2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · COLORADO · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 1

Open seat — Melat Kiros defeated 15-term Rep. Diana DeGette (D) in the June 30 Democratic primary.



Melat Kiros

DEMOCRAT · OPEN SEAT

Former lawyer and Ph.D. student at the University of Colorado Denver.



Christy Peterson

REPUBLICAN · OPEN SEAT

Office manager and accountant in the construction industry.

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)

MELAT KIROS

Supports an arms embargo on Israel, describing the war in Gaza as a genocide, and favors diplomacy over military spending.

[1] Ballotpedia: Melat Kiros
[2] Kiros campaign site

CHRISTY PETERSON

Opposes "forever wars" and cites "peace through strength"; no position on specific conflicts stated.

[1] Ballotpedia: Christy Peterson
[2] Peterson campaign site

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

MELAT KIROS

Calls for public input on AI development, with worker protections against automation and public accountability.

[1] Ballotpedia: Melat Kiros

CHRISTY PETERSON

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

MELAT KIROS

Lists Medicare for All, universal childcare and "Housing First" as priorities, and calls for addressing hunger.

[1] Ballotpedia: Melat Kiros
[2] Kiros campaign site

CHRISTY PETERSON

Says safety-net programs "will be investigated to see if they are truly helping" people become self-sufficient.

[1] Ballotpedia: Christy Peterson

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

MELAT KIROS

Supports expanding voting rights and consolidating elections into a single day.

[1] Ballotpedia: Melat Kiros

CHRISTY PETERSON

Supports the SAVE America Act, paper ballots, same-day voting and hand counts of ballots.

[1] Ballotpedia: Christy Peterson

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

MELAT KIROS

Says "reproductive rights are fundamental human rights" and calls for codifying abortion rights in federal law.

[1] Ballotpedia: Melat Kiros

CHRISTY PETERSON

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

MELAT KIROS

No public position found.

CHRISTY PETERSON

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

MELAT KIROS

Opposes ICE raids and supports pathways to citizenship, saying "we are greater because of immigrants."

[1] Ballotpedia: Melat Kiros

CHRISTY PETERSON

Cites "paying for illegals" as a driver of rising costs; no specific enforcement plan stated.

[1] Ballotpedia: Christy Peterson

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

MELAT KIROS

No public position found.

CHRISTY PETERSON

Says "No to sharia law"; no position on school choice stated.

[1] Ballotpedia: Christy Peterson

CARE FOR CREATION

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

MELAT KIROS

Calls climate change an urgent crisis and supports a zero-emissions power grid.

[1] Ballotpedia: Melat Kiros

CHRISTY PETERSON

Lists energy and environment as interests and says "no to chem-trails toxic weather modifications."

[1] Ballotpedia: Christy Peterson

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