2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · MISSOURI · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 7

Incumbent Eric Burlison (R) seeks reelection. District lines redrawn for 2026 (map subject to legal dispute per Ballotpedia).



Eric Burlison

REPUBLICAN · INCUMBENT

U.S. Representative since 2023; former Missouri state senator.



Missi Hesketh

DEMOCRAT · CHALLENGER

Teacher and former mayor and alderwoman of Forsyth, Missouri.

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)

ERIC BURLISON

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

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

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

MISSI HESKETH

No public position found.

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

ERIC BURLISON

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

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

MISSI HESKETH

Says "it is not the role of government to develop AI," opposes AI data centers under a "Farms not Data Centers" priority, and supports preserving "the right to unionize."

[1] Ballotpedia: Missi Hesketh (Candidate Connection survey)
[2] Missi for MO

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

ERIC BURLISON

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

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

MISSI HESKETH

Says "our healthcare system is broken" and calls for caps on costs of services, prescriptions and premiums; supports "Medicare for all who want it."

[1] Ballotpedia: Missi Hesketh (Candidate Connection survey)

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

ERIC BURLISON

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

VOTING RECORD

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

MISSI HESKETH

Supports "continuing absentee voting and mail-in ballots for those unable to participate on election day" and lists fair elections and ending gerrymandering as priorities.

[1] Ballotpedia: Missi Hesketh (Candidate Connection survey)

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

ERIC BURLISON

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

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

MISSI HESKETH

Says "we need to codify Roe and give women and their partners the autonomy they need and deserve."

[1] Ballotpedia: Missi Hesketh (Candidate Connection survey)

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

ERIC BURLISON

No public position found.

MISSI HESKETH

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

ERIC BURLISON

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

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

MISSI HESKETH

No public position found.

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

ERIC BURLISON

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

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

MISSI HESKETH

Says "we need to ensure public education is preserved" and backs investing in rural education; no stated position on vouchers or religious liberty.

[1] Ballotpedia: Missi Hesketh (Candidate Connection survey)

CARE FOR CREATION

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

ERIC BURLISON

No campaign statement found. See voting record below.

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

MISSI HESKETH

Says "we need to protect our water, air, and soil — there is no planet B."

[1] Ballotpedia: Missi Hesketh (Candidate Connection survey)

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