2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · MASSACHUSETTS · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. Senate

Sen. Ed Markey seeks reelection after defeating Rep. Seth Moulton in the Sept. 1 Democratic primary, 65.6% to 34.4%. Rated Solid Democratic by Cook Political Report (Oct 2026).



John Deaton

REPUBLICAN · CHALLENGER

Attorney and Marine Corps veteran; 2024 Republican nominee against Sen. Elizabeth Warren.



Ed Markey

DEMOCRAT · INCUMBENT

U.S. senator since 2013; represented Massachusetts in the U.S. House from 1976 to 2013.

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)

JOHN DEATON

Breaks with Trump on the Iran war, per WBUR; says "I will not write blank checks" for foreign aid. Says international leaders like Benjamin Netanyahu must be held accountable.

[1] WBUR: John Deaton's 2026 Senate run (Oct. 2026)
[2] Deaton campaign: Issues
[3] GBH: Deaton on policy debates and global tensions (Jan. 2026)

ED MARKEY

Calls the Iran conflict "Trump's war of choice" that "Congress never authorized"; says "I will not vote for one more penny to fund this illegal war" and urges a diplomatic solution.

[1] Markey Senate office: Statement on fifth Iran war powers vote (Apr. 2026)

VOTING RECORD

Yes	Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 86), June 2026
Yes	Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 89), Sept. 2026
No	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

JOHN DEATON

Proposes a federal AI standard with a three-year "safe harbor," stricter rules for the largest AI operators, and action against training AI on stolen content; wants AI safeguards for seniors. Endorsed by IBEW Local 326.

[1] Deaton campaign: Issues
[2] NBC Boston: Markey and Deaton clash on debate stage (Oct. 2026)
[3] Deaton campaign homepage

ED MARKEY

Lead sponsor of the AI Civil Rights Act, reintroduced in December 2025, to bar algorithmic discrimination and set guardrails on AI decisions; wants AI executives to testify before Congress. Endorsed by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

[1] Markey Senate office: AI Civil Rights Act reintroduced (Dec. 2025)
[2] Boston.com: Markey–Deaton debate (Oct. 2026)
[3] Markey campaign: Massachusetts AFL-CIO endorsement

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

JOHN DEATON

Calls affordable health care "a human right" and would break up large insurers and pharmacy benefit managers; opposes Medicare for All. In 2024 said enhanced ACA tax credits should not be allowed to expire.

[1] Deaton campaign: Issues
[2] WBUR: Markey–Deaton debate (Oct. 2026)
[3] OnTheIssues: John Deaton

ED MARKEY

Opposed the 2025 reconciliation law, citing about $1 trillion in Medicaid cuts and reductions to the ACA, and blamed Republicans for a looming lapse in SNAP benefits during the 2025 shutdown. Supports Medicare for All.

[1] WBUR: Markey–Deaton debate (Oct. 2026)
[2] Markey campaign: MassLive on SNAP cuts

VOTING RECORD

No 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

JOHN DEATON

Supports voter identification and says he opposes efforts that make voting harder for eligible citizens.

[1] Deaton campaign: Issues

ED MARKEY

Says Trump sought "to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election" and that Jan. 6 pardons amount to "condoning political violence." Says Trump's SAVE America Act push is about "stealing" the midterms.

[1] Markey Senate office: Statement on five years since Jan. 6 (Jan. 2026)
[2] Washington Examiner: Markey on the SAVE America Act (Aug. 2026)

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)

Yes For the People Act (S. 2093), June 2021 — vote to begin debate (failed, 50–50; 60 needed)

No 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)

No 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

JOHN DEATON

"I strongly disagree with the Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs." Supports codifying Roe's protections, would vote against a federal abortion ban, and supports later abortions for fatal fetal anomalies or to protect the mother's life.

[1] Deaton campaign: Issues

ED MARKEY

Pledges to "restore Roe nationwide"; in 2025 joined Senate Democrats in introducing the Women's Health Protection Act to "guarantee access to abortion nationwide." Endorsed by Reproductive Freedom for All.

[1] Markey campaign: Reproductive Freedom for All endorsement (Aug. 2026)

VOTING RECORD

No 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

JOHN DEATON

No public position found.

ED MARKEY

Joined Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Ayanna Pressley in 2023 to reintroduce legislation ending the federal death penalty.

[1] Markey Senate office: Bill to end federal death penalty (July 2023)

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

JOHN DEATON

"I reject both blanket amnesty and mass deportation." Backs a bipartisan border bill, more legal immigration and an earned path to legal status for Dreamers; says ICE "needs to be reformed, not abolished."

[1] Deaton campaign: Issues
[2] WBUR: John Deaton's 2026 Senate run (Oct. 2026)

ED MARKEY

Calls for abolishing ICE and opposed further DHS funding: "We cannot and we must not vote to send a single nickel to this lawless organization." Introduced a bill barring ICE and CBP from using facial recognition and other biometric surveillance.

[1] Markey campaign: Truthout on abolishing ICE (Jan. 2026)
[2] Markey campaign: ICE Out of Our Faces Act

VOTING RECORD

No Laken Riley Act (S. 5), Jan. 2025 — requires detention of undocumented immigrants charged with theft and certain crimes

No 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

JOHN DEATON

Says he will "expand school choice and vocational training" so every child has a practical path to success.

[1] Ballotpedia: John Deaton (campaign themes)

ED MARKEY

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

No 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

JOHN DEATON

Opposes the Green New Deal; backs an "all-of-the-above" approach including nuclear (small modular reactors), natural gas, solar, wind and geothermal. Says "I'm not a climate denier at all."

[1] Deaton campaign: Issues
[2] WBUR: Markey–Deaton debate (Oct. 2026)
[3] GBH: Deaton on policy debates and global tensions (Jan. 2026)

ED MARKEY

A key sponsor of the Green New Deal; introduced Green New Deal bills for schools and health care, and says the administration's halt of offshore wind projects off Massachusetts should be reversed.

[1] Markey campaign: Green New Deal bills for schools and health care
[2] WBUR: Markey–Deaton debate (Oct. 2026)

VOTING RECORD

No Resolution overturning EPA approval of California vehicle-emission rules (H.J.Res. 87), May 2025

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