2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · ILLINOIS · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 9

Open seat (Democrat Jan Schakowsky retired).



Daniel Biss

DEMOCRAT · OPEN SEAT

Mayor of Evanston; former Illinois state senator.

JE

John Elleson

REPUBLICAN · OPEN SEAT

Chicagoland pastor for 40 years; 2018 Republican nominee for this seat.

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)

DANIEL BISS

Backs a lasting Gaza ceasefire, recognizing a Palestinian state, stopping a nuclear Iran by diplomacy rather than strikes, aid to Ukraine, and requiring congressional approval for future military action.

[1] Biss campaign: Foreign policy

JOHN ELLESON

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

DANIEL BISS

Supports the PRO Act, sectoral bargaining and worker seats on corporate boards; on tech, backs breaking up Big Tech firms, data-ownership rights and banning addictive design for kids.

[1] Biss campaign: Empowering workers
[2] Biss campaign: Holding Big Tech accountable

JOHN ELLESON

Says he would "promote job creation through local businesses while removing burdensome regulations"; no stated position on AI or unions.

[1] Ballotpedia: John Elleson

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

DANIEL BISS

Supports Medicare for All, reversing the 2025 Republican budget's Medicaid and ACA cuts, capping child care costs at 7% of income, and a $17 indexed federal minimum wage.

[1] Biss campaign: Lowering the cost of essentials
[2] Biss campaign: Empowering workers

JOHN ELLESON

Calls for "community-first healthcare policies" expanding local clinics and affordability "without federal overreach," plus aid-based programs for addiction, homelessness and mental health.

[1] Ballotpedia: John Elleson

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

DANIEL BISS

Supports restoring the Voting Rights Act, the John Lewis and For the People Acts, a national ban on partisan and mid-decade gerrymandering, and abolishing the Electoral College.

[1] Biss campaign: Restoring trust in democracy
[2] Biss campaign: Civil rights and civil liberties

JOHN ELLESON

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

DANIEL BISS

Says federal law should "guarantee the right to safe, legal abortion in all 50 states," supports ending the Hyde Amendment and federal safeguards for contraception and IVF.

[1] Biss campaign: Civil rights and civil liberties

JOHN ELLESON

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

DANIEL BISS

No public position found.

JOHN ELLESON

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

DANIEL BISS

Calls to "abolish ICE," ban mass raids, keep enforcement out of schools and churches, protect asylum rights and pass the American Dream and Promise Act's path to citizenship.

[1] Biss campaign: A welcoming immigration policy

JOHN ELLESON

No public position found.

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

DANIEL BISS

Supports security funding for houses of worship and keeping immigration enforcement out of churches; says charter schools should meet public-school standards and allow teachers to unionize.

[1] Biss campaign: Civil rights and civil liberties
[2] Biss campaign: Public education

JOHN ELLESON

Lists "protecting religious liberty" among his campaign themes; has not detailed specific proposals.

[1] Ballotpedia: John Elleson

CARE FOR CREATION

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

DANIEL BISS

Supports a Green New Deal, a "Polluter Pays" climate superfund, repealing fossil fuel subsidies and opposing new fossil fuel infrastructure; has taken the No Fossil Fuel Money pledge.

[1] Biss campaign: Climate

JOHN ELLESON

No public position found.

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