2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · ARKANSAS · LETTERS FROM LEO

Governor

Incumbent Sarah Huckabee Sanders seeks a second term. Rated Solid Republican by Cook Political Report (Oct 2026). Libertarian Colt Shelby polled 7% (Hendrix College, Aug 2026).



Fredrick Love

DEMOCRAT · CHALLENGER

Arkansas state senator (District 15) and former state representative.



Sarah Huckabee Sanders

REPUBLICAN · INCUMBENT

Governor of Arkansas since 2023; former White House press secretary.



Colt Shelby

LIBERTARIAN · CHALLENGER

Farmer and contracts manager from Cecil; opposes the proposed Franklin County prison near his farm.

Where the candidates stand on the issues Pope Leo XIV has raised, in their own words and votes. Bracketed numbers link to sources. We do not rate, score, or endorse candidates.

WAR & PEACE

POPE LEO XIV *Leo invited citizens of every country involved in the war with Iran to contact their leaders and members of Congress "to work for peace and to reject war and violence."* Remarks at Castel Gandolfo, Apr. 7, 2026 (Vatican News via The Good Newsroom)

FREDRICK LOVE

No public position found.

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

No public position found.

COLT SHELBY

No public position found.

AI & THE DIGNITY OF WORK

POPE LEO XIV *"No one can be reduced to productivity, to cognitive performance, or to mere data."* Magnifica Humanitas presentation, May 25, 2026

FREDRICK LOVE

Sought a moratorium on new data centers; names workforce preparation, with unions and apprenticeships, as the top economic issue.

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)
[2] Arkadelphian/Steve Brawner: Governor has money, opponents had debate (Jul 2026)

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

Led a bipartisan governors' effort against a federal provision limiting state AI regulation, saying she opposes "allowing Big Tech to take over."

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

COLT SHELBY

Says data center decisions should rest with local communities and large data centers should pay for the grid upgrades they require.

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)
[2] Colt Shelby campaign: Platform

THE POOR & THE SAFETY NET

POPE LEO XIV *The preferential choice for the poor is "a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society."* Dilexi Te, Oct. 4, 2025

FREDRICK LOVE

Pledges to "protect Medicaid," says the state must invest in it to keep hospitals open, and backs one year of postpartum coverage for mothers.

[1] Fred Love campaign: Issues
[2] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)
[3] Arkadelphian/Steve Brawner: Governor has money, opponents had debate (Jul 2026)

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

Says the ARHOME Medicaid program must be accessible and affordable and "the goal of welfare shouldn't be that you stay there forever."

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

COLT SHELBY

Supports extending Medicaid postpartum coverage from 60 days to one year.

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

ELECTIONS & CIVIC LIFE

POPE LEO XIV *Authentic democracy, "far from being a mere procedure," "recognizes the dignity of every person and calls each citizen to participate responsibly in the pursuit of the common good."* Message to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Apr. 9, 2026

FREDRICK LOVE

Voted in 2011 against a bill requiring voters to show photo identification.

[1] OnTheIssues: Fredrick Love on government reform

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

Said in 2022 of the 2020 election, "I don't think we'll ever know the depths of how much fraud existed."

[1] OnTheIssues: Sarah Huckabee Sanders on government reform

COLT SHELBY

No public position found.

LIFE OF THE UNBORN

POPE LEO XIV *Abortion "cuts short a growing life and refuses to welcome the gift of life."* Address to the Diplomatic Corps, Jan. 9, 2026

FREDRICK LOVE

No stated abortion position found in this campaign; in debate said "to be a pro-life state, we're doing a bad job in protecting our moms."

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

Said in 2021 she would not support abortion-ban exceptions for rape or incest.

[1] OnTheIssues: Sarah Huckabee Sanders on abortion

COLT SHELBY

No stated abortion position found; in debate said Arkansas claims to be pro-life but is "a pro-birth state," citing infant mortality.

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

THE DEATH PENALTY

POPE LEO XIV *Someone who opposes abortion but favors the death penalty "is not really pro-life."* AP via PBS NewsHour, Sept. 30, 2025

FREDRICK LOVE

Has leaned against the death penalty in the past but says he would now consider it case by case.

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

Signed a 2025 law allowing executions by nitrogen gas; says on capital cases, "It's the only decision that you make that you can't undo."

[1] KAIT: Sanders signs nitrogen gas execution law (Mar 2025)
[2] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

COLT SHELBY

Supports the death penalty.

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

POPE LEO XIV *"Defending human life also includes welcoming, protecting and assisting immigrants."* Letter on the 250th Anniversary of the United States, June 25, 2026

FREDRICK LOVE

Has said "Regardless of if someone is a U.S. citizen or not, due process is a part of our law" (2026).

[1] OnTheIssues: Fredrick Love on immigration

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

Said in 2023 "we now have the worst border crisis in American history"; in debate said opponents "want open borders."

[1] OnTheIssues: Sarah Huckabee Sanders on immigration
[2] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

COLT SHELBY

No public position found.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY & EDUCATION

POPE LEO XIV *Religious freedom is "the right of every person to worship according to conscience."* Letter on the 250th Anniversary of the United States, June 25, 2026

FREDRICK LOVE

Would end the LEARNS Act education freedom accounts by executive order and redirect the money to public schools.

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)
[2] Arkadelphian/Steve Brawner: Governor has money, opponents had debate (Jul 2026)

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

Defends the 2023 LEARNS Act, whose education freedom accounts fund private and homeschooling expenses: "I want to invest in students, not systems."

[1] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

COLT SHELBY

Opposes "school voucher schemes" that move public dollars to private schools and wants to scale back the education freedom accounts.

[1] Colt Shelby campaign: Platform
[2] Talk Business & Politics: Sanders, Love and Shelby debate (Oct 2026)

CARE FOR CREATION

POPE LEO XIV *"We cannot love God, whom we cannot see, while despising his creatures."* AP, Oct. 1, 2025

FREDRICK LOVE

No public position found.

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS

Sued the EPA over what she called "out-of-control federal overreach" (2023).

[1] OnTheIssues: Sarah Huckabee Sanders on environment

COLT SHELBY

Proposes an Arkansas Ratepayer and Water Protection framework so industrial water use does not come "at the expense of local agriculture."

[1] Colt Shelby campaign: Platform

Full guide and every race in Arkansas: standwithpopeleo.com/vote/arkansas/ · **Take the Pope Leo voter pledge:** standwithpopeleo.com/vote/

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