

Political Awareness at the University of Miami: The 2026 Iran War

By Alessandra Djohan

On Feb. 28, 2026, the unimaginable happened. Iran was attacked, leaving their leader assassinated. Here at the University of Miami, student's opinions vary surrounding one of the largest conflicts in today's geopolitical landscape.

This year, several global, geopolitical conflicts have intensified, including the civil war in Sudan, rising tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War.

However, one that has caused recent, heightened global turmoil, is the War in Iran. The conflict began this February, when the United States and Israel sent large-scale attacks targeting Iranian military assets, assassinating their leader, Ali Hosseini Khamenei, according to [Global Conflict Tracker](#). Allegedly, 1,500 Iranian civilians have been killed so far, 175 of which reportedly died following a U.S strike on an Iranian elementary school. In response, Iran launched a series of counterattacks targeting Israel, U.S military bases and United Kingdom bases in the Middle East, according to the [UK Parliament's Website](#). This has caused global panic, with large parts of Middle Eastern airspaces becoming heavily restricted, including Israel, Bahrain, UAE and Qatar, according to [OPS Group](#).

Here at the University of Miami, one of the most prestigious private schools in Florida, students' opinions surrounding this topic differ. Vincent Wang, an 18-year-old Californian freshman studying marine biology stated that he supports the United States' actions. "The United States

attacked Iran because it is a nuclear threat,” he stated. When asked how he formed this opinion, he said it was from his parents who were in support of the war. A poll conducted by [Gallup News](#) shows that seven in ten teens (71%) said their political ideology is the same as their parents. This carries onto their later years, with a poll conducted by [Tufts Circle](#), which shows that more than two-thirds of youth aged 18 to 24 say their party preference matches their parents. This suggests that many young people struggle to form independent political views; with most of them still heavily influenced by their parents. According to a poll conducted by [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#) only 36% of youth aged 18 to 29 support the action. This makes Wang the minority, however, it is uncertain whether these young adults formed their opinions through their own research or simply from their parents.

Similarly, Gavin Fenrick, a 21-year-old Californian sophomore studying Computer Science stated that he was not well informed about the war. “I know the gist of it,” he said, “just the highlights. I mostly learned about it through social media.” Surprisingly, this phenomenon is common amongst youth in their early 20s. Once free from their parent's influence, youth often turn to social media for their political knowledge, letting mainstream, short form content applications such as TikTok and Instagram shape their opinions. Now, 39% of young people aged 18 to 24 rely on social media as their main source of news, overtaking news websites and apps, according to the [Reuters Institute](#). This develops a problem, as due to the fast paced, short form nature of many social media apps now, youth will tend to only grasp the highlights of news events, rather than learning about them in detail. Furthermore, a study undertaken by Loughborough University’s Online Civic Culture Centre in 2019 found that 42.8% of news

sharers on social media admit to sharing inaccurate or false news, according to the [University of Derby](#).

Emily Gomez, an 18-year-old freshman from Florida studying physics expressed her concern about American youth and their lack of knowledge surrounding global politics. “I think it’s bad for the future,” she stated. When asked about her opinions surrounding the war she said, “I think the U.S and Israel are at fault, when Trump chose to attack Iran it was without congressional authorization.” This view seems to be the most common amongst youth as according to a poll conducted by [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#), young people aged 18 to 29 were the most likely of any age group to be against the action, with a 64% majority. However, with the rapid growth of influence from short form social media content overtaking reputable news sources, it is uncertain whether these individuals were able to form their own opinions without bias and misinformation. Kyla Kavanaugh, an 18-year-old freshman student studying chemical engineering expressed her concern alongside Gomez. “Most of my friends get their news from TikTok,” she said worriedly, “Some of the videos seem fake or like AI.” This neglect in reputable news sources amongst youth is happening nationwide. Throughout universities in the U.S, even here at the University of Miami, this pattern is still present, with only 8% of college students nationwide reading the print edition of their campus paper, according to the [Miami Hurricane](#), showcasing low engagement with reputable news sources even within one’s college community.

In conclusion, youth in the University of Miami have varying opinions regarding the 2026 Iran War. However, the formation of these opinions are questionable, since it is clearly showcased that many youth are heavily influenced by family and misleading media content. This needs to change, as knowledge of political landscapes and conflicts can aid in societal progression in the

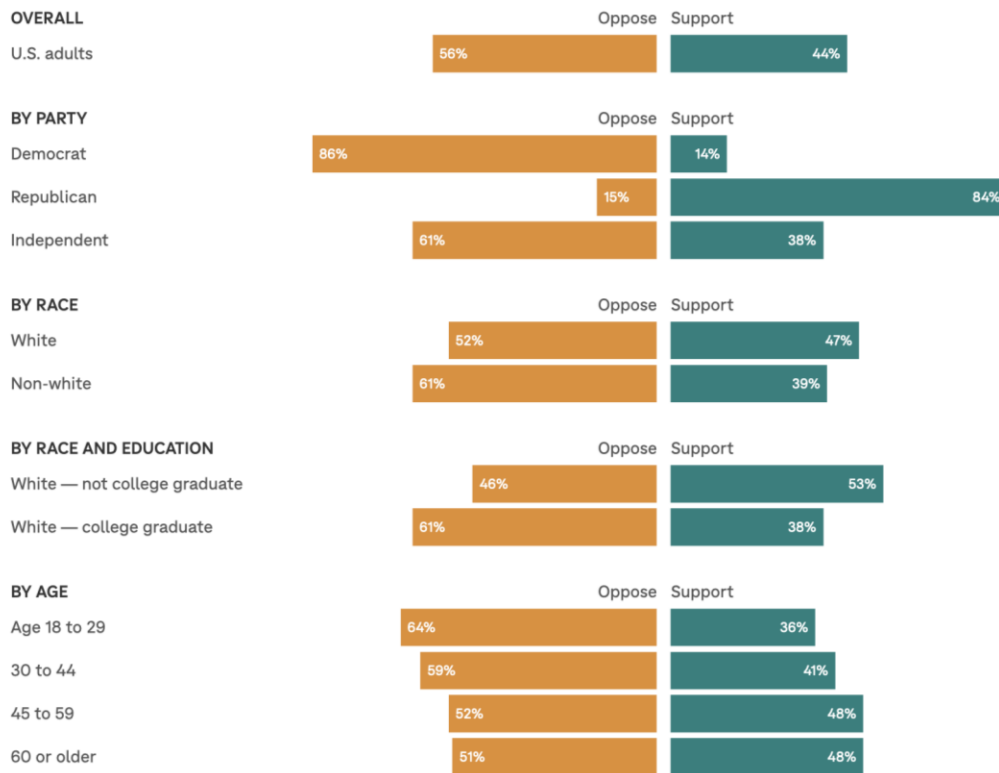
future. Whether this is done through better marketing of reliable news sources or teaching society to be more unbiased and truthful is uncertain, but it is essential.



Israeli firefighters work to put out a fire on a car at a site impacted by a projectile after Iran launched missiles into Israel, following Israeli and US strikes on Iran, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Feb. 28, 2026 [Tomer Appelbaum/Reuters]. Image taken from [Aljazeera](#).

A majority of Americans oppose U.S. military action in Iran

Respondents were asked: Do you support or oppose United States military action in Iran?



Source: NPR/PBS News/Marist poll of 1,591 U.S. adults conducted March 2-4, 2026. The margin of error for the overall sample is 2.8 percentage points. Unsure responses are not shown.

Image taken from [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#).

