2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · IDAHO · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. Senate

Jim Risch is seeking a fourth term. Democratic nominee David Roth withdrew in July, leaving independent Todd Achilles as the main challenger. Rated Solid R by Cook Political Report (Oct 2026).



Todd Achilles

INDEPENDENT · CHALLENGER

Former Democratic state representative, Army armor officer and technology executive.



Natalie Fleming

INDEPENDENT · CHALLENGER

Author with degrees in information technology, supply chain management and cybersecurity; running as an independent.



Jim Risch

REPUBLICAN · INCUMBENT

U.S. senator since 2009, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and former governor.

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)

TODD ACHILLES

Would "reassert Congress' constitutional authority over decisions of war and peace" and end "endless wars" that do not advance U.S. interests.

[1] Achilles campaign: Policies

NATALIE FLEMING

No public position found.

JIM RISCH

Called the 2025 U.S. strike on Iran "a brilliant tactical move" within the president's authority and urged colleagues to reject a war powers resolution.

[1] Senate Foreign Relations: Risch floor speech on Iran strike

VOTING RECORD

No Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 86), June 2026
No Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 89), Sept. 2026
Yes Russia sanctions bill (H.R. 5334), Aug. 2026

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

TODD ACHILLES

Would protect intellectual property from unpermitted AI use, ban predatory non-competes and roll back right-to-work laws; endorsed by the Idaho AFL-CIO.

[1] Achilles campaign: Policies
[2] Ballotpedia: Todd Achilles

NATALIE FLEMING

Calls for algorithmic transparency and regulating addictive tech design; backs small businesses and cooperatives.

[1] Fleming campaign: Issues

JIM RISCH

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

TODD ACHILLES

Would protect ACA premium tax credits, says the ACA "needs to be reformed," and wants upfront, itemized prices for procedures and medications.

[1] Achilles campaign: Policies
[2] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand

NATALIE FLEMING

Says "basic health care is a question of human decency."

[1] Fleming campaign: Issues

JIM RISCH

Calls the ACA "a mess" and wants health care moved "significantly more back into the private sector."

[1] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand

VOTING RECORD

Yes One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), July 2025 — tax cuts with Medicaid and SNAP changes

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

TODD ACHILLES

Calls the SAVE Act "federal overreach," saying Idaho's voter ID rules suffice; wants to end gerrymandering: "Politicians cannot be allowed to choose their voters."

[1] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand
[2] Achilles campaign: Policies

NATALIE FLEMING

No public position found.

JIM RISCH

"I'm all in on the Save Act," which requires proof of citizenship to register; says Idaho's elections are "rock solid safe."

[1] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand

VOTING RECORD

No Objection to counting Arizona's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 6, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 6–93)

No Objection to counting Pennsylvania's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 7, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 7–92)

No For the People Act (S. 2093), June 2021 — vote to begin debate (failed, 50–50; 60 needed)

Yes SAVE America Act (S. 1383), Mar. 2026 — motion to take up the bill requiring proof of citizenship to register and photo ID to vote (passed, 51–48)

Yes Photo ID amendment to the SAVE America Act, Mar. 2026 — vote to end debate on requiring photo ID to vote (failed, 53–47; 60 needed)

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

TODD ACHILLES

Supports Idaho's Proposition 1 reproductive-freedom initiative and pledges to "align my service in the Senate" with its outcome.

[1] Achilles campaign: Policies

NATALIE FLEMING

No public position found.

JIM RISCH

Has long stated "I oppose abortion"; opposes Idaho's 2026 Proposition 1 abortion-rights initiative.

[1] OnTheIssues: Jim Risch
[2] Ballotpedia: Jim Risch

VOTING RECORD

Yes Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (S. 6), Jan. 2025 — vote to advance the bill (failed, 52–47; 60 needed)

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

TODD ACHILLES

No public position found.

NATALIE FLEMING

No public position found.

JIM RISCH

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

TODD ACHILLES

Supports Customs and Border Protection resources to "stop illegal crossings" and would revive the bipartisan Lankford immigration bill; backs year-round H-2A farmworker visas.

[1] Achilles campaign: Policies
[2] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand

NATALIE FLEMING

Supports "common sense immigration reform" and "a lean, clean, compassionate immigration process."

[1] Fleming campaign: Issues

JIM RISCH

"A nation without secure borders is not sovereign." Calls a path to citizenship for those who entered illegally a "non-starter"; wants to improve H-2A farmworker visas.

[1] Risch campaign: Issues
[2] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand

VOTING RECORD

Yes Laken Riley Act (S. 5), Jan. 2025 — requires detention of undocumented immigrants charged with theft and certain crimes

Yes Secure America Act (S. 2), June 2026 — reconciliation funding for ICE and Customs and Border Protection

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

TODD ACHILLES

Pledges to "defend every Idahoan's freedom to practice their faith"; as a legislator voted against Idaho's private-school tax credit law.

[1] Achilles campaign: Policies
[2] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand

NATALIE FLEMING

Supports "religious freedom for all faiths" and parental rights.

[1] Fleming campaign: Issues

JIM RISCH

Has supported school vouchers; criticized Achilles for voting against Idaho's private-school tax credit law.

[1] OnTheIssues: Jim Risch
[2] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand

VOTING RECORD

Yes 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

TODD ACHILLES

"Not one acre of public land will be sold under my watch." Would defend Idaho's Roadless Rule and adequately staff federal land agencies.

[1] Ballotpedia: Todd Achilles
[2] Achilles campaign: Policies
[3] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand

NATALIE FLEMING

Would invest in "regenerative energy" and domestic production, restore watersheds and forests, and balance conservation with public access.

[1] Fleming campaign: Issues

JIM RISCH

"It'll be over my dead body that we sell off public lands." Backs nuclear power and hydropower, opposes dam breaching and helped stop the Lava Ridge wind project.

[1] KMVT: Risch v. Achilles — where they stand
[2] Risch campaign: Issues

VOTING RECORD

Yes Resolution overturning EPA approval of California vehicle-emission rules (H.J.Res. 87), May 2025

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