2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · IDAHO · LETTERS FROM LEO

Governor

Brad Little is seeking a third term. A Change Research poll (July 2026) had Little 48%, Pickens 27%, Stegner 11%. Rated Solid R by Cook Political Report.



Brad Little

REPUBLICAN · INCUMBENT

Governor since 2019; former lieutenant governor and rancher.



Terri Pickens

DEMOCRAT · CHALLENGER

Attorney running for governor as the Democratic nominee.



John Stegner

INDEPENDENT · CHALLENGER

Former Idaho Supreme Court justice (2018–2023) and district judge.

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)

BRAD LITTLE

No public position found.

TERRI PICKENS

No public position found.

JOHN STEGNER

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

BRAD LITTLE

No public position found.

TERRI PICKENS

Says "strong unions and worker protections" bring stability; backs fair wages and safe workplaces.

[1] Pickens campaign: Issues

JOHN STEGNER

Says Idaho families "should get to decide" whether data centers are built in their neighborhoods.

[1] Stegner campaign website

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

BRAD LITTLE

Does not seek to repeal voter-approved Medicaid expansion but proposed $45 million in Medicaid cuts and signed work requirements; calls Medicaid "the fastest growing expense to state government."

[1] Idaho Capital Sun: Little seeks Medicaid cuts, not repeal

[2] Ballotpedia: Brad Little

TERRI PICKENS

Says health care "must be affordable and accessible to all Idahoans"; would restore Medicaid expansion and mental health funding.

[1] Pickens campaign: Issues

[2] East Idaho News: Pickens, Stegner gubernatorial forum

JOHN STEGNER

Says "Idaho families need access to quality healthcare"; has not detailed a Medicaid position.

[1] Stegner campaign website

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

BRAD LITTLE

No public position found.

TERRI PICKENS

No public position found.

JOHN STEGNER

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

BRAD LITTLE

Signed the 2020 law making performing an abortion a crime in nearly all cases except to save the mother's life; could not be reached for comment on Proposition 1.

[1] Idaho Capital Sun: Pickens, Stegner back abortion initiative

TERRI PICKENS

Supports Proposition 1 — "I absolutely 100% support the ballot initiative" — and says women, not the government, should make family-planning decisions.

[1] Idaho Capital Sun: Pickens, Stegner back abortion initiative
[2] Pickens campaign: Issues

JOHN STEGNER

Supports Proposition 1 and says he would "veto any efforts by the Legislature to change or limit" it if voters pass it.

[1] Idaho Capital Sun: Pickens, Stegner back abortion initiative

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

BRAD LITTLE

Signed the 2025 law making the firing squad Idaho's primary execution method, effective July 2026.

[1] Idaho Capital Sun: Little signs firing squad bill

TERRI PICKENS

No public position found.

JOHN STEGNER

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

BRAD LITTLE

Directed Idaho State Police, under a 287(g) agreement, to transport convicted immigrants who had completed their sentences from jails to ICE: "Idaho is stepping up to help the Trump administration."

[1] Office of the Governor: Idaho to assist ICE

TERRI PICKENS

Says immigrants should be "treated humanely" with simple legal work pathways and violent criminals deported; would end state 287(g) agreements with ICE.

[1] Pickens campaign: Issues
[2] East Idaho News: Pickens, Stegner gubernatorial forum

JOHN STEGNER

Says he would not have entered Idaho's agreement with ICE, which he calls "a rogue agency."

[1] East Idaho News: Pickens, Stegner gubernatorial forum

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

BRAD LITTLE

Signed the 2025 $50 million Parental Choice Tax Credit for private school costs, while saying the bill lacked accountability.

[1] Idaho Education News: Little and private school choice

TERRI PICKENS

Would repeal the "school voucher scheme" (the Parental Choice Tax Credit) and increase public school funding.

[1] Pickens campaign: Issues

JOHN STEGNER

Would repeal the Parental Choice Tax Credit and make a legal challenge to "the vouchers" his first executive action.

[1] East Idaho News: Pickens, Stegner gubernatorial forum

CARE FOR CREATION

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

BRAD LITTLE

No public position found.

TERRI PICKENS

"Public lands must stay in the hands of the public"; would end the state's agreement to host a nuclear campus.

[1] Pickens campaign: Issues
[2] East Idaho News: Pickens, Stegner gubernatorial forum

JOHN STEGNER

"Idaho isn't for sale" on public lands; opposes the nuclear campus agreement and calls for action on water shortages.

[1] Stegner campaign website
[2] East Idaho News: Pickens, Stegner gubernatorial forum

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