

# FRIDAY BRIEF

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## Islamic Institute Hosts Muslim and Republican Leader Forum

Leaders from the American Muslim community met on Sunday, January 21st, with leaders in the Republican Party and conservative activists at an event sponsored by the Islamic Institute to discuss a range of topics important to Muslims in the United States.

The session included several guest participants from the Republican Party and several conservative organizations and publications. Among the guests were former Speaker of the House and current GOPAC Chairman **Newt Gingrich**, Representative **John E. Sununu** (R-NH) and his father **John Sununu**, former Chief of Staff for President George H. W. Bush, Representative **Tom Davis** (R-VA), conservative activist **Kerri Houston** of the American Conservative Network, **David Shephard** from the Leadership Institute, **Frank Lavine**, former Political Director for President Reagan, and **Grover Norquist**, President of the Americans for Tax Reform.

A range of domestic and international topics were discussed, including secret evidence legislation, the situation in Palestine, the role of the Muslim community in the 2000 elections, and the hiring of Muslims for posts in the new Bush administration. Also discussed were strategies for the American Muslim community to continue to be politically active and become more involved in local and state politics as well as national politics.

## Zogby/Reuters Poll Reveals Interesting Numbers on Ashcroft

A survey conducted by Zogby International and Reuters revealed four in ten respondents approve of the nomination of former Senator John Ashcroft as the next Attorney-General of the United States. This equated to some 42% in support of Ashcroft, while 34% of respondents disapproved. Another 24% were not sure.

In the survey conducted January 14-16 of 601 likely voters nationwide, Ashcroft received strong approval from Republican respondents (71% approve, 10% disapprove). However, 55% of Democrats disapproved of his nomination, with 19% approval. Independents narrowly approved of Ashcroft, 39% to 34%, with 28% not sure.

In the same poll, voters also expressed approval of President Bush's proposed \$1.3 billion tax cut by 48%, with 40% disapproving and 12% not sure. Voters also approved of a plan to fund a new missile defense system 48% to 42% disapproval. Another 11% were not sure about the plan.

Voters were split on the issue of whether the federal government should set aside tax money in each state's largest cities for public school students in failing schools to use to attend another public, private, or parochial school. While 48% agreed, 45% disagreed with 7% not sure.

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