2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · CALIFORNIA · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 43

Incumbent Maxine Waters (D) seeks re-election. District lines redrawn for 2026 under Proposition 50.



Cristian Morales

REPUBLICAN · CHALLENGER

Manufacturing operations executive in the automotive, aerospace and defense industries; 2022 gubernatorial candidate.



Maxine Waters

DEMOCRAT · INCUMBENT

U.S. Representative first elected in 1990; ranking Democrat on the House Financial Services Committee.

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)

CRISTIAN MORALES

Backs "peace through strength," says the U.S. should "avoid endless wars without clear objectives," wants Congress to weigh in before prolonged deployments, and supports Israel's right to defend itself.

[1] Morales: Platform

MAXINE WATERS

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

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

CRISTIAN MORALES

Wants America ahead of China on AI with "reasonable safeguards," protections for workers and children, and a ban on government AI surveillance; calls himself "a pro labor Republican" (2022).

[1] Morales: Platform
[2] Ballotpedia: Cristian Morales

MAXINE WATERS

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

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

CRISTIAN MORALES

Pledges to protect Social Security, Medicare and coverage for pre-existing conditions and to lower drug prices, "without putting Washington in control of every healthcare decision."

[1] Morales: Platform

MAXINE WATERS

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

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

CRISTIAN MORALES

No public position found.

MAXINE WATERS

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

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

CRISTIAN MORALES

No public position found.

MAXINE WATERS

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

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

CRISTIAN MORALES

No public position found.

MAXINE WATERS

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

CRISTIAN MORALES

Supports securing the border and enforcing immigration laws while streamlining legal immigration; would "protect DREAMERS" and hold employers accountable for exploiting illegal labor.

[1] Morales: Platform

MAXINE WATERS

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

Did not vote 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

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

CRISTIAN MORALES

Pledges to defend religious liberty and supports school choice across public, charter, private and vocational options.

[1] Morales: Platform

MAXINE WATERS

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

CARE FOR CREATION

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

CRISTIAN MORALES

Supports an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy including oil, gas, nuclear and solar, fewer energy regulations, and "practical, science-based" clean air and water protections.

[1] Morales: Platform

MAXINE WATERS

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

Full guide and every race in California: standwithpopeleo.com/vote/california/ · **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.