U.S. Senate

Incumbent Tom Cotton seeks a third term. Rated Solid Republican by Cook Political Report (Oct 2026).



Tom Cotton

REPUBLICAN · INCUMBENT

U.S. Senator since 2015; former U.S. Representative and Army veteran.



Hallie Shoffner

DEMOCRAT · CHALLENGER

Arkansas farmer and Clinton School of Public Service graduate.

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)

TOM COTTON

Backed the 2026 Iran strikes, saying America "finally put our foot down" after decades of "indecision and timidity"; opposed limiting the president's war powers.

[1] Arkansas Advocate: Where Senate candidates stand on the Iran war

VOTING RECORD

No Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 86), June 2026
No Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 89), Sept. 2026
Yes Russia sanctions bill (H.R. 5334), Aug. 2026

HALLIE SHOFFNER

Says there is "not the appetite for an expensive, prolonged foreign conflict" with Iran and would have backed limiting the president's war powers; supports Ukraine's sovereignty and Israel's self-defense.

[1] Arkansas Advocate: Where Senate candidates stand on the Iran war
[2] OnTheIssues: Hallie Shoffner on foreign policy

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

TOM COTTON

No public position found.

HALLIE SHOFFNER

Pledges to protect the right to organize and bargain collectively and oppose attacks on unions: "Strong unions mean stronger communities." No stated position found on AI.

[1] Hallie Shoffner campaign: Priorities

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

TOM COTTON

Campaign site says he "ended the Obamacare tax on Arkansans" and helped lower health care costs. No stated position found on Medicaid or SNAP changes.

[1] Tom Cotton campaign site

VOTING RECORD

Yes One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), July 2025 — tax cuts with Medicaid and SNAP changes

HALLIE SHOFFNER

Pledges to strengthen the Affordable Care Act, protect Medicare and Medicaid, expand nutrition programs and raise the minimum wage.

[1] Hallie Shoffner campaign: Priorities

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

TOM COTTON

Has called Alaska's ranked-choice voting system "a scam to rig elections" (2022).

[1] OnTheIssues: Tom Cotton on government reform

VOTING RECORD

No Objection to counting Arizona's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 6, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 6–93)

No Objection to counting Pennsylvania's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 7, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 7–92)

No For the People Act (S. 2093), June 2021 — vote to begin debate (failed, 50–50; 60 needed)

Yes SAVE America Act (S. 1383), Mar. 2026 — motion to take up the bill requiring proof of citizenship to register and photo ID to vote (passed, 51–48)

Yes Photo ID amendment to the SAVE America Act, Mar. 2026 — vote to end debate on requiring photo ID to vote (failed, 53–47; 60 needed)

HALLIE SHOFFNER

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

TOM COTTON

Campaign site calls for "a culture that stands for life"; has said Roe v. Wade "was wrongly decided" and states should decide.

[1] Tom Cotton campaign site
[2] OnTheIssues: Tom Cotton on abortion

VOTING RECORD

Yes Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (S. 6), Jan. 2025 — vote to advance the bill (failed, 52–47; 60 needed)

HALLIE SHOFFNER

Has said states can now set abortion laws but that restrictive laws can block women's access to life-saving surgery (2025); campaign site backs women's access to "lifesaving medical care."

[1] OnTheIssues: Hallie Shoffner on abortion
[2] Hallie Shoffner campaign: Priorities

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

TOM COTTON

Has supported the death penalty for killing police officers (2015).

[1] OnTheIssues: Tom Cotton on crime

HALLIE SHOFFNER

No public position found.

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

TOM COTTON

Says "we need to keep getting criminal illegals out" and end chain migration; his RAISE Act would cut green cards and cap refugees at 50,000.

[1] Arkansas Advocate: Senate candidates on immigration (Feb 2026)
[2] KATV: Shoffner and Cotton on ICE (Jul 2026)

VOTING RECORD

Yes Laken Riley Act (S. 5), Jan. 2025 — requires detention of undocumented immigrants charged with theft and certain crimes

Yes Secure America Act (S. 2), June 2026 — reconciliation funding for ICE and Customs and Border Protection

HALLIE SHOFFNER

Said in June she would "defund ICE as it exists right now," citing wrongful detentions; later wrote, "I don't want to defund ICE, I want to reform it."

[1] KATV: Shoffner and Cotton on ICE (Jul 2026)
[2] Fox News: Shoffner on ICE (Sep 2026)
[3] Arkansas Advocate: Senate candidates on immigration (Feb 2026)

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

TOM COTTON

In 2012 backed "choice, competition, and freedom" to reform public schools; in 2015 co-sponsored the First Amendment Defense Act, shielding faith-based opposition to same-sex marriage from federal penalties.

[1] OnTheIssues: Tom Cotton on education
[2] OnTheIssues: Tom Cotton on civil rights

VOTING RECORD

Yes One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), July 2025 — created a federal tax credit for donations to K–12 scholarship organizations

HALLIE SHOFFNER

No public position found.

CARE FOR CREATION

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

TOM COTTON

Campaign site says he "helped lower energy costs"; in 2013–2014 he backed Keystone XL pipeline approval and bills limiting EPA water regulations.

[1] Tom Cotton campaign site
[2] OnTheIssues: Tom Cotton on environment

VOTING RECORD

Yes Resolution overturning EPA approval of California vehicle-emission rules (H.J.Res. 87), May 2025

HALLIE SHOFFNER

Has said "Climate change is a threat. It's threatening our groceries" (2022).

[1] OnTheIssues: Hallie Shoffner on energy

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

This guide does not endorse any candidate or party. Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee. Positions are summarized from candidates' own statements, votes, and campaign materials, with sources linked. Published by *Letters from Leo*. Spot an error? Email cjh@christopherhale.com.