responsibility to vote for leaders who will protect the common good and uphold justice.

The Impact of Political Participation on Policies Affecting the Muslim Community

Political participation directly impacts policies related to immigration, anti-discrimination laws, and social services, which are critical issues for Michigan's Muslim community. By voting and engaging in political advocacy, Muslims can ensure that policies are more inclusive and representative of their needs and interests.

Common Misconceptions About Voting in Islam

Some misconceptions may exist in the Muslim community regarding voting in a non-Muslim country. However, many Islamic scholars have emphasized that voting is a way for Muslims to promote justice and ensure that societal structures reflect Islamic values of fairness and equity. This section can clarify these misconceptions and reinforce that voting is encouraged in Islam as a means to protect community rights and well-being.

Talking Points for Sermons (Khutbah)

The Importance of Voting as an Act of Justice

In Islam, justice is a core principle, and voting is one of the most direct ways that Muslims can seek justice in their society. By casting a vote, you contribute to the selection of leaders and policies that can either uphold or hinder justice. This is especially important in the context of the ongoing global and domestic challenges, including issues such as civil rights, economic equity, and foreign policy.

For Michigan Muslims, voting allows the community to influence policies that impact healthcare, education, and civil liberties. But it also enables you to raise your voice on matters of international concern, such as the tragic events unfolding in Gaza. The genocide in Gaza, the inhumane treatment of Palestinians, and the broader implications of U.S. foreign policy in the region are urgent reminders of why we must engage politically. Our votes can help elect leaders who prioritize human rights, peace, and justice—not only here but also abroad.

This Khutbah should emphasize that by voting, Michigan Muslims are not just fulfilling a civic duty but are actively participating in the fight for justice. This is a powerful act of advocacy for those suffering in Palestine and other parts of the world.

Building a Strong Muslim Political Voice

The Muslim community in Michigan has grown significantly in both numbers and influence. However, without organized political engagement, this growing presence may not translate into real power. The stronger the Muslim voter turnout, the more attention politicians and policymakers will give to the needs and concerns of our community.

One of the critical issues for Muslims in this election cycle is ensuring that their voices are heard regarding foreign policy, especially with respect to the ongoing genocide in Gaza. The suffering of Palestinians under occupation and the global inaction on this issue is an urgent call to all Muslims to mobilize. By voting, Michigan Muslims can help elect officials who will advocate for a just U.S. foreign policy that respects human rights and the dignity of all people.

Furthermore, building a strong Muslim political voice isn't just about protecting our rights domestically. It is about standing in solidarity with oppressed peoples around the world. Voting in this election is an opportunity for Michigan Muslims to push back against policies that perpetuate injustice in Palestine and other parts of the world.

How the Quran and Hadith Encourage Social Responsibility

Islamic teachings consistently emphasize the importance of looking after others, protecting the vulnerable, and engaging in activities that promote the common good. The Quran encourages believers to “stand firm for justice” (Quran 4:135), and voting is a modern extension of that responsibility. By participating in elections, Muslims have the power to influence policies that affect the marginalized, both locally and globally.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also taught that the “best of people are those who are most beneficial to humanity.” This can be seen in voting for policies and leaders that will help protect vulnerable communities, ensure equity in healthcare and education, and promote peace. With the ongoing crisis in Gaza, the responsibility to act is even more pressing. Our vote becomes a tool for advocating for policies that can contribute to ending the suffering of the Palestinian people and fostering a more just and peaceful world.

The Hadith also teaches us the importance of defending the oppressed: “Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then with his tongue. If he is not able to do so, then with his heart—and that is the weakest of faith.” Voting is one of the ways in which we can act against injustice and oppression, whether in our local communities or on the global stage.

Overcoming Political Apathy and Misinformation

In the face of political apathy, it is vital to remind Muslims that every vote matters, especially in swing states like Michigan. There is a dangerous narrative that voting does not lead to change or that individual votes do not count. However, history shows that elections can be decided by very slim margins, and the Muslim community’s involvement can sway outcomes in crucial ways.

This election, apathy is not an option, especially as we witness the genocide in Gaza. The ongoing violence and suffering should be a motivator for every Muslim to engage more deeply with the political process. Policies and representatives who support or oppose U.S. aid to regimes involved in human rights violations are directly influenced by voters. If we remain silent or apathetic, those in power will continue to act without accountability. But by voting, we can help shift U.S. foreign policy toward one that emphasizes peace, human dignity, and justice for oppressed peoples.

The spread of misinformation, particularly regarding voting as un-Islamic, also needs to be addressed. In Islam, political engagement is not forbidden—it is necessary. It is our duty to challenge false narratives that discourage Muslims from fulfilling their civic responsibility. This is especially true when it comes to standing up for justice for oppressed peoples, like those in Gaza, where voting can contribute to shifting the policies that enable their suffering.

The Impact of Political Participation on Policies Affecting the Muslim Community

Muslims in Michigan, as elsewhere in the U.S., are impacted by a variety of political decisions—whether related to domestic issues like healthcare, education, and civil rights, or foreign policy decisions that affect Muslim-majority countries. When Muslims vote in large numbers, they are more likely to influence policies that protect their civil liberties, combat Islamophobia, and improve their quality of life.

But beyond these domestic issues, this election holds special significance because of the ongoing atrocities in Gaza. The power to influence foreign policy rests largely with elected officials, and their decisions can either exacerbate or alleviate crises around the world. Voting this year is not just about local or national politics; it is about taking a stand against the U.S. government's support of policies that contribute to the ongoing genocide in Palestine.

By electing leaders who are committed to human rights and peace, Muslims in Michigan can contribute to policy changes that support an end to violence and occupation in Gaza and advocate for a just solution. Participation in the political process is a critical tool for safeguarding the rights and dignity of oppressed people, both at home and abroad.

The Urgency of Voting Amid the Genocide in Gaza

As Muslims witness the ongoing genocide in Gaza, it becomes clear that our political engagement in the U.S. has a direct impact on foreign policy decisions that affect millions of lives. The tragic loss of life, destruction of homes, and the suffering of innocent Palestinians demands a response from the global Muslim community—and that includes using our votes to influence U.S. foreign policy.

By voting, Michigan Muslims can play a role in electing representatives who will advocate for an immediate ceasefire, end U.S. complicity in the violence, and push for long-term solutions rooted in justice and human rights. Voting in this election can be seen as a powerful form of protest against policies that enable the oppression of Palestinians.

In this khutbah, Imams should urge the congregation to see their vote as a voice for the voiceless, a tool for advocating for those who are suffering and cannot advocate for themselves. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “The example of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.” The plight of Palestinians is our collective pain, and voting in this election is one way to respond to that pain with action.

By voting, we can help build a government that prioritizes peace, justice, and the rights of oppressed peoples around the world. The Muslim vote in Michigan can be a catalyst for change in U.S. policies toward Gaza and other regions affected by conflict and injustice.

Election Information and Resources

How to Register to Vote (Online, In-Person, Mail)

- **Online:** Register online through the Michigan Secretary of State's website by October 21, 2024. Register to Vote.
- **In-Person:** You can register in person up until 8 PM on Election Day at your local clerk's office. Find your local clerk using this tool: Find My Clerk.
- How to Verify Your Voter **Registration Status**
- Check your registration status through the Michigan **Voter Information Center at MVIC.**
- What to Bring to the Polls (Voter ID, Precinct Information)
- **Voter ID:** Michigan requires a photo ID to vote, but if you don't have one, you can still vote by signing an affidavit. Acceptable IDs include a Michigan driver's license, state ID, or a U.S. passport.
- **Precinct Information:** Find your polling location and precinct details at MVIC.
- How to Report Voter Suppression or Irregularities
 - If you experience or witness voter suppression, contact the Michigan Secretary of State's Election Protection Hotline at **1-866-OUR-VOTE** or report issues to the Council on American-Islamic Relations Michigan (CAIR-MI) for assistance.

Engaging the Youth in Elections

Educating Young Muslims on the Importance of Voting

Youth are critical in building a sustainable culture of civic engagement within Michigan's Muslim community. Organizing workshops that highlight the importance of voting and how it aligns with Islamic values can instill lifelong civic habits.

Organizing Youth-Led Voter Registration Drives

Youth can lead efforts to increase voter registration among their peers and broader community. Encourage local mosques and organizations to partner with youth groups to host drives and informational sessions about the electoral process.

How Young Muslims Can Make a Difference Even If They Cannot Vote

Young Muslims can contribute through activities such as canvassing, organizing educational campaigns, and volunteering at polling stations. Even if they are not yet eligible to vote, their efforts can help ensure high voter turnout in the community.

Common Myths about Voting in the Muslim Community

Myth 1: **My Vote Doesn't Matter**

Some believe that a single vote has little impact, but in Michigan, elections have been decided by narrow margins, especially in key swing districts. Every vote counts, and the Muslim vote could be pivotal in shaping the state's future.

Myth 2: **Voting Is Forbidden in Islam**

There is a misconception that participating in a non-Islamic government is not permissible. However, voting is seen by many scholars as a means to protect the rights and dignity of the Muslim community and to advocate for justice, making it an act of civic and religious duty.

Myth 3: **The Election Process Is Rigged**

While some may feel disillusioned with the system, Michigan has safeguards to ensure the integrity of elections. This includes transparent voting processes, bipartisan poll workers, and security measures to protect the voting process.

Election Integrity and Security

How to Ensure Your Vote Is Secure

To ensure your vote is secure, vote early, use designated drop boxes for absentee ballots, and verify your ballot's receipt through the Michigan Secretary of State's absentee ballot tracking system.

Understanding the Voting Process and Chain of Custody for Ballots

Michigan has a strict chain of custody for ballots, ensuring that they are counted accurately and securely. Poll watchers and election monitors are in place to uphold the integrity of the process.

Resources for Further Education

- Michigan Secretary of State: Michigan Voting Information
- Council on American-Islamic Relations Michigan (CAIR-MI): CAIR-MI Voter Protection Resources
- Voter Registration: Register to Vote in Michigan
- Election Protection Hotline: 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)