2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · FLORIDA · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 19

Open seat (Rep. Byron Donalds is running for governor). District lines redrawn for 2026.



Victor Arias

DEMOCRAT · OPEN SEAT

Managing attorney of Arias Law Firm; 2024 candidate for Lee County schools superintendent.



Jim Schwartzel

REPUBLICAN · OPEN SEAT

President of Sun Broadcasting and Gulfshore Life Media.

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)

VICTOR ARIAS

No public position found.

JIM SCHWARTZEL

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

VICTOR ARIAS

No public position found.

JIM SCHWARTZEL

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

VICTOR ARIAS

Lists "healthcare affordability and access" as a campaign pillar.

[1] Arias campaign: Transforming

JIM SCHWARTZEL

Pledges to make President Trump's tax cuts permanent, cut waste and balance the budget, and convert the local VA clinic into a full VA hospital.

[1] Jim Schwartzel campaign site

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

VICTOR ARIAS

No public position found.

JIM SCHWARTZEL

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

VICTOR ARIAS

No public position found.

JIM SCHWARTZEL

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

VICTOR ARIAS

No public position found.

JIM SCHWARTZEL

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

VICTOR ARIAS

No public position found.

JIM SCHWARTZEL

Pledges to "secure the border and deport illegal immigrants" and to stand with President Trump on enforcing immigration laws.

[1] Jim Schwartzel campaign site

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

VICTOR ARIAS

No public position found.

JIM SCHWARTZEL

Lists "expanding school choice" among priorities he supports.

[1] Jim Schwartzel campaign site

CARE FOR CREATION

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

VICTOR ARIAS

Lists "clean water and the regional economy" as a pillar, emphasizing environmental protection and clean water.

[1] Arias campaign: Improving

JIM SCHWARTZEL

Supports finishing Everglades restoration, septic-to-sewer conversion, hardening the power grid and extending "the ban on oil drilling off Florida's coast."

[1] Jim Schwartzel campaign site

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