2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · MISSISSIPPI · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. Senate

Incumbent Cindy Hyde-Smith seeks a second full term. Rated Likely Republican by Cook Political Report (Oct 2026). Independent Ty Pinkins polled 6–7% in 2026 surveys.



Scott Colom

DEMOCRAT · CHALLENGER

District attorney for Mississippi's 16th Circuit Court District since 2016.



Cindy Hyde-Smith

REPUBLICAN · INCUMBENT

U.S. Senator since 2018; former Mississippi agriculture commissioner.



Ty Pinkins

INDEPENDENT · CHALLENGER

Attorney and 21-year Army veteran; 2024 Democratic 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)

SCOTT COLOM

Would "require a vote of Congress before America goes to war"; on Iran has said, "I don't know what the objective is."

[1] Scott Colom campaign: Priorities
[2] Guides.vote: 2026 Mississippi U.S. Senate voters guide

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Says she "stands with Israel" and supports Israel's war in Gaza.

[1] Hyde-Smith campaign: Israel
[2] Mississippi Free Press: Meet the U.S. Senate candidates

VOTING RECORD

No Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 86), June 2026
No Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 89), Sept. 2026
Yes Russia sanctions bill (H.R. 5334), Aug. 2026

TY PINKINS

Criticizes both parties over "war after war after war"; said in 2024 the U.S. must support Ukraine against Russia.

[1] Mississippi Free Press: Meet the U.S. Senate candidates
[2] OnTheIssues: Ty Pinkins on war and peace

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

SCOTT COLOM

Seeks a pause on new data centers until companies pay for their power and water and hire Mississippi workers; wants "a real person" reviewing AI decisions.

[1] Scott Colom campaign: Priorities
[2] Scott Colom campaign: Making AI Work for Mississippi

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Said in 2020 that wage policy should be left to state and local leaders. No stated position found on AI.

[1] OnTheIssues: Cindy Hyde-Smith on jobs

TY PINKINS

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

SCOTT COLOM

Pledges to "vote to cancel the Medicaid cuts," restore ACA tax credits and support Medicaid expansion; would raise the minimum wage and tie it to living costs.

[1] Scott Colom campaign: Priorities
[2] WLOX: Senate candidates on health care and economy (Sep 2026)

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Wants the ACA repealed and replaced without "expanding the government's role"; says removing fraud will lower health costs; stands by the 2025 reconciliation law.

[1] Hyde-Smith campaign: Health care
[2] WLOX: Senate candidates on health care and economy (Sep 2026)

VOTING RECORD

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

TY PINKINS

Supports universal health care and Medicaid expansion: "Expand Medicaid, protect Medicare."

[1] WLOX: Senate candidates on health care and economy (Sep 2026)
[2] Mississippi Free Press: Meet the U.S. Senate candidates

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

SCOTT COLOM

Campaign has focused on protecting ballot access, particularly in historically Black communities; opposes Mississippi's 2026 voter citizenship-verification law.

[1] OnTheIssues: Scott Colom on government reform
[2] Guides.vote: 2026 Mississippi U.S. Senate voters guide

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Supports voter ID and proof of citizenship to register for federal elections, saying voter ID "is lawful, it is fair, and it works."

[1] Guides.vote: 2026 Mississippi U.S. Senate voters guide
[2] OnTheIssues: Cindy Hyde-Smith on government reform

VOTING RECORD

Yes Objection to counting Arizona's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 6, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 6–93)

Yes Objection to counting Pennsylvania's 2020 electoral votes, Jan. 7, 2021 — a Yes vote supported the objection (failed, 7–92)

No For the People Act (S. 2093), June 2021 — vote to begin debate (failed, 50–50; 60 needed)

Yes 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)

Yes 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)

TY PINKINS

Supports voting rights and has said "we must make voting as easy and as efficient as possible" (2024).

[1] Mississippi Free Press: Meet the U.S. Senate candidates
[2] OnTheIssues: Ty Pinkins 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

SCOTT COLOM

Has said "I've always been pro-life" while also saying he would "trust" women to make their own choices; supports IVF access.

[1] Guides.vote: 2026 Mississippi U.S. Senate voters guide

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Says all children, "including the unborn," have a God-given right to life and opposes taxpayer-funded abortion; says she supports IVF access.

[1] Hyde-Smith campaign: Defending life
[2] Mississippi Free Press: Meet the U.S. Senate candidates

VOTING RECORD

Yes Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (S. 6), Jan. 2025 — vote to advance the bill (failed, 52–47; 60 needed)

TY PINKINS

Has said abortion is "between women, her doctor, and God" and supports expanded access to reproductive health care (2024).

[1] OnTheIssues: Ty Pinkins on abortion

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

SCOTT COLOM

No public position found.

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

No public position found.

TY PINKINS

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

SCOTT COLOM

Pledges to "work to secure the border and enforce our immigration laws."

[1] Scott Colom campaign: Priorities

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Says "illegal immigration must come to an end" and supports President Trump's plans to build a wall.

[1] Hyde-Smith campaign: Stopping illegal immigration

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

TY PINKINS

Calls the immigration system "broken" and supports legal immigration and a pathway to citizenship for some undocumented immigrants.

[1] Mississippi Free Press: Meet the U.S. Senate candidates

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

SCOTT COLOM

No public position found.

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Says "Mississippi does not need Washington telling it how to raise and educate its children" and backs parent and local control of education.

[1] Hyde-Smith campaign: 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

TY PINKINS

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

SCOTT COLOM

No public position found.

CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Supported the first Trump EPA's deregulatory approach (2018) and has criticized the "Democrats' radical Green New Deal climate agenda."

[1] OnTheIssues: Cindy Hyde-Smith on environment
[2] Guides.vote: 2026 Mississippi U.S. Senate voters guide

VOTING RECORD

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

TY PINKINS

Has said "the next thing I think is coming is hydro power" and listed sustainable, resilient infrastructure among his focus areas (2024).

[1] OnTheIssues: Ty Pinkins on energy

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