2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · IOWA · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 4

Open seat (Randy Feenstra, R, not seeking reelection).



Dave Dawson

DEMOCRAT · OPEN SEAT

Woodbury County prosecutor and former Iowa state representative.



Chris McGowan

REPUBLICAN · OPEN SEAT

Military veteran and law school graduate from northwest Iowa; endorsed by President Trump.

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)

DAVE DAWSON

No public position found.

CHRIS MCGOWAN

Pledges to put "America First," stand up to China and ensure troops have the training, resources and equipment they need; no specific position on Iran, Israel or Ukraine.

[1] McGowan campaign: Vision

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

DAVE DAWSON

Supports passing the PRO Act to strengthen workers' right to unionize — citing his 20-plus years as an AFSCME member — and tougher antitrust enforcement; no stated position on AI.

[1] Dawson campaign: Issues

CHRIS MCGOWAN

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

DAVE DAWSON

Says he will "fight any effort to cut Medicaid," protect the Affordable Care Act, add a voluntary public option, raise the federal minimum wage and expand the Child Tax Credit.

[1] Dawson campaign: Issues

CHRIS MCGOWAN

No public position found.

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

DAVE DAWSON

Supports "restoring the full strength of the Voting Rights Act" and federal legislation to ensure equal access to the ballot, and says he will oppose attempts to "weaken voting rights."

[1] Dawson campaign: Issues

CHRIS MCGOWAN

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

DAVE DAWSON

No public position found.

CHRIS MCGOWAN

Lists "defending life from conception to natural death" among his commitments on faith, family and freedom.

[1] McGowan campaign: Vision

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

DAVE DAWSON

No public position found.

CHRIS MCGOWAN

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

DAVE DAWSON

No public position found.

CHRIS MCGOWAN

Says he will work with the Trump administration to "complete the job" of border enforcement, stop the flow of fentanyl and fight human trafficking, adding "a nation without borders is no nation at all."

[1] McGowan campaign: Vision

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

DAVE DAWSON

No public position found.

CHRIS MCGOWAN

Says freedoms "are derived from God — not government" and pledges to stand up to those who "attack and demean our sincerely held beliefs."

[1] McGowan campaign: Vision

CARE FOR CREATION

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

DAVE DAWSON

No public position found.

CHRIS MCGOWAN

Supports "restoring energy independence" and notes Iowans "generate the energy" that powers the country; no stated position on climate.

[1] McGowan campaign: Vision
[2] McGowan campaign: Home

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