

Governor

Open seat (Gov. Janet Mills term-limited).

Rick Bennett

INDEPENDENT · OPEN SEAT

State senator from Oxford County and former Maine Senate president; a longtime Republican running as an independent.

Bobby Charles

REPUBLICAN · OPEN SEAT

Lawyer and former assistant U.S. secretary of state for narcotics and law enforcement; former Naval intelligence officer.

Hannah Pingree

DEMOCRAT · OPEN SEAT

Former speaker of the Maine House and former director of the governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.

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)

RICK BENNETT

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

RECORD IN OFFICE

No SP 163 (2003), joint resolution urging the President to pursue diplomacy and weapons inspections in Iraq (Senate adoption as introduced)

BOBBY CHARLES

No public position found.

HANNAH PINGREE

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

RECORD IN OFFICE

Yes SP 163 (2003), joint resolution urging the President to pursue diplomacy and weapons inspections in Iraq (House adoption as amended)

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

RICK BENNETT

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

RECORD IN OFFICE

No LD 151 (2021), allowing farmworkers to organize for collective bargaining (Senate concurrence vote)

BOBBY CHARLES

No public position found.

HANNAH PINGREE

Proposes a “people-first” AI strategy, including a Workers Council on AI and tax credits for employers that retrain workers rather than replace them; supports stronger worker bargaining power.

[1] Pingree campaign: Economic Opportunity

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

RICK BENNETT

Proposes paying MaineCare providers on time, a \$2 million medical-debt relief program, and a “real path toward universal care” by activating the Maine Health Care Board.

[1] Bennett campaign: Make Health Care Affordable

BOBBY CHARLES

Calls for “a complete forensic audit” of MaineCare and pledges to work with the Justice Department on Medicaid fraud allegations. Proposes abolishing the state income tax.

[1] Spectrum News: Charles to work with Trump on fraud allegations (June 2026)

[2] Charles campaign: Issues

HANNAH PINGREE

Proposes a state-backed public health insurance option, streamlined SNAP and MaineCare enrollment, and lower drug costs; criticizes federal Medicaid and ACA subsidy cuts.

[1] Pingree campaign: Affordability

[2] Pingree campaign: Health Care

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](#)

RICK BENNETT

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

RECORD IN OFFICE

No LD 1619 (2023), allowing abortion after viability when a physician deems it necessary

BOBBY CHARLES

No public position found.

HANNAH PINGREE

Health plan pledges to “ensure all Maine people can access and afford the full range of reproductive health care” and expand rural maternity care.

[1] [Pingree 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](#)

RICK BENNETT

No public position found.

BOBBY CHARLES

No public position found.

HANNAH PINGREE

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](#)

RICK BENNETT

In 2025, broke with Republicans to vote for a bill limiting local police cooperation with ICE.

[1] [Portland Press Herald: Bennett announces independent run \(June 2025\)](#)

BOBBY CHARLES

Pledges “strict public safety and immigration policies” and supports ICE enforcement in Maine. Reportedly said he would ask federal officials for ICE and U.S. Marshals at polling places; his campaign said he will seek all legal means to ensure fair elections.

[1] [Charles campaign: Issues](#)

[2] [WGME: Charles reportedly wants ICE agents at Maine polls](#)

[3] [Charles campaign: Cut Crime plan \(PDF\)](#)

HANNAH PINGREE

After the fatal ICE shooting in Biddeford, called for an independent, Maine-based investigation, noted agents weren’t wearing body cameras, and said “ICE out of Maine.”

[1] [Pingree campaign: Statement on the killing of Johan Sebastián Guerrero](#)

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](#)

RICK BENNETT

No public position found.

BOBBY CHARLES

Education plan backs “educational freedom” and curriculum transparency, with a focus on reading, math and science.

[1] [Charles campaign: Issues](#)

HANNAH PINGREE

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

RECORD IN OFFICE

Yes LD 1020 (2009), allowing same-sex civil marriage with exemptions for clergy and religious institutions

CARE FOR CREATION

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

RICK BENNETT
Proposes a state Maine Generation Authority to own renewable generation and storage, plus expanded weatherization. Co-sponsored the Maine Climate Superfund Act to make fossil fuel companies pay for climate damages.
[\[1\] Bennett campaign: Make Energy Affordable](#)
[\[2\] Bennett campaign: Rick's Results](#)
RECORD IN OFFICE
No LD 99 (2021), requiring the state to divest assets invested in the fossil fuel industry

BOBBY CHARLES
Energy plan aims to “cut energy costs by 30 to 40 percent” by ending “costly political mandates,” putting energy experts in charge and restoring reliable power.
[\[1\] Charles campaign: Issues](#)
[\[2\] Charles campaign: Energy Crisis plan \(PDF\)](#)

HANNAH PINGREE
Pledges 100% clean energy by 2040, a Maine Climate Superfund Act, and a moratorium on AI data centers until they pay their own way; co-chaired the Maine Climate Council.
[\[1\] Pingree campaign: Climate & Energy](#)
RECORD IN OFFICE
Yes LD 845 (2003), An Act To Provide Leadership in Addressing the Threat of Climate Change

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