

A Letter from the Executive Director

Welcome to PAAIA's Annual Report for 2024! This year was defined by successes as well as urgency, resilience, and meaningful progress. At a moment when Iranian Americans and the Iranian people faced profound challenges—from intensifying repression inside Iran to rising discrimination here at home—PAAIA remained steadfast in its mission: to educate, advocate, lead, and elect.

This year, our advocacy translated into tangible policy impact. After over a year of sustained bipartisan engagement, the Mahsa Amini Human Rights and Security Accountability Act (MAHSA Act) became law in April 2024, codifying sanctions against Iran's top leadership for human rights violations. At the same time, PAAIA played a central role in advancing internet freedom for the Iranian people, culminating in the passage of Section 5124 of the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act (IRAN Act). Signed into law in December 2024, this landmark provision requires the U.S. government develop a comprehensive strategy to counter internet blackouts in Iran, expand access to secure internet freedom technologies, and dedicate \$30 million in grants to support open and reliable internet access. These victories reflect what is possible when principled advocacy meets persistent, bipartisan action.

Education remained a cornerstone of our work. PAAIA continued to serve as the leading source of credible data and insight on Iranian American perspectives through:

- Nationally recognized public opinion surveys
- Congressional and Executive Branch briefings
- Community education initiatives
- Contributions to the Department of Justice's conciliation workshop content

Our 2024 survey reaffirmed overwhelming community support for the Woman, Life, Freedom movement and underscored the central importance of internet access, human rights, and family unity in U.S.–Iran policy discussions.

Equally important was our investment in the next generation of Iranian American leaders. 2024 marked the third anniversary of PAAIA's Civic Leadership Program, now the largest investment in Iranian American youth in our community's history. From the Farokhzad Civic Leaders Summit and Pezeshkan Capitol Hill Internship Program to the launch of the Saram Service Initiative and expansion of our Civic Leadership Credential, we equipped students and professionals across the country with the tools, networks, and confidence to lead with purpose.

We also strengthened Iranian American political participation. Through IAPAC's bipartisan engagement, we supported candidates who understand and champion our community's priorities. In a historic milestone, Yassamin Ansari became the first Iranian American Democrat elected to Congress, a powerful reminder of what representation can achieve.

None of this work happens in isolation. Our Members, donors, partners, and volunteers—who believe in the power of civic engagement and principled leadership—make it possible. Your support allows PAAIA to show up on Capitol Hill, in the media, and within our communities every single day.

As we look ahead to 2025, our focus remains clear: to protect and implement the policy gains we have secured, expand opportunities for Iranian American leadership, and continue standing with the Iranian people in their pursuit of freedom and dignity. I am grateful for your partnership and proud of what we are building together.

Sincerely,

Neda Bolourchi, JD, PhD Executive Director



ANNUAL REPORT

2024





ANNUAL REPORT

2024





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A Letter From the Executive Director

PLACEHOLDER

PLACEHOLDER

PLACEHOLDER

PLACEHOLDER

PLACEHOLDER

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neda Bolourchi".

Neda Bolourchi, JD, PhD
Executive Director, PAAIA



PAAIA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization that serves the interests of Iranian Americans and represents the community before U.S. policymakers and the American public.

PAAIA FUND

PAAIA's tax-deductible, national leadership network that positively engages, educates, and elevates the voices of Iranian Americans and uplifts the next generation. (c3)

PAAIA, Inc.

PAAIA's nonpartisan advocacy

organization that educates members of Congress and other policymakers as well as the American public about issues important to Iranian Americans. (c4)

IAPAC

PAAIA's connected PAC which promotes and contributes to the election of candidates that are Iranian American or support the interests of Iranian Americans. (PAC)



EDUCATE



ADVOCATE



LEAD



ELECT

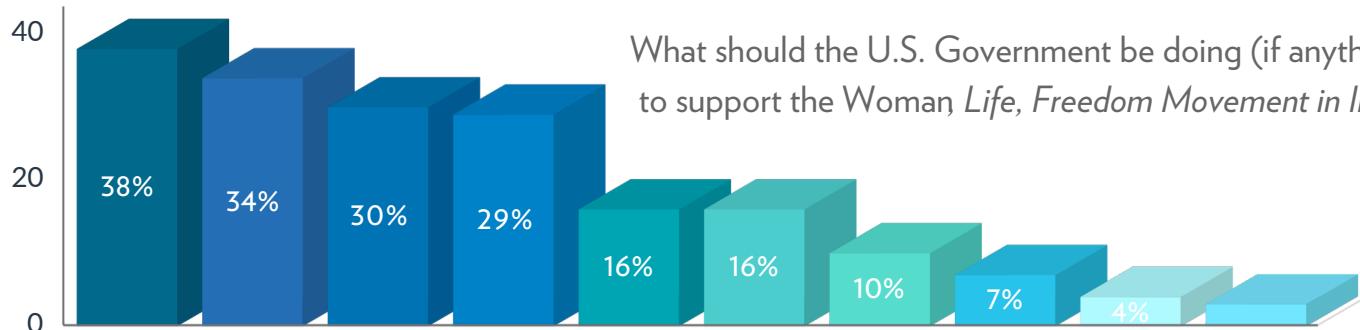


EDUCATE

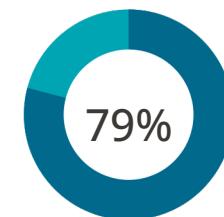
As the leading source of credible information about the Iranian American community, PAAIA serves as an educator for both U.S. policymakers and the American public about issues salient to the Iranian American community. We do this by sharing the histories of Iranian Americans and their accomplishments, hosting educational events, conducting annual surveys, publishing congressional scorecards, and disseminating facts on relevant issues.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Since 2008, PAAIA has commissioned nationally recognized pollsters to survey Iranian American attitudes on a variety of important topics ranging from domestic issues to foreign policy preferences. The first of their kind, these national surveys are used to provide accurate scientific data to policymakers and the public, increasing their understanding of the Iranian Americans. At PAAIA, we also use the results to inform our policy stances as we continue advocating on behalf of the community. This year, [our survey](#) took a closer look at how Iranian Americans believe the U.S. government should be supporting the Women, Life, Freedom Movement in Iran.

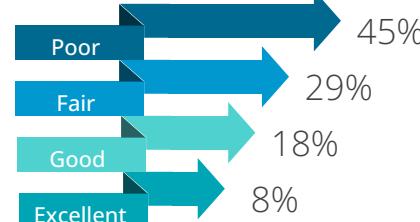


What should the U.S. Government be doing (if anything) to support the Women, Life, Freedom Movement in Iran?



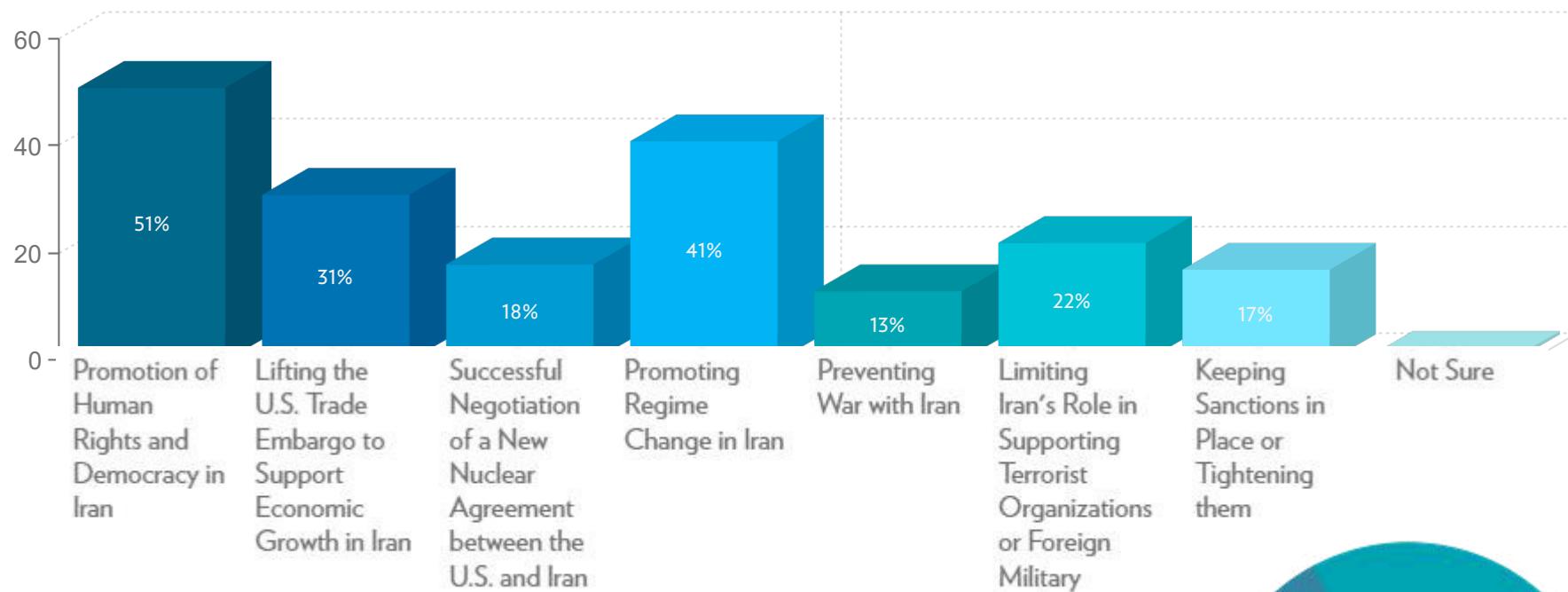
are concerned
about increased
discrimination
against Iranian
Americans

Rating of President Biden's
Handling of U.S.-Iran Relations

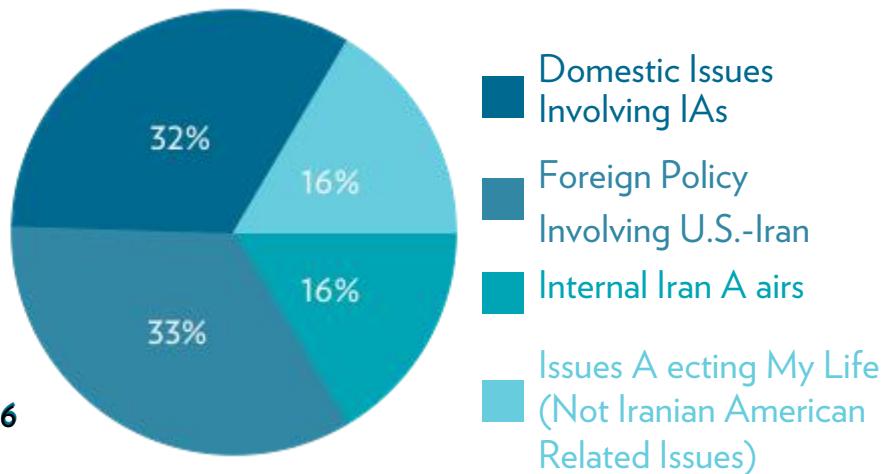


10 Iranian Americans
support the Women, Life,
Freedom Movement in Iran

Top 2 Most Important Issues When it Comes to U.S.-Iran Relations



Issues Important to IAs



6



How the U.S. Should Take Action to Support the Protests (Top 3)

CELEBRATING NOWRUZ AND HONORING THE WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM

MOVEMENT

In March of 2024, PAAIA hosted its [annual](#)

[Nowruz reception on Capitol Hill](#), with over 120 members of Congress, congressional staffers, and special guests in attendance. Among them were Representatives Jim Baird (R-IN4), André Carson (D-IN7), Virginia Foxx (R-NC5), Jim Himes (D-CT4), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA18), Burgess Owens (R-UT4), and Michael Waltz (R-FL6).

This year's celebration honored Iranian

American women in public service and the Woman, Life, Freedom movement in Iran, recognizing the brave women and girls of Iran who continue their fight for justice.

The 2024 reception featured keynote speeches by The Honorable Ashley Tabaddor and Virginia State Delegate Atoosa Reaser, who shared their personal journeys into public service and paid tribute to the changemakers who paved the way for women leaders. This year's event also emphasized the importance of human rights, religious tolerance, and freedom for all people, including the people of Iran.



The Honorable Ashley Tabaddor



Left to right: PAAIA's Executive Director Dr. Neda Bolourchi, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, and PAAIA's Government Affairs & Policy Director Morad Ghorban

PAAIA celebrated the [bipartisan resolution](#) introduced in March 2023 in honor of Nowruz, the Iranian New Year. Introduced by Representatives Zoe Lofgren (CA-18), Stephanie Bice (OK-5), Gerry Connolly (VA-11), and Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1), the bill recognizes the cultural significance of Nowruz and supports the rights of all Iranians.

PAAIA is the leading advocate for Nowruz resolutions in Congress, and the resolution marks the 8th time that a similar piece of legislation has been introduced. The resolution specifically recognized the Woman, Life, Freedom movement in Iran and underscored the importance of human rights, religious tolerance, and freedom for all people, including the people of Iran.

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

In September 2024, PAAIA in conjunction with Representatives Eric Swalwell (D-CA) and Claudia Tenney (R-NY) [held a briefing and panel discussion](#) focused on the critical role of Internet Freedom in Iranian civil society and how it can be used to support the human rights and democratic aspirations of the Iranian people.

Our panelists included experts [Simin Kargar](#), [Eric Novotny](#), and [Ali Tehrani](#). Our three esteemed panelists followed by covering topics such as the Iranian regime's use of the internet for political repression, the importance of open internet access as a tool for documenting human rights abuses, political organization, and global connection. Pivotal, they discussed the impacts of the Internet Reach and Access Now (IRAN) Act in advancing Internet Freedom in Iran.



MENA CATEGORY INCLUDED IN CENSUS

A MENA category ensures that Iranian Americans are accurately counted and receive the services counted and resources needed.



Collected data are used to redraw the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts

The data are used to determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives



After years of advocacy for Iranian American inclusion in federal data, the the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced the addition of a Middle East North Africa (MENA) category on the census and other federal forms! PAAIA's efforts, along with those of many other organizations, resulted in over 20 thousand comment submissions to the OMB's working group, which ultimately made this decision.

Throughout the years, PAAIA has taken several actions to advocate for the MENA category including the following:

- launched an educational campaign encouraging Iranian Americans to submit responses supporting a MENA ethnic category
- provided sample drafts of responses individuals could easily copy and paste into the submission form
- joined a coalition letter led by The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and their Census Task Force in support of a MENA ethnic category

\$2.8 trillion

in funds are distributed based on census data*

*Census.gov FY2021

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In honor of Black History Month, PAAIA had the opportunity to speak with [Tennessee State Senator Raumesh Akbari](#) about the intersection of her Black & Iranian identities and the importance of civic engagement. Senator Akbari has not only [blazed trails](#) in Tennessee politics but has also become [a symbol of the diverse tapestry of American identity](#). The Senator made history in 2013 as [the first Iranian American elected to the Tennessee State Legislature](#), representing District 91 in the House of Representatives. She currently serves as Tennessee Senate Minority Leader representing Senate District 29. In 2021, she achieved another historic milestone by becoming [the first Black woman](#) to chair the Senate Democratic Caucus in Tennessee.



ADVOCATE

PAAIA fosters Iranian American participation in the American civic process. We work to develop, maintain, and strengthen relations with

policymakers in both the executive and legislative branches of government. In addition to advocating for policies that impact our community, PAAIA also uses online alerts to encourage Iranian Americans nationwide to take action themselves.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS

PAAIA works to advance bipartisan legislation that serves the interests of the Iranian American community and support the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people. As **the trusted Iranian American organization** to which members of Congress turn for support and advice, PAAIA policy priorities for the 118th Congress include:



SUPPORT THE DEMOCRATIC ASPIRATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE IRANIAN PEOPLE.

RECOGNIZE IRANIAN HERITAGE AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE U.S. AND THE WORLD.

CLICK HERE TO READ ALL OF PAAIA'S POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



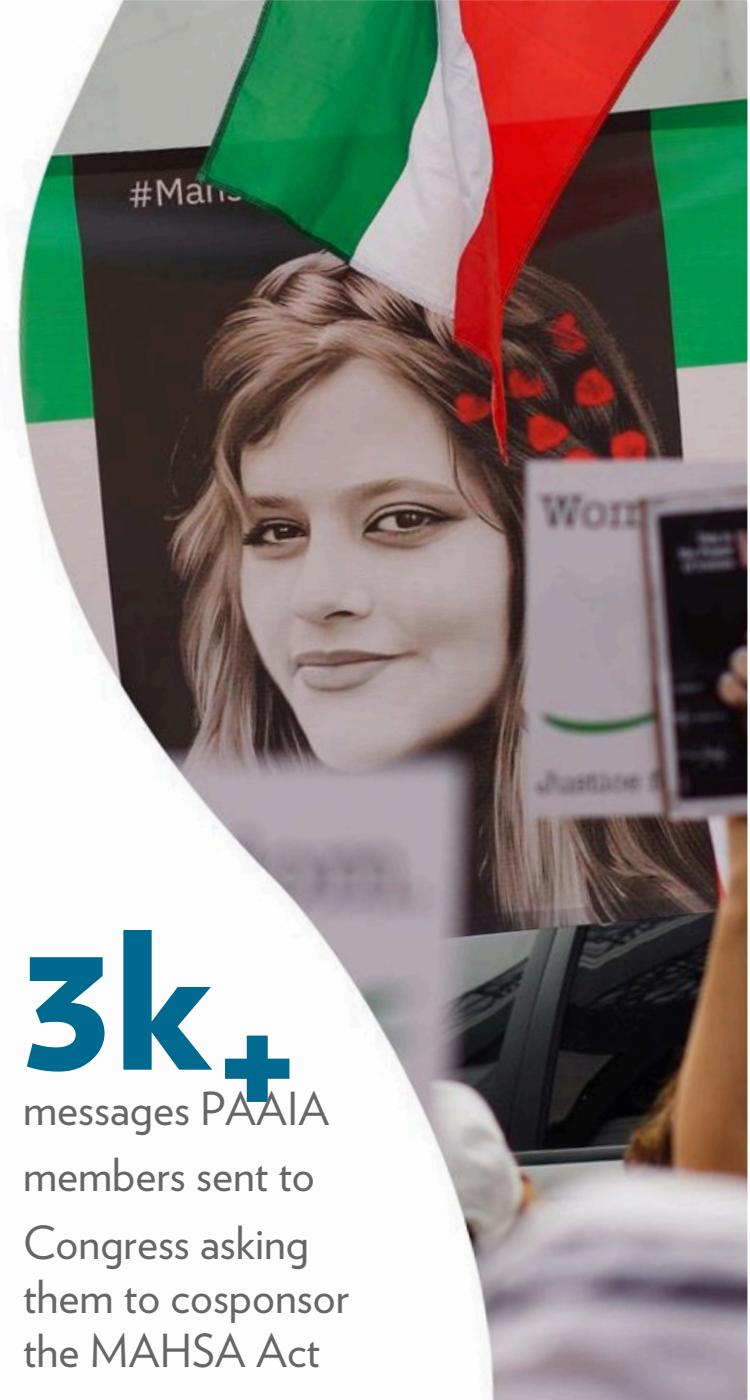
ADVANCE COMMON-SENSE LEGAL IMMIGRATION REFORM AND END DISCRIMINATORY TRAVEL POLICIES



THE MAHSA ACT BECOMES LAW

Since the death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022, PAAIA has been working tirelessly to help secure support for the Mahsa Amini Human rights and Security Accountability Act (MAHSA Act).

In 2024, the MAHSA Act became law! The bipartisan and bicameral MAHSA Act codifies sanctions against Iran's Supreme Leader, President, and their offices for human rights violations and support of terrorism. It passed the House by **a vote of 410 to 3** on September 12, 2023, and was subsequently included in a foreign aid package that passed both chambers. PAAIA was in contact with all **535 congressional offices** and **secured over 47 cosponsors** for the bill. Prior to the House vote, PAAIA submitted a statement of support to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and met with Speaker McCarthy to advocate for the bill. In the Senate, PAAIA encouraged Chairman Cardin to act on the MAHSA Act, which was subsequently passed by the committee. President Biden signed the bill into law on April 24, 2024, as part of the national security aid package.



SUPPORTING INTERNET FREEDOM IN IRAN

PAAIA spent 2024 tirelessly working to promote internet freedom in Iran. PAAIA collaborated with Representatives Eric Swalwell (D-CA) and Claudia Tenney (R-NY) on the introduction of the Internet Reach and Access Now (IRAN) Act in August 2024, which aims to enhance internet access for the Iranian people. The act mandates that the Secretary of State regularly implement and update a comprehensive strategy to promote internet freedom in Iran, with three new objectives to address the needs of Iranian civil society. The legislation had a total of 35 co-sponsors with strong bipartisan support at the end of the 118th Congress.

In September 2024, PAAIA partnered with Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and James Lankford (R-OK) on the introduction of the Iran Internet Freedom Act in the Senate. The legislation shares similar policy objectives to the IRAN Act but additionally authorizes grants to support secure internet programs in Iran, appropriating \$15 million for fiscal years 2025 and 2026 to the Open Technology Fund for Iran. The legislation had a total of 8 cosponsors in the Senate.

LEADING COALITION EFFORTS

In October 2024, a coalition of organizations led by PAAIA submitted letters to the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in support of the IRAN Act and the Iran Internet Freedom Act. The letters received backing from a diverse array of organizations including the Center for Human Rights in Iran, Freedom House, Iranian American Democrats of California, and the National Union for Democracy in Iran (NUFDI). Notably, Lantern and Psiphon, two of the largest VPN service providers for Iranian civil society, also signed on, underscoring the practical importance of secure online access for activists and everyday citizens in Iran.



IRAN INTERNET FREEDOM BECOMES LAW

PAAIA is proud to have played a key role in [the passage of Section 5124 of the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\)](#), a significant step forward in advancing internet freedom in Iran. The NDAA re-creates key elements of the [Iran Internet Freedom Act \(S.5076\)](#) and the [Internet Reach and Access Now \(IRAN\) Act \(H.R.9299\)](#)—two critical pieces of legislation that PAAIA was [instrumental](#) in developing and advocating for in Congress.

Through persistent bipartisan engagement, coalition-building, and direct advocacy, PAAIA worked closely with [Senators Ben Cardin \(D-MD\)](#) and [James Lankford \(R-OK\)](#) in the Senate and [Representatives Eric Swalwell \(D-CA\)](#) and [Claudia Tenney \(R-NY\)](#) in the House to ensure that provisions from these bills were included in the NDAA. These efforts have culminated in a comprehensive strategy to counter internet blackouts in Iran, expand the use of VPNs, and allocate \$30 million in grants to support secure internet access initiatives. The passage of this legislation demonstrates the impact of PAAIA's advocacy and its commitment to policies that empower the Iranian people with the tools they need to access free and open information.

MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS & IRAN ACTION HUB

When the Woman, Life, Freedom protests began, PAAIA created the [Iran Action Hub](#) to keep track of what steps Congress and the Biden Administration were taking to [support the protesters](#).

The page also shares actions PAAIA has taken.



Throughout 2024, PAAIA continued to maintain a strong presence on Capitol Hill in advocating for our policy priorities. PAAIA held over [100 meetings](#) with members of Congress and their staff. We discussed the importance of supporting

legislation like the TFVA, MAHSA Act, as well as the Internet Reach and Access Now (IRAN) Act and the Iran Internet Freedom Act.

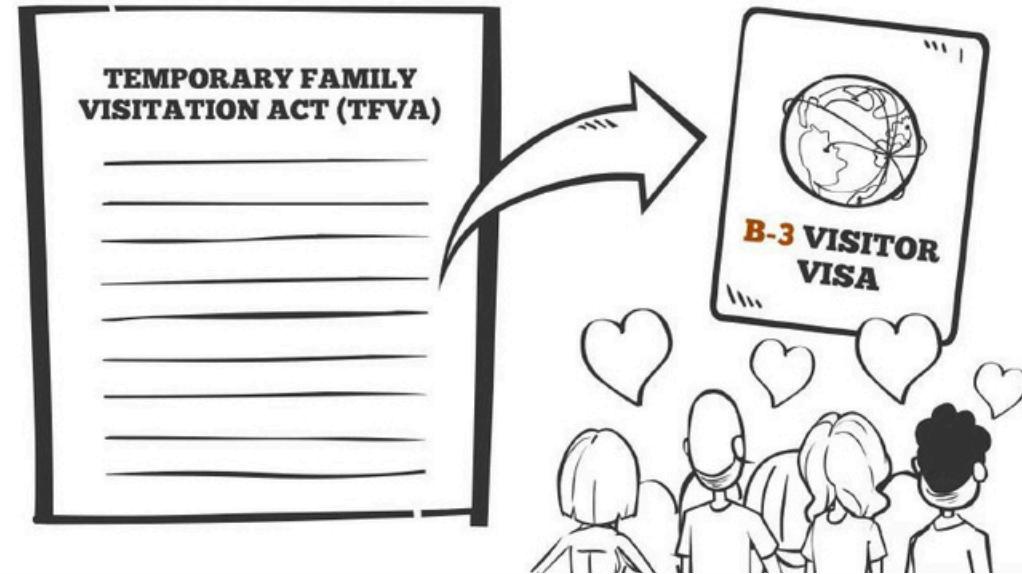
In April 2024, PAAIA members convened in Washington, D.C. for direct meetings with members of Congress as part of our Capitol Hill Day meetings, including a dinner with [House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries \(D-NY\)](#) and a breakfast with [Problem Solvers Caucus Chair Representative Brian Fitzpatrick \(R-PA\)](#). Our meeting with [Senator James Lankford \(R-OK\)](#) resulted in his [cosponsorship](#) of the MAHSA Act and led him to join Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) in introducing the Iran Internet Freedom Act. Numerous others signed on to the TFVA and IRAN Act as cosponsors thanks to our efforts.

REUNITING FAMILIES

PAAIA continued to advocate for its signature legislation, the [Temporary Family Visitation Act \(TFVA\)](#), which was reintroduced in the House and Senate in 2023. This bipartisan bill modifies the existing U.S. visa system ~~to create a new~~ **nonimmigrant visa** to allow for relatives outside of the U.S. to more easily visit their family members who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents.

Many Iranian Americans struggle to be able to have family visitations invite due to the [high rejection rates](#) of B-2 visa applications. The goal of TFVA is for families to be reunited for life's important moments, such as weddings, graduations, and funerals.

Learn More About TFVA



The bill was introduced in the Senate by Senators Rand Paul (R-KY) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and in the House by Representatives Scott Peters (D-CA), Stephanie Bice (R-OK), Jim Himes (D-CT), and Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL). As of the end of the 118th Congress, the TFVA had 24 cosponsors in the House and in the Senate, it has garnered endorsements from five senators,

The TFVA marks the [first time in history](#) that an IA organization has spearheaded legislation that would positively impact the lives of tens of millions of Americans each year. It has been endorsed by 22 national and regional organizations.



92%

of Iranian Americans support the **TFVA**

THE DIGNITY ACT

The DIGNIDAD Act stands for Dignity for Immigrants while Guarding our Nation to Ignite and Deliver the American Dream and spells the Spanish word for ‘Dignity.’ This comprehensive, bipartisan bill addresses border security, border infrastructure, establishes new pathways for asylum seekers, and much more.

The Dignity Act, introduced by María Elvira Salazar (R-FL) and Veronica Escobar (D-TX) in 2023, also contains the entirety of the TFVA within its text! As such, PAAIA has supported the bill, which boasted 38 cosponsors by the end of the 118th Congress. The legislation was also endorsed by the Problem Solvers Caucus, the largest bipartisan caucus of 62 Members of Congress committed to advancing common-sense solutions to key issues facing our nation.

National Security and Border Security Supplemental Bill

A version of TFVA was also included in the Bipartisan Senate National Security and Border Security Supplemental Bill negotiated by Senators James Lankford (R-OK), Chris Murphy (D-CT), and Krysten Sinema (I-AZ). The legislation enjoys support from Senate Democratic and Republican leadership, as well as the White House.

LEAD

PAAIA empowers the next generation of Iranian Americans by encouraging their participation in civil service and the political sphere. Our Civic Leadership Program creates a more civically-engaged community by providing rewarding experiences that help participants learn about the importance of being active in the American civic process. By providing internship opportunities, peer-to-peer connections, and mentorship with Iranian American public servants, PAAIA hopes to catalyze an unprecedented generation of Iranian American leaders.



CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

2024 marked the third anniversary of PAAIA's flagship initiative, the Civic Leadership Program. This one-of-a-kind program empowers the next generation of Iranian Americans to become the civic leaders of tomorrow.

A culmination of years of research into Iranian American civic participation combined with generous support from our donors, the CLP represents ~~the largest investment in~~ **Iranian American youth ever.**

Learn More

Historically, Iranian Americans remain disengaged with the political process, which minimizes our **collective voice**. To address this problem, the **Civic Leadership Program (CLP)** was created to empower Iranian American youth to **become civic leaders** through educational, funding, training, and mentorship opportunities.

Through our various programs under the CLP umbrella, Iranian American high schoolers, college students, and recent graduates take active steps to make a positive impact in their communities.

make a positive impact

FAROKHZAD CIVIC LEADERS SUMMIT 2 0 2 3

Our third annual **Farokhzad Civic Leaders Summit** took place July 8-14. Students across the country came together for a **transformative week** building leadership skills, learning about the importance of civic engagement, creating lasting connections, and taking action to **make a difference**.

21 Iranian American High Schoolers and Counselors

15 Capitol Hill Visits with Congressional Offices



FAROKHZAD CIVIC LEADERS SUMMIT 2024

EXPLORING IDENTITY

Exploring the **history of our Iranian American community** and its impact on our identity

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Participating in **public leadership training** developed by Harvard University Professor Marshall Ganz

CUISINE & DIPLOMACY

Enjoying Persian cuisine and learning about the **role of culture and cuisine in diplomacy**

ADVOCATE ON THE HILL

Training to **advocate on Capitol Hill** and learning directly from **Members of Congress**



SARRAM SERVICE INITIATIVE LAUNCHED

PAAIA launched the Sarram Service Initiative (SSI) in February 2024 during an exclusive Kick-off and Social event at the Peacock Café as part of its Civic Leadership Program. Designed specifically to build community, the SSI empowers Iranian American professionals through public service and cultural engagement.

Sponsored by longtime PAAIA member, Shiva Sarram, the SSI is a testament to the belief that **positive change** arises from the collaborative efforts of a connected and committed community.

The SSI seeks to empower Iranian Americans to become catalysts for positive change in their communities and beyond. The Initiative brings together Iranian Americans working in the fields of **public service, politics, and policy** through a diverse array of programming that includes advocacy campaigns, service activities, cultural events, and networking opportunities.

Among the programming the SSI accomplished in 2024, the initiative included a trip for current and past CLP fellows to the White House for the White House Nowruz Celebration and Open House.



"My parents always instilled in me a sense of service and reminded me daily to always remember where I come from."

This initiative brings together my passion for civic engagement, giving back, and desire to see the next generation of Iranian Americans maintain their connection to each other

and their culture."
Shiva Sarram,
SSI Sponsor



60
learners
enrolled in the
credential in
2024

CIVIC LEADERSHIP CREDENTIAL

Iranian Americans should have access to civic education. Delivered fully online, the **Civic Leadership Credential** program equips learners around the country with the skills and knowledge they need to advance the public good, make an immediate impact in their communities, and further the interests of Iranian Americans.



This **free** online credential is **self-paced**. Participants will be guided through each interactive step and upon completion will **earn** a **certificate** to share on their resume, LinkedIn, college/job applications, etc.

REGISTER NOW »



PEZESHKAN CAPITOL HILL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (CHIP)



Porsia Zurita
Sen. Warner (VA)



Yasamin Khosh
Rep. Frost (FL)



Ava Etemadi
Rep. Levin (CA)



Melody Mashouf
Rep. Sherman (CA)



Lin Adnseay
Rep. S. Choi (CA)

As part of the Pezeshkan Capitol Hill Internship Program (CHIP), it offers college students or recent graduates of Iranian descent the opportunity to get a firsthand look at our nation's legislative and political processes. The program is enhanced by opportunities to network with and receive mentorship from Iranian American staff on Capitol Hill, in the administration, and in non-governmental organizations throughout Washington, D.C. Since 2012, CHIP Alumni have used the experience as a launching point for their careers while creating lasting connections.

ANSARI PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWSHIP

The Ansari Fellowship, was founded to encourage and empower young Iranian Americans to **pursue careers in public service**. The program provides exceptional students – both graduates and undergraduates – with funding and access to a network of public policy experts during an unpaid **summer internship** in public service.



Rooha
Hagharmeidiabadi

Interned with American Gateways



Hasti Sadri

Interned with the Brookings Institution



SPRING LEADERSHIP RETREAT

PAAIA welcomed Members and Friends to Washington, DC in April 2024 for its Capitol Hill Days and Spring Retreat. From advocating for critical legislation on the Hill to engaging with subject matter experts, attendees delved into key issues and discussed some of the most pertinent events of our time. PAAIA Members met with eleven offices to discuss the Temporary Family Visitation Act, the MAHSA Act, and Internet Freedom with Senators and Representatives from both sides of the aisle.

PAAIA's captivating Spring Retreat featuring three panels and two reside chats followed the Hill meetings. With topics ranging from artifical intelligence, climate investments, and space exploration to turmoil in the Middle East and the Woman, Life, Freedom movement, this year's Spring Retreat provided deeper insight into current events and left attendees feeling inspired by what humanity can achieve.

To start off the day, panelists Nadereh Chamlou, nonresident fellow at the Atlantic Council, Bahar Ghandehari, junior policy fellow at the Atlantic Council's Strategic Litigation Project, and Reza Taba, founder and producer at AVA Studios, spoke with moderator Dr. Leila Golestaneh Austin, the co-executive director of the Women's Learning Partnership. The four discussed Iranian youth's role in the Woman, Life, Freedom (WLF) movement, how the movement is different from those that came before it, and the role of the arts in furthering political activism.



Panelists Cli Kupchan, the chairperson of the Eurasia Group, Dr. Adnan Mazarei, nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, and Dr. Mahsa Rouhi, research fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies (appearing in her personal capacity), spoke with Dr. Maziar Minovi, CEO of the Eurasia Group, about Iran's internal struggles and ongoing bid for regional influence in our second panel. The four discussed Iran's use of proxies in the region, highlighting the financial gains as well as the political costs of using said proxies.



In our first reside chat, CGTN anchor and former CNN anchor Asieh Namdar spoke with the founder and CEO of RockCreek Investment Firm, Afsaneh Mashayekhi Beschloss, about her career trajectory and her accomplishments as a powerful Iranian American woman in a male-dominated industry. The two women analyzed some impediments to addressing climate change and the potential for economic growth in the green energy sector. The discussion yielded some very thought-provoking questions, and Mashayekhi Beschloss ultimately concluded that the biggest motivator for switching to cleaner options is self-interest – both for corporations and countries.



PAAIA's fourth panel explored the transformative potential of AI, examining its impact on global stability, conservation, law, and the workforce. Dr. Amir Bagherpour (Accenture Federal Services) discussed AI's role in predictive modeling and decision-making, while Dr. Alex Dehgan (Conservation X Labs) highlighted its use in wildlife protection. Amir Ghavi (Fried Frank) addressed legal challenges surrounding Generative AI, including intellectual property and privacy concerns. Moderated by Pouya Lavian (Wells Fargo), the panel debated whether AI-driven automation will benefit workers or lead to job losses, emphasizing that AI's societal impact depends on policy and regulation rather than the technology itself.

In our second reside chat, Van Espahbodi, general partner at Generational Partners and co-founder of Starburst Aerospace, spoke with Dr. Kam Gharian, visionary and co-founder of Axiom Space, X-Energy, and Intuitive Machines about private space exploration. Dr. Gharian explained unity consciousness to the crowd—the idea that when you're in outer space looking back at Earth, you don't see religions, ethnicities, or borders, but rather one planet, unified. He shared his dream that humanity will one day raise its consciousness to be able to see itself as one and the same and even to extend that unity beyond our species to other animals and the Earth as a whole.





FALL LEADERSHIP RETREAT

PAAIA's 2024 Fall Retreat, held in Houston, TX, brought together thought leaders, policymakers, and industry experts for a day of insightful discussions on some of the most pressing global challenges. The retreat featured four dynamic panels and one reside chat covering advancements in medicine, energy innovation, Middle East policy, space exploration, and civic engagement, highlighting the achievements and contributions of Iranian Americans across diverse elds.

To kick o the retreat, attendees were given an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of Axiom Space, the company pioneering the development of the world's rst commercial space station. Led by industry experts, the tour provided an in-depth look at Axiom's groundbreaking work in advancing human space ight, space research, and commercial space infrastructure. Participants explored cutting-edge facilities, learned about the company's collaboration with NASA and international partners, and gained insight into how Axiom's innovations are shaping the future of space exploration.

Moderated by Dr. Hamid Taheri, Director of Clinical Research at Carent Heart and Vascular Center, our rst panel featured Dr. Behnaam Aazhang, J.S. Abercrombie Professor & Director at Rice University's NeuroEngineering Initiative, Dr. Abbas Ardehali, Cardiothoracic Surgeon & Director at UCLA's Heart & Lung Transplant Programs, and Dr. Leila Pirhaji, Founder & CEO at ReviveMed. The panelists discussed cutting-edge advancements in neurological research, organ transplantation, and AI-driven precision medicine, highlighting how these innovations are transforming healthcare and improving patient outcomes.



Moderated by Dr. Neda Bolourchi, Executive Director of PAAIA, our second panel featured Ali Azad, Senior Advisor at Neos Partners and Independent Board Member at Quaise Energy, Dr. Ghasem Bayat, CEO of New Dawn Energy, Dr. Matineh Eybpoosh, Co-founder & CEO of Powerline, and Moji Karimi, CEO & Co-founder of Cemvita. The discussion examined the role of AI, clean energy, and bioengineering in shaping the energy transition, emphasizing the need for technological innovation, policy support, and investment in sustainable solutions.



Our reside discussion featured Ambassador David M. Satter eld, Director of Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, and Dr. Abbas Milani, Hamid & Christina Moghadam Director of Iranian Studies at Stanford University. Theconversation provided audience members insights into Iran's geopolitical strategies, regional in uence, and the evolving role of U.S. foreign policy, analyzing the broader implications for stability, security, and diplomatic relations in the Middle East.



Moderated by Dr. Neda Bolourchi, Executive Director of PAAIA, our third panel featured Dr. Kamak Ebadi, Manager of GN&C Space ight Autonomy Group at Blue Origin, and Babak Tafreshi, Astrophotographer & Science Journalist. The discussion explored commercial space travel, AI-driven autonomy in space missions, and the role of space photography in bridging science and art, underscoring how advancements in space technology continue to push the boundaries of human knowledge.

Moderated by Ari Aramesh, Founder & Managing Member of Aramesh Law, our final panel addressed Iranian American civic engagement and political participation. Yassamin Ansari, Candidate for U.S. Congress (AZ-3) and Former Vice Mayor of Phoenix, shared her experiences in public service and the challenges of running for office. Layla Sharaf, Deputy Chief Operating Officer at the Civic Operations Group, discussed the importance of grassroots activism and policy engagement. The discussion underscored the need for increased Iranian American representation in government and public affairs.



ELECT

IAPAC is the registered bipartisan connected political action committee of PAAIA. IAPAC contributes to candidates for public office who are attuned to the concerns of the Iranian American community. In addition, IAPAC supports and encourages Iranian Americans to actively participate in the U.S. democratic process and run for public office. As a critical tool in PAAIA's advocacy efforts, IAPAC contributions are a means of access to discuss policy positions and/or educate our elected officials, assuring that our message is heard on Capitol Hill, and a way to encourage increased community participation.

ENDORSED CANDIDATES

IAPAC contributes to candidates running for public office, regardless of **their party affiliation** who are attuned to the concerns of the Iranian American community. Congressional candidates supported by IAPAC have an exceptional track record on the **issues of importance to the Iranian American community**, have articulated a readiness to engage and work with Iranian Americans, or are in a position to have influence over the legislative issues of concern to the community. Iranian American candidates supported by IAPAC have demonstrated their **commitment to public service**, are running viable campaigns, and embrace their heritage.



IAPAC & PAAIA
Member Contributions
Over \$380K

In 2024, IAPAC contributed to 17 candidates and congressional committees



We're proud to share that IAPAC-endorsed candidate Yassamin Ansari became the first Iranian American Democrat elected to Congress, winning her election in November to serve the **10th Congressional District of Arizona**!

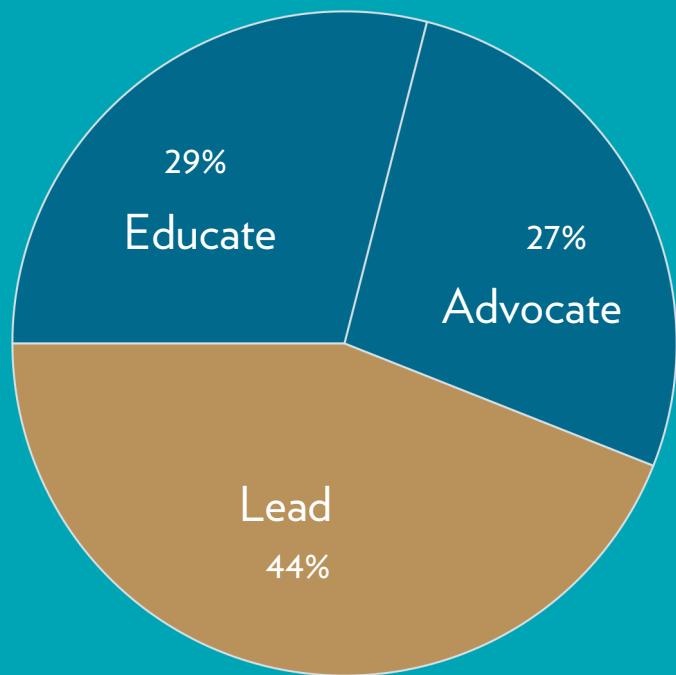
FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

In 2023, PAAIA spent **29% of our funds on educating policymakers and the American public** about our community. This includes funding for our National Public Opinion Survey, community congressional briefings, cultural events, and our MENA category campaign.

27% of our funds went towards our advocacy efforts, which include our efforts to pass the MAHSA Act and build support for the TFVA as well as other legislation that impacts the Iranian American community.

The final **44%** was spent on **mentoring in the next generation of leaders**. Our Civic Leadership Program includes initiatives like the Pezeshkan CHIP Fellowship, Ansari Public Service Fellowship, Civic Leadership Credential, and Farokhzad Civic Leaders Summit! These efforts aim to empower Iranian American youth and create a more civically-engaged community.

SPENDING BY CATEGORY



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THANK YOU

PAAIA extends a big thank you to all of our generous donors and everyone who has participated in our events this year. We can't do this without your support.

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