



# Strength in Numbers

The Relative Concentration of Iranian Americans  
Across the United States



## Iran Census Report

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## Foreword

In the wake of the September 11th attacks, all Americans were reeling from a combination of anguish, loss, uncertainty, and insecurity. Iranian Americans experienced similar feelings plus additional hardships. As Americans, we mourned and felt the increased sense of threat that all did. And as Iranians, we wondered daily about how we were feared, or even hated, by other Americans.

Initially fueled by the American hostage crisis, these negative feelings caused many Iranian Americans to seek a low profile – to be unobtrusive, unnoticed and disconnected from mainstream American society. This legacy made our community voiceless, and one that lacks the necessary instruments and organizational structures to defend its rights and to become active and involved in public affairs and civic discourse.

But much of this is changing. The willingness to participate in political affairs, in getting organized, and in voicing an opinion is now stronger than ever within the Iranian-American community. Yet, in addition to a lack of participation, the community suffers from two other major obstacles to political influence: 1) a lack of detailed statistics regarding the community's size, political inclination, location, income and other demographic attributes, and 2) the co-location of Iranian Americans in the same geographies as other politically active and influential ethnic groups that may have conflicting agendas. Without reliable demographic statistics on the community, it is very difficult to mobilize Iranian Americans for collective action. Furthermore, without reliable and detailed statistics on the relative strength of the community in different Congressional districts, it is difficult to know where the community's chances of success and political influence will be the greatest.

To this end, NIAC has conducted a study detailing the relative size of the Iranian-American community in each Congressional district vis-à-vis the size of other communities. This knowledge is pivotal for the community to be represented in political life. Selected groups in the study are chosen due to their ability to be both political competitors and partners to the Iranian-American community. For instance, while some differences may exist between Arab Americans and Iranian Americans on issues related to US foreign policy in the Middle East, cooperation between the groups may be more fruitful in the areas of civil rights and visa laws.

This study is intended to be used as a map for any group or entity that wishes to mobilize the Iranian-American community, regardless of their goals and agendas. It is NIAC's belief that increased political participation among all segments of the Iranian-American community will ultimately lead to a strengthening of democratic traits and practices in our community. Through intense participation and practical experiences of democratic exercises, a profound understanding of the true meaning of democracy, dem-

ocratic approaches and a democratic mindset will emerge in our community, enabling healthy internal competition for the leadership of the community and an ability for strong external competition in the face of obstacles that confront us all, irrespective of our political orientations.

Furthermore, this study is preliminary in the sense that the number of Iranian Americans is underestimated by the US Census, and the existing data is yet to be fully analyzed. We are currently investigating the possibility of conducting a census that would rectify the systemic errors present in the US Census data, as well as including more ethnic groups in the study for comparison. In the meantime, this study will serve as an excellent guide for anyone wishing to mobilize the Iranian-American community on the state or national level.

This project has come to fruition under the insightful leadership of NIAC's Executive team Marjan Ehsassi and Dokhi Fassihian, and the untiring work of NIAC staffers Raha Rafii and Soraya Fata.



**Trita Parsi**  
**President**  
**September 2003**

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## Goal

In order to determine the relative political strength of the Iranian-American community in the United States, it is necessary to measure not only the population of the community but its population as a percentage of the general population, and compared to other important ethnic minorities.

The geographic concentrations of Iranian Americans are compared to ethnic minorities of Armenian, Greek, Arab, Turkish, and Israeli descent – communities that may have competing or complementary political agendas. While they may be potential competitors in the political arena, the aforementioned groups may also serve as a boon in helping the Iranian-American community achieve its goals. We have selected these ethnic communities as the major political entities to study Iranian Americans against because of shared history, ancestral geographic proximity, and cultural closeness. These factors continue to relate these groups to Iranian Americans either in shared interests or competition for political influence and power. The Jewish-American community, which is very relevant to our study, could however not be included in the study since the US Census Bureau does not list religious minorities.

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## Method

The Iranian<sup>1</sup> population by Congressional district has been obtained as reported by the United States Census Bureau ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) in the 108th Congressional District as of July 2003. As such, the US Census Bureau does not offer a designation for individuals of Iranian descent, though it does so for a variety of other groups.<sup>2</sup> As a result, it is estimated that only a fraction of the total number of Iranians in the United States chose to write in “Iranian” as their ancestry, underestimating the size and importance of the Iranian-American community. The US Census estimates that the Iranian-American community numbers around 330,000, whereas the Iranian Interest Section in Washington, DC claims to hold passport information for approximately 900,000 Iranians in the US.

The problem lies partly with the 2000 census form. Only two questions deal with ancestry: the first which asks if an individual is Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, and a second which asks a person’s race. The choices provided under the category of race are “white”; “black, African Am., or Negro”; “American Indian or Alaska Native”; “Asian Indian”; “Chinese”; “Filipino”; “Japanese”; “Korean”; “Vietnamese”; “Other Asian--Print race”; “Native Hawaiian”; “Guamanian or Chamorro”; “Samoan”; “Other Pacific

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1. The terms “Iranian” and “Iranian American” are used interchangeably throughout this document to denote individuals who register with the U.S. Census as being of Iranian ancestry.

2. See short-form questionnaire at <http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/pdf/d61a.pdf>

Islander – Print race”; and “Some other race – Print race”. The confusion between race and ethnicity in this question makes it unclear for Iranians whether to write in “Iranian” under the race category choice of “Some other race – print race,” or to with some choose to mark “white” instead.<sup>3</sup>

Though the numbers of Iranian Americans reported in the census are most likely inaccurate in absolute terms, the error tends to be systematic across different states and districts. Since the proportion of people failing to write in “Iranian” as their ancestry is randomly distributed, the error does not vary across the nation.

The relative strength of the Iranian-American community is measured per Congressional district. This breakup is particularly helpful when speaking to members of Congress, governors, and other elected officials on behalf of the community. It is also a helpful guide for electing Iranian Americans to political office.

In order to know geographically where to focus the community’s political efforts, the relative strength of the Iranian-American community is first determined by state, and then by congressional district within each state (See Tables 1 and 2). The numbers reported by the US Census represent the absolute minimum Iranian population for each district, but most likely, the figures are still inaccurate for the reasons previously mentioned.<sup>4</sup>

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## Findings

### California

CA	159,016 Iranian-Americans	0.469% of the state's population
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According to the US Census, the largest community of Iranian descent in the United States resides in California, concentrated in the Los Angeles and Beverly Hills area, with 159,016 residents – a number greater than the Iranian populations in the next 20 states combined. Though Iranian residents in California are very affluent, much of it a result of technological firms in Silicon Valley, this wealth has not yet been translated into political clout.

Though a relatively large number, it is important to note that Iranian Americans are only 0.469% of the general population and are vastly outnumbered by the more sizeable Hispanic/Latino population (10,969,132, or 32.384% of the general population of California). A politically well-organized group,

3. There has been no major change in this question affecting Iranian Americans since the 1990 census, although changes have affected other groups.

4. Though projections of the actual population have been upwards of 1 million, without an informational source, it remains as speculation. Therefore, the numbers reported have not been corrected for estimated “actual” numbers, though it would be of interest to pay particular attention to districts where the numbers of the Iranian populations are close to those of other ethnic groups.

the Hispanic community has recently reached the ranking of the nation's single largest minority group.

District 30 in California (Henry Waxman-D) has the single largest Iranian population in the nation, with 35,547 (5.557% of the general population of California). It is in this geography that Iranians are strongest relative to their populations elsewhere in California. They outnumber all listed ethnic groups and are closest in number to the Hispanic/Latino population (53,083). The sheer number of Iranian residents in this area, combined with their affluence, makes it a prime target for political mobilization. These characteristics also mark District 48 (Christopher Cox-R), which has the next single largest population of Iranians at 13,599 (2.129%).

District 27 (Brad Sherman-D) with 10,585 (1.658%), is the third most populous district, but Iranians here are outnumbered by Armenians (17,421). District 15 (Michael Honda-D) with 6,631 (1.038%), is the next most populous district, and may become even more effective if Honda – his family having been interned in a concentration camp during World War II – proves sensitive to ethnic discrimination against Iranians.

Besides District 30 (Henry Waxman-D), District 48 (Christopher Cox-R), and District 27 (Brad Sherman-D), all other populations of Iranians in California drop below 7,000 and average 2,000 per district. The highest congressional district population of Armenian-Americans in California (District 29, Adam Schiff-D) is about double the highest population of Iranian Americans in District 30.

Of the general population of Iranians in California, Armenians and Arabs outnumber Iranians, with Armenians numbering the highest (204,631). Iranians are outnumbered by at least two of the listed ethnic groups in all of California's districts except 9 (Barbara Lee-D), 10 (Ellen Tauscher-D), 12 (Tom Lantos-D), 14 (Anna Eshoo-D), 15 (Michael Honda-D), 16 (Zoe Lofgren-D), 30 (Henry Waxman-D), 36 (Jane Harman-D), 46 (Dana Rohrabacher-R), and 48 (Christopher Cox-R). Iranians outnumber all listed ethnic groups in Districts 10 (Ellen Tauscher-D), 14 (Anna Eshoo-D), 15 (Michael Honda-D), 16 (Zoe Lofgren-D), 27 (Brad Sherman -D), 28 (Howard Berman-D), 30 (Henry Waxman-D), and 48 (Christopher Cox-R).

New York

NY 22,856 Iranian Americans 0.120% of the state's population



Ranking after California, New York's Iranian-American population is reported at 22,856. District 5 (Gary Ackerman-D) consists of the most Iranian Americans by far, with a population of 8,079 (1.235%). This is followed by District 9 (Anthony Weiner-D) with 2,308 (0.352%) and District 14 (Carolyn Maloney-D) with 1,994 (0.305%). Besides District 2 (Steve Israel-D) and District 4 (Carolyn McCarthy-D), the populations drop below 1,000. Iranians are

heavily outnumbered by Greeks in every district, most notably in District 5 (Gary Ackerman-D) and District 14 (Carolyn Maloney-D), which contain the two single largest Greek populations in the state. There are also significant populations of Israelis in District 5 (2,267, Gary Ackerman-D) and District 9 (1,243, Anthony Weiner-D). Iranians are outnumbered by at least two of the listed ethnic groups (mainly Greek, Arab, and Turkish) in every New York Congressional district.

## Texas

TX 22,590 Iranian Americans 0.108% of the state's population



Coming a close third, Texas reports 22,590 Iranian Americans. The two highest populations in this state are in District 7 (3,944, 0.605%, John Culberson-R) and District 3 (3,363, 0.516%, Sam Johnson-R). The next highest are District 32 (Pete Sessions, R) and District 22 (represented by the powerful House Majority Leader Tom Delay), with populations of 1,676 and 1,642, respectively. Other than District 10 (Lloyd Doggett-D) and District 26 (Michael Burgess-R), the populations drop below 1,000, with six districts below 100. Iranians are outnumbered by Arabs in all of these districts, with the difference being the least in District 3 (Sam Johnson-R, 0.819 Iranian to Arab ratio) and the most in District 7 (John Culberson, 0.470). Except for District 24 (Martin Frost-D), Iranians are outnumbered by at least two of the listed ethnic groups, namely Greeks and Arabs.

## Maryland

MD 12,935 Iranian Americans 0.244% of the state's population



The state of Maryland's Iranian-American population is stated to be 12,935, mostly concentrated in Washington, DC's immediate suburbs. The highest single population in Maryland is in District 8 (Chris Van Hollen-D) with a population of 8,313 (1.204% of the general district population), exceeding the next two highest districts – District 2 (C.A. Ruppersberger-D) and District 3 (Benjamin Cardin-D) – by more than 7,000. District 8 is also the only congressional district in the country where Iranians outnumber all listed ethnic groups.

## Virginia

VA 14,970 Iranian Americans 0.211% of the state's population



Virginia reports 14,970, also concentrated in districts within the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The three greatest Iranian populations in Virginia are in District 11 (Tom Davis-R, 5,278, 0.813%), District 10 (Frank Wolf-R, 4,822, 0.608%),

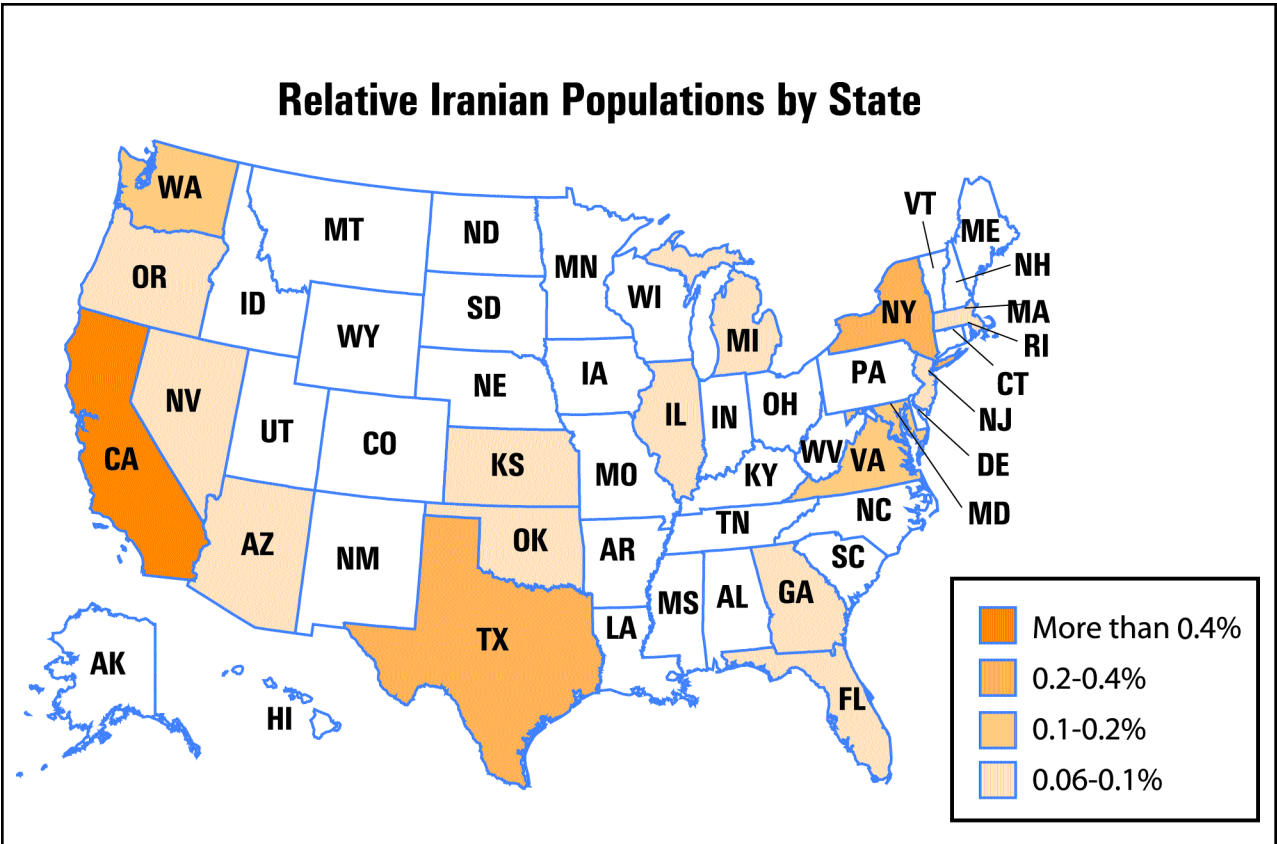
and District 8 (Jim Moran-D, 2,514, 0.400%), with other districts averaging approximately 270. Arabs vastly outnumber Iranians in Districts 8 and 11 (with populations of 10,166 and 12,251, respectively), and Iranians are outnumbered by two or more listed ethnic groups in all districts except 10 and 11.

Washington

WA	6,351 Iranian Americans	0.108% of the state's population
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The state of Washington reports 6,351 Iranian Americans. The highest single population in the state of Washington is in District 1 (Jay Inslee-D) with 2,154, (0.341% of the population), followed by District 8 (Jennifer Dunn-R) with 1,520 (0.218%) and District 7 (Jim McDermott-D) with 781 (0.132%). However, Iranians are outnumbered by at least two listed ethnic groups (Greek and Arabs) in all districts except District 8 (Jennifer Dunn-R).





## Other States

The following are statistics on other states and districts where relatively large concentrations of Iranian Americans can be found ( $\geq 0.15\%$ ):

Georgia - District 6 (Johnny Isakson-R): 2,701 (0.429%); District 7 (John Linder-R): 1,172 (0.186%). Outnumbered by Greeks and Arabs in District 6 and slightly outnumbered by Arabs in District 7.

Arizona - District 5 (J.D. Hayworth-R): 1,791 (0.279%). Outnumbered by Greeks and Arabs.

Oregon - District 1 (David Wu-D): 2148 (0.2148%). Outnumbered by Greeks and Arabs.

Illinois - District 9 (Janice Schakowsky-D): 1,319 (0.202%); District 10 (Mark Kirk-R): 1,285 (0.196%); District 13 (Judy Biggert-R): 1,056 (0.162%). Outnumbered by Armenians, Greeks (heavily), and Arabs in Districts 9 and 10, and by Greeks (heavily) and Arabs in District 13. District 9 has the single highest Greek population in Illinois.

Oklahoma - District 5 (Ernest Istook-R): 1,359 (0.197%). Outnumbered by Arabs 2 to 1.

New Jersey - District 5 (Scott Garrett-R): 1,234 (0.194%); District 9 (Steven Rothman-D): 1,329 (0.205%); District 11 (Rodney Frelinghuysen-R): 1,079 (0.162%). Outnumbered by Armenians, Greeks, and Israelis in District 5, by Armenians, Greeks, Arabs, Turks, and Israelis in District 9 and 11. The single largest Arab population in New Jersey resides in District 9 (12,053).

Massachusetts - District 7 (Edward Markey-D): 1,053 (0.171%); District 8 (Michael Capuano-D): 1,107 (0.178%). Heavily outnumbered by Armenian, Greek, and Arabs in both districts, with Israelis and Turks very close to the Iranian population in District 8.

Michigan - District 9 (Joseph Knollenberg-R): 1,130 (0.170%). Heavily outnumbered by Armenians, Greeks, and Arabs in every district. Arabs outnumber Iranians in District 9 almost 11 to 1.

Nevada - District 1 (Shelley Berkley-D): 1,474 (0.157%). Outnumbered by Greeks and Arabs.

Kansas - District 3 (Dennis Moore-D): 1,204 (0.164%). Outnumbered by Greeks and Arabs.

Florida - District 20 (Peter Deutsch-D): 1,004 (0.157%). Outnumbered by Greeks, Arabs, Turks, and Israelis.

## Conclusion

The following conclusions have been made based on the assumption that a low ratio of Iranians (<0.1%) to more than one listed ethnic group indicates a lack of political strength.

It is clear from the findings that the Iranian population of California has both the numbers and the percentages needed to effectively project its voice in American politics. The Iranian population in 32 of California's 53 districts exceeds 0.15%. In five districts, the population exceeds 1%.

New York is important in its overall population and district concentrations, with District 5 (Gary Ackerman-D, Great Neck: 8,079) being one of the larger district populations in the nation.

While the Iranian population of Texas is very large, it is spread out across the state. Concentrations in six of its districts exceed 0.15%, with two exceeding 0.5%. Of those, Iranians are outnumbered only by Arabs. The gap between the two populations is narrowest in District 3 (Sam Johnson-R), which also has a fairly high proportion of Iranians to the general population (0.516%), and District 10 (Lloyd Doggett-D), where the Iranian population is able to exercise some political influence. Iranians in District 7 (John Culberson-R) and District 22 (Tom DeLay-R) have high percentages (0.252% and 0.605%, respectively) and are outnumbered only by Arabs. It thus seems that Texas is second only to California in the number of Congressional districts prime for political mobilization, albeit to a lesser degree. It is important to discern the populations of South Asian Indians in these Congressional districts – most notably in the Houston area – to more accurately determine the relative political strength of Iranian populations in Texas.

Iranians in Maryland's District 8 (Chris Van Hollen-D) could exercise considerable political power since their numbers are among the highest in the nation and they outnumber all listed ethnic groups in that district. Though Virginia boasts fairly high numbers as well, Iranians are outnumbered in the most populous districts except for District 10 (Frank Wolf-R, 4,822, 0.608%), making that district prime for political mobilization.

District 1 (Jay Inslee-D) and 8 (Jennifer Dunn-R) in Washington state have relatively small populations but high percentages (0.341% and 0.218%, respectively). District 8 displays the most political potential because of the strength of the Iranian community relative to the other mentioned ethnic groups. However, the difference between the Arab and Greek populations is not great, so District 1 may also become politically effective for Iranians.

Of the other states mentioned with low overall populations but high district concentrations, Georgia's District 7 (John Linder-R) seems to be the only district that can prove politically potent, claiming 0.816% of the district population and only slightly outnumbered by Arabs.

Table 1 (In Order of Percentage)

State	Pop. of Iranian Descent	Total Population	Population of Iranian Descent	State	Pop. of Iranian Descent	Total Population	Population of Iranian Descent
1) CA	0.469%	33,871,648	159,016	27) MO	0.041%	5,595,211	2,267
2) MD	0.244%	5,296,486	12,935	28) NH	0.040%	1,235,786	491
3) VA	0.211%	7,078,515	14,970	29) KY	0.039%	4,041,769	1,581
4) DC	0.130%	572,059	746	30) PA	0.038%	12,281,054	4,657
5) NY	0.120%	18,976,457	22,856	31) NC	0.037%	8,049,313	3,000
6) TX	0.108%	20,851,820	22,590	32) OH	0.035%	11,353,140	3,927
7) WA	0.108%	5,894,121	6,351	33) WI	0.034%	5,363,675	1,823
8) OR	0.103%	3,421,399	3,538	34) NE	0.033%	1,711,263	561
9) NV	0.101%	2,663,602	2,702	35) HI	0.030%	1,211,537	363
10) NJ	0.093%	8,414,350	7,790	36) SD	0.027%	754,844	201
11) MA	0.091%	6,349,097	5,764	37) LA	0.026%	4,468,976	1,180
12) CO	0.087%	4,301,261	3,738	38) ND	0.025%	642,200	161
13) AZ	0.082%	5,130,632	4,222	39) IN	0.024%	6,080,485	1,476
14) OK	0.081%	3,450,654	2,798	40) AL	0.024%	4,447,100	1,069
15) GA	0.078%	8,186,453	6,377	41) AR	0.023%	2,673,400	616
16) KS	0.075%	2,688,418	2,004	42) VT	0.023%	608,827	139
17) CT	0.071%	3,405,565	2,428	43) ID	0.021%	1,293,953	272
18) UT	0.068%	2,233,169	1,526	44) MS	0.021%	2,844,658	588
19) IL	0.066%	12,419,293	8,184	45) WV	0.021%	1,808,344	374
20) FL	0.060%	15,982,378	9,625	46) SC	0.020%	4,012,012	802
21) NM	0.057%	1,819,046	1,039	47) ME	0.018%	1,274,923	228
22) MN	0.051%	4,919,479	2,500	48) AK	0.012%	626,932	70
23) MI	0.047%	9,938,444	4,673	49) WY	0.012%	493,782	57
24) DE	0.047%	783,600	372	50) MT	0.008%	902,195	74
25) RI	0.046%	1,048,319	485	51) PR	0.0001%	3,808,610	56
26) TN	0.042%	5,689,283	2,362				

Table 2 (In Order of Population)

State	Population of Iranian Descent	State	Population of Iranian Descent
California	159,016	Kentucky	1,581
New York	22,856	Utah	1,526
Texas	22,590	Indiana	1,476
Virginia	14,970	Louisiana	1,180
Maryland	12,935	Alabama	1,069
Florida	9,625	New Mexico	1,039
Illinois	8,184	South Carolina	802
New Jersey	7,790	Washington, DC	746
Georgia	6,377	Arkansas	616
Washington	6,351	Mississippi	588
Massachusetts	5,764	Nebraska	561
Michigan	4,673	New Hampshire	491
Pennsylvania	4,657	Rhode Island	485
Arizona	4,222	West Virginia	374
Ohio	3,927	Delaware	372
Colorado	3,738	Hawaii	363
Oregon	3,538	Idaho	272
North Carolina	3,000	Maine	228
Oklahoma	2,798	South Dakota	201
Nevada	2,702	North Dakota	161
Minnesota	2,500	Vermont	139
Connecticut	2,428	Montana	74
Tennessee	2,362	Alaska	70
Missouri	2,267	Wyoming	57
Kansas	2,004	Puerto Rico	56
Wisconsin	1,823		

Table 3: Hot Seats

			Iranian Popul.	Total Popul.	Rel to pop.	Armenian ratio	Greek ratio	Arab ratio	Turkish ratio	Israeli ratio
Arizona										
District 5	J.D. Hayworth	R	1,791	641,348	0.279%	2.05	0.57	0.47	3.89	5.02
California										
District 3	Doug Ose	R	2,408	639,374	0.377%	1.38	0.64	0.86	12.61	11.98
District 23	Lois Capps	D	1,242	638,854	0.194%	1.12	0.68	0.60	4.10	5.15
District 24	Elton Gallegly	R	2,506	639,060	0.392%	1.71	0.83	0.76	12.11	4.47
District 26	David Dreier	R	2,649	639,913	0.414%	0.51	1.06	0.33	7.50	18.02,
District 27	Brad Sherman	D	10,585	638,532	1.658%	0.61	3.78	1.23	18.57	3.12
District 30	Henry A. Waxman	D	35,547	639,700	5.557%	7.09	7.72	4.62	27.34	6.52
District 36	Jane Harman	D	5,248	639,168	0.821%	2.47	1.56	0.99	8.89	6.02
District 40	Ed Royce	R	2,230	638,671	0.349%	1.37	0.87	0.36	14.58	18.90
District 42	Gary G. Miller	R	5,462	640,090	0.853%	2.02	1.78	0.85	21.50	23.34
District 46	Dana Rohrabacher	R	4,199	639,245	0.657%	1.78	1.14	0.67	6.03	7.62
District 48	Christopher Cox	R	13,599	638,848	2.129%	4.93	3.76	1.96	20.39	28.69
District 50	Randy Cunningham	R	4,153	639,437	0.649%	3.47	1.15	0.94	6.09	6.51
District 52	Duncan Hunter	R	2,565	639,329	0.401%	2.78	0.74	0.34	8.22	9.29
District 53	Susan A. Davis	D	2,308	638,703	0.361%	2.22	0.78	0.64	5.86	6.04
Georgia										
District 6	Johnny Isakson	R	2,701	630,087	0.429%	3.81	0.57	0.56	3.31	7.44
District 7	John Linder	R	1,172	629,851	0.186%	11.16	1.06	0.96	9.85	11.96
Maryland										
District 8	Chris Van Hollen, Jr.	D	8,313	690,698	1.204%	5.10	1.12	1.26	6.85	4.24
New York										
District 5	Gary L. Ackerman	D	8,079	654,253	1.235%	3.66	0.46	2.21	6.28	3.62
Oregon										
District 1	David Wu	D	2,148	743,388	0.289%	3.49	0.83	0.63	4.25	12.79
Texas										
District 32	Pete Sessions	R	1,676	652,266	0.257%	6.12	0.94	0.38	5.11	2.95
Virginia										
District 8	James P. Moran	D	2,514	627,723	0.400%	2.66	0.64	0.25	2.13	21.49
District 10	Frank R. Wolf	R	4,822	792,605	0.608%	5.83	1.22	0.83	6.53	65.16
District 11	Thomas M. Davis III	R	5,278	649,477	0.813%	6.12	1.31	0.43	5.37	34.95
Washington										
District 1	Jay Inslee	D	2,154	632,282	0.341%	2.30	0.78	0.82	6.14	7.58
District 8	Jennifer Dunn	R	1,520	695,709	0.218%	2.00	0.61	1.09	3.20	6.01

## Revised US Census Data – Presenting a hypothetical situation

As previously stated, the reported numbers for the Iranian population are most likely far lower than the actual population. Although it is widely believed that the Iranian-American population numbers no less than 1 million nationwide, the Census only reports a figure of approximately 330,000, as little as a third of the most commonly quoted figure.

If it is true that the community is three times, or at least twice, the amount reported by the census, what does it mean in terms of political influence? To answer that, we have made the assumptions that the error in the US Census has 1) only affected the Iranian-American community and 2) only counted one out of every two Iranian Americans. Thus, *in this hypothetical case*, we have revised the data by increasing the number of Iranian Americans in each Congressional district by a factor of two. The revised figures give us an idea of what the relative strength of the community may be, given an underestimation of the Iranian-American population resulting from one out of two Iranian Americans failing to register themselves as individuals of Iranian descent.

It should be very clear, however, that the following is just a hypothetical case. Although there are strong suspicions that the US Census data is flawed, there is no evidence that our revision of the data is more accurate. However, we present this hypothetical situation in order to emphasize the necessity of having accurate statistics on the size and strength of the Iranian-American community.

### NIAC Public Education Campaign

NIAC will launch a public education campaign aimed at achieving a more accurate accounting of the Iranian-American community by the 2010 US Census. Absent a revision of the census form to include “Iranian”, NIAC will encourage all Iranian Americans to write in their ethnicity on the forms.

An accurate census population report will enable Iranian Americans to realize the importance of their numbers, and tap their potential to mobilize politically. NIAC is currently seeking funding to conduct a more comprehensive census that will rectify the flaws that currently exist in the US Census data.

### FINDINGS

Assuming revisions of the census data by a multiplier of two, Arizona’s District 5 (J.D. Hayworth-R) emerges as a potentially viable district with an Iranian-American population of 0.559%, outnumbered only by Arab Americans.

Of California’s eighteen districts with political potential, thirteen rank above their earlier analysis in the study. In District 3, Republican Congressman Doug Ose represents an Iranian-American population measuring 0.753% of the district’s total population, leading all other ethnic groups in this study. Iranians also lead in size in District 23 (Lois

Capps-D, 0.389%.) District 24 (Elton Gallegly-R, 0.784%), District 42 (G. Miller-R, 1.707%), District 50 (Randy Cunningham-R, 1.299%), and District 53 (Susan A. Davis-D, 0.723%).

In District 8, represented by House Minority leader Nancy Pelosi, Iranian Americans constitute 0.373% of the district population and are outnumbered by Greeks and Arabs. In District 19 (George P. Radanovich-R), Iranians are outnumbered by Armenians only and measure 0.449% of the district population. Iranian Americans are outnumbered by Armenians only in District 25 (Howard McKeon-R, 0.582%) and by Arabs in District 26 (David Dreier-R, 0.828%), District 40 (Ed Royce-R, 0.698%), District 44 (Ken Calvert-R, 0.439%) and District 52 (Duncan Hunter-R, 0.802%). Statewide, Iranian Americans are very strong in California, constituting 1.749% of the state's total population; Iranians are not outnumbered by any other ethnic groups included in this study.

Iranian Americans are also very strong in the state of Maryland, amounting to 0.488% of its population, outnumbered only by Greeks. As mentioned earlier, District 8 (Chris Van Hollen, Jr.-D) holds the vast majority of the Iranian-American population in the state, amounting to 2.407% of the district population, outnumbered by no other ethnic groups in the study.

The Iranian population is stronger in Virginia, with 1.219% of the state population, but is outnumbered there by Arab Americans. Although the Iranian population in the state of Washington (0.553% of state population) is smaller than that of Virginia, it is stronger in relative terms since no other ethnic group there outnumbers it statewide. Iranian-Americans are strong in both District 1 (Jay Inslee-D) and District 8 (Jennifer Dunn-R) with 0.681% and 0.437% of the district population, respectively. No other ethnic group in this study outnumbers Iranians in these two districts.

In Georgia, revised data does not result in the emergence of any new politically ripe districts, but leaves Iranian Americans in District 6 (Johnny Isakson-R) and District 7 (John Linder-R) unchallenged by the other ethnic groups in this study. The same is true for Oregon's District 1 (David Wu-D).

However, revisions in the data cause Oklahoma's District 5 (Ernest Istook, Jr.-R) to emerge as a potentially ripe district with a population ratio of 0.394%, outnumbered only by Arabs.



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NIAC receives all its financial support from private Iranian-American donors, Iranian-American businesses and American foundations. We need your support to continue to serve the interests of the Iranian-American community and to conduct a comprehensive study on the relative concentration of Iranian Americans across the United States. Such a study will entail information on the exact numbers of Iranian Americans in each congressional district in relation to other key ethnic minorities such as Armenians, Arabs and Jewish Americans, as well as data on educational levels and income.

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