2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · KENTUCKY · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. Senate

Open seat (Mitch McConnell retiring). Rep. Andy Barr won the GOP primary with 60.5%; Charles Booker won the Democratic primary with 46.8%.



Andy Barr

REPUBLICAN · OPEN SEAT

U.S. Representative for Kentucky's 6th District since 2013; attorney.



Charles Booker

DEMOCRAT · OPEN SEAT

Former Kentucky state representative; 2022 Democratic U.S. Senate nominee.

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)

ANDY BARR

Asked whether he would support U.S. ground troops in Iran: "I have full faith and confidence that this president will make the right decision."

[1] WKMS: GOP Senate debate (Mar. 2026)

VOTING RECORD

Iran war powers resolutions, Mar.–Sept. 2026 (six House votes): **No** Mar., Apr., May, June, Sept. · **Other**July

No Ukraine Support Act (H.R. 2913), June 2026 — authorizes support for Ukraine

CHARLES BOOKER

Would back a War Powers Resolution to end the Iran war, repeal the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs, and suspend military aid to Israel until a two-state solution is enacted.

[1] Booker campaign: Military

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

ANDY BARR

Has supported keeping right-to-work laws (2021); no public position on AI found.

[1] OnTheIssues: Andy Barr on jobs

VOTING RECORD

No Protect America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2550), Dec. 2025 — nullifies the executive order ending union bargaining for many federal workers

No Faster Labor Contracts Act (H.R. 5408), June 2026 — sets deadlines for reaching first union contracts

CHARLES BOOKER

Supports "a national moratorium on all new AI data center construction"; wants new energy projects built with union labor at prevailing wages.

[1] Booker campaign: Data centers
[2] Booker campaign: Energy

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

ANDY BARR

Campaign says he helped author the 2025 reconciliation law ("Big Beautiful Bill"), highlighting its tax provisions for seniors.

[1] Barr campaign: Issues

VOTING RECORD

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

No Breaking the Gridlock Act (H.R. 1834), Jan. 2026 — extends enhanced ACA premium tax credits through 2028

CHARLES BOOKER

Opposes the 2025 Medicaid cuts; would restore ACA subsidies and build on Kentucky's Medicaid expansion with a state public option.

[1] Booker campaign: Health care
[2] Booker campaign: Policies

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

ANDY BARR

Supports a voter ID mandate and the SAVE America Act requiring documentary proof of citizenship to vote.

[1] Branch: Andy Barr

VOTING RECORD

No Objection to counting Arizona's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 6, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 121–303)

No Objection to counting Pennsylvania's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 7, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 138–282)

No For the People Act (H.R. 1), Mar. 2021 — automatic and same-day voter registration, expanded mail and early voting, campaign-finance and ethics rules

No Presidential Election Reform Act (H.R. 8873), Sept. 2022 — says the vice president's role in counting electoral votes is ministerial and raises the threshold for objections

Yes SAVE America Act (House amendment to S. 1383), Feb. 2026 — requires documentary proof of citizenship to register and photo ID to vote in federal elections

CHARLES BOOKER

Has called for removing barriers to voting and restoring voting rights to people with past convictions (2021).

[1] OnTheIssues: Charles Booker on government reform

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

ANDY BARR

Signed a legal brief supporting the overturning of Roe v. Wade; voted in 2015 to ban abortion after 20 weeks except to save the mother's life.

[1] Branch: Andy Barr
[2] OnTheIssues: Andy Barr on abortion

VOTING RECORD

Yes Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 21), Jan. 2025 — requires care for infants born alive after an attempted abortion

Yes Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act (H.R. 6945), Jan. 2026 — lets states use TANF funds for pregnancy centers

CHARLES BOOKER

Says decisions on pregnancy, contraception, IVF and miscarriage care "belong to women, their families and their doctors, not Washington."

[1] Booker campaign: Health care

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

ANDY BARR

No public position found.

CHARLES BOOKER

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

ANDY BARR

Says "we must deport all criminal illegals and secure the border," backing the wall and Remain in Mexico; says border security allows "streamlining legal immigration programs."

[1] Barr campaign: Issues
[2] WKMS: GOP Senate debate (Mar. 2026)

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

No Haiti TPS bill (H.R. 1689), Apr. 2026 — requires temporary protected status for Haitians

CHARLES BOOKER

Has called for abolishing ICE and for "a true immigration system that is rooted in humanity"; supports a path to citizenship.

[1] WKMS: Democratic Senate debate (Mar. 2026)
[2] OnTheIssues: Charles Booker on immigration

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

ANDY BARR

Voted in 2015 to reauthorize the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship school voucher program (SOAR Act).

[1] OnTheIssues: Andy Barr on education

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

CHARLES BOOKER

No public position found.

CARE FOR CREATION

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

ANDY BARR

Has "a plan to bring back clean, beautiful coal"; opposes ESG mandates and what he calls backdoor Green New Deal efforts through financial regulators.

[1] Barr campaign: Issues

VOTING RECORD

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

Yes Homeowner Energy Freedom Act (H.R. 4758), Feb. 2026 — repeals home-electrification rebates from the 2022 climate law

CHARLES BOOKER

Backs an "all-of-the-above energy strategy," interstate renewable power sales, abandoned mine cleanup and protecting miners' black lung benefits.

[1] Booker campaign: Energy

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