2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · NEW JERSEY · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. Senate

Incumbent Cory Booker (D) seeks a third full term; Justin Murphy won the June 2 Republican primary with 33.4%. Rated Solid Democratic by Cook Political Report (Oct 2026).



Cory Booker

DEMOCRAT · INCUMBENT

U.S. Senator since 2013; former mayor of Newark.



Justin Murphy

REPUBLICAN · CHALLENGER

Attorney, U.S. Navy veteran and former Tabernacle Township deputy mayor.

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)

CORY BOOKER

Opposes the Iran war and introduced Senate war powers resolutions, calling it "the choice of one reckless individual" with "no oversight, no hearings."

[1] Booker: Senate Six on Iran war
[2] Booker: second war powers resolution

VOTING RECORD

Yes Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 86), June 2026
Yes Iran war powers resolution (H.Con.Res. 89), Sept. 2026
Yes Russia sanctions bill (H.R. 5334), Aug. 2026

JUSTIN MURPHY

Names China, Iran and North Korea as threats, backs "engaging with the Chinese from a position of strength," and wants a military able to fight two wars at once.

[1] Murphy campaign site
[2] WHYY: GOP Senate candidates
[3] Ballotpedia: Justin Murphy

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

CORY BOOKER

Cosponsored 2026 bills requiring AI chatbots to verify users' ages, studying AI's environmental impact and letting workers in labor disputes receive unemployment benefits.

[1] Congressional Record Index 2026: Booker

JUSTIN MURPHY

Says "tens-of-thousands of union blue-collar jobs" can be created by expanding domestic energy production.

[1] Murphy campaign site

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

CORY BOOKER

In his record 25-hour 2025 Senate speech, said "They are trying to gut Medicaid and Medicare," "all to pay for tax cuts to billionaires and corporations"; cosponsored a 2026 bill to raise the minimum wage.

[1] Capital B: Booker speech on Medicaid
[2] Congressional Record Index 2026: Booker

VOTING RECORD

No One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), July 2025 — tax cuts with Medicaid and SNAP changes

JUSTIN MURPHY

Opposes government-run health care, favors Health Savings Accounts and a Medicare and Medicaid fraud unit, and pledges seniors "the best Medicare program available"; would replace the income tax with a flat tax.

[1] Ballotpedia: Justin Murphy
[2] Murphy campaign site

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

CORY BOOKER

Cosponsored 2026 measures to repeal President Trump's executive order on citizenship verification in federal elections and to expand youth access to voting.

[1] Congressional Record Index 2026: Booker

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)

JUSTIN MURPHY

No public position found.

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

CORY BOOKER

Cosponsored 2026 bills to bar states from restricting travel for abortion and to protect nationwide access to IVF and other assisted reproductive technology.

[1] Congressional Record Index 2026: Booker

VOTING RECORD

No Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (S. 6), Jan. 2025 — vote to advance the bill (failed, 52–47; 60 needed)

JUSTIN MURPHY

Says he is "pro-life" and believes life begins at conception, with exceptions for rape, incest and the mother's life; opposes "tax dollars funding abortion."

[1] Murphy campaign site
[2] Ballotpedia: Justin Murphy

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

CORY BOOKER

Cosponsor of the Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act, reintroduced in May 2026 to end the federal death penalty.

[1] Durbin: bill to end federal death penalty

JUSTIN MURPHY

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

CORY BOOKER

Introduced a 2025 bill requiring immigration officers to visibly display identification during public encounters, saying ICE agents often wear unmarked tactical gear.

[1] News 12: Booker ICE ID bill

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

JUSTIN MURPHY

Would finish the southern border wall, secure the northern border, deploy the military to the border, withhold federal aid from sanctuary jurisdictions and deport criminal noncitizens.

[1] Murphy campaign site
[2] Ballotpedia: Justin Murphy

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

CORY BOOKER

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

JUSTIN MURPHY

Supports "school choice for parents and competition between all schools," calls parental rights "the civil rights issues of our time" and would abolish the federal Department of Education.

[1] Murphy campaign site
[2] Ballotpedia: Justin Murphy

CARE FOR CREATION

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

CORY BOOKER

Cosponsored 2026 bills on climate risks to mothers and babies, preparing health care for the climate crisis and limiting plastic pellet pollution; his campaign says he takes no money from fossil fuel executives.

[1] Congressional Record Index 2026: Booker
[2] Booker campaign site

VOTING RECORD

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

JUSTIN MURPHY

Strongly supports expanding nuclear power and domestic oil production, vows to "fight for energy independence" and wants to keep the Jersey Shore "windmill free."

[1] Murphy campaign site
[2] WHYY: GOP Senate candidates
[3] Ballotpedia: Justin Murphy

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