2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · CALIFORNIA · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 17

Incumbent Ro Khanna (D) faces Ritesh Tandon (R). Rated Solid Democratic by Cook Political Report. District lines redrawn for 2026 (Proposition 50).



Ro Khanna

DEMOCRAT · INCUMBENT

U.S. Representative since 2017.



Ritesh Tandon

REPUBLICAN · CHALLENGER

Engineer and business executive.

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)

RO KHANNA

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

Iran war powers resolutions, Mar.–Sept. 2026 (six House votes): **Yes** Mar., Apr., May, June, July, Sept.

Yes Ukraine Support Act (H.R. 2913), June 2026 — authorizes support for Ukraine

RITESH TANDON

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

RO KHANNA

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

Yes Protect America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2550), Dec. 2025 — nullifies the executive order ending union bargaining for many federal workers

Did not vote Faster Labor Contracts Act (H.R. 5408), June 2026 — sets deadlines for reaching first union contracts

RITESH TANDON

Says "either every American kid graduates AI-literate, or we hand the future to other countries."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ritesh Tandon

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

RO KHANNA

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

No One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), final passage July 2025 — tax cuts with Medicaid and SNAP changes

Yes Breaking the Gridlock Act (H.R. 1834), Jan. 2026 — extends enhanced ACA premium tax credits through 2028

RITESH TANDON

Proposes lowering "healthcare and Rx costs through price transparency and preventive care."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ritesh Tandon

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

RO KHANNA

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

No Objection to counting Arizona's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 6, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 121–303)

No Objection to counting Pennsylvania's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 7, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 138–282)

Yes For the People Act (H.R. 1), Mar. 2021 — automatic and same-day voter registration, expanded mail and early voting, campaign-finance and ethics rules

Yes Presidential Election Reform Act (H.R. 8873), Sept. 2022 — says the vice president's role in counting electoral votes is ministerial and raises the threshold for objections

No SAVE America Act (House amendment to S. 1383), Feb. 2026 — requires documentary proof of citizenship to register and photo ID to vote in federal elections

RITESH TANDON

Calls to "enforce Voter ID — only American citizens decide American elections."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ritesh Tandon

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

RO KHANNA

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

No Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 21), Jan. 2025 — requires care for infants born alive after an attempted abortion

No Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act (H.R. 6945), Jan. 2026 — lets states use TANF funds for pregnancy centers

RITESH TANDON

No public position found.

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

RO KHANNA

No public position found.

RITESH TANDON

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

RO KHANNA

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

No Laken Riley Act (S. 5), Jan. 2025 — requires detention of undocumented immigrants charged with theft and certain crimes

No Secure America Act (S. 2), June 2026 — reconciliation funding for ICE and Customs and Border Protection

Yes Haiti TPS bill (H.R. 1689), Apr. 2026 — requires temporary protected status for Haitians

RITESH TANDON

Calls for "enforcing the law, fixing a broken system" and securing the border "with modern technology, anti-cartel ops, and rapid processing."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ritesh Tandon

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

RO KHANNA

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

No One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), July 2025 — created a federal tax credit for donations to K–12 scholarship organizations

RITESH TANDON

Supports school choice — "fund the child, not the bureaucracy" — and cites a Supreme Court ruling protecting "the right of people of every faith to worship."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ritesh Tandon

CARE FOR CREATION

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

RO KHANNA

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

No Resolution overturning EPA approval of California vehicle-emission rules (H.J.Res. 87), Apr. 2025

No Homeowner Energy Freedom Act (H.R. 4758), Feb. 2026 — repeals home-electrification rebates from the 2022 climate law

RITESH TANDON

No public position found.

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