2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · CALIFORNIA · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 37

Incumbent Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D) faces fellow Democrat Samantha Mota in a top-two general election. District lines redrawn for 2026 under Proposition 50.



Sydney Kamlager-Dove

DEMOCRAT · INCUMBENT

U.S. Representative; former State Senator and Assemblymember.



Samantha Mota

DEMOCRAT · CHALLENGER

Community advocate; former Santa Monica public safety oversight commissioner.

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)

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

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

SAMANTHA MOTA

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

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

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

Yes Faster Labor Contracts Act (H.R. 5408), June 2026 — sets deadlines for reaching first union contracts

SAMANTHA MOTA

No public position found.

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

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

Lists "health care for all" as a focus; coauthored California's single-payer bill as a legislator.

[1] Kamlager-Dove campaign: Accomplishments

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

SAMANTHA MOTA

Supports Medicare for All and repealing Medicaid and ACA subsidy cuts.

[1] Mota campaign: Universal Health Care

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

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

Lists "expanding voting rights" as a focus.

[1] Kamlager-Dove campaign: Accomplishments

VOTING RECORD

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

SAMANTHA MOTA

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

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

Lists "reproductive justice" as a focus and says she worked to remove cost as a barrier to abortion.

[1] Kamlager-Dove campaign: Accomplishments

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

SAMANTHA MOTA

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

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

No public position found.

SAMANTHA MOTA

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

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

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

SAMANTHA MOTA

Would dismantle ICE, end for-profit detention and promote access to asylum and due process.

[1] Mota campaign: Immigration Reform

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

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

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

SAMANTHA MOTA

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

SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

Supports "a Green New Deal and immediate climate action."

[1] Kamlager-Dove campaign: Accomplishments

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

SAMANTHA MOTA

No public position found.

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