2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · NEW MEXICO · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. Senate

Luján is seeking a second term. Marker won the Republican nomination as a write-in candidate in the June 2 primary. Rated Solid Democratic by Cook Political Report (Oct 2026).



Ben Ray Luján

DEMOCRAT · INCUMBENT

U.S. senator since 2021; former U.S. Representative and member of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission.



Larry Marker

REPUBLICAN · CHALLENGER

Self-employed oil and gas businessman from Roswell; 2024 state Senate candidate.

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)

BEN RAY LUJÁN

Calls the Iran war "illegal" because it lacked congressional approval, saying "the power to declare war belongs to Congress."

[1] Sen. Luján statement on Iran war (Mar. 4, 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
Yes Russia sanctions bill (H.R. 5334), Aug. 2026

LARRY MARKER

Supports "decisive action" to stop Iran's nuclear program but wants a defined military and diplomatic endpoint rather than open-ended involvement.

[1] Albuquerque Journal: Larry Marker Q&A (Oct. 2, 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

BEN RAY LUJÁN

Has said "unions built the middle class" and sponsored legislation to strengthen union organizing; backs federal investment in workforce training and manufacturing.

[1] OnTheIssues: Ben Ray Luján
[2] Luján campaign: Delivering for New Mexicans

LARRY MARKER

Supports "common-sense guardrails" on AI that do not stifle innovation, set mainly at the federal level "to avoid a patchwork of conflicting state rules."

[1] Albuquerque Journal: Larry Marker Q&A (Oct. 2, 2026)

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

BEN RAY LUJÁN

Opposed the 2025 budget law's SNAP cuts and is working to reverse them; backs permanently extending ACA premium tax credits and capping child-care costs at 7% of family income.

[1] Luján campaign: Making New Mexico More Affordable

VOTING RECORD

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

LARRY MARKER

Says Luján leans too heavily on "welfare-type programs"; wants New Mexico less dependent on federal dollars through energy development and private investment.

[1] Santa Fe New Mexican: Marker interview (May 2026)
[2] Albuquerque Journal: Larry Marker Q&A (Oct. 2, 2026)

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

BEN RAY LUJÁN

In 2012–2015, opposed photo-ID requirements as vote suppression and backed automatic voter registration and 15 days of early voting in every state.

[1] OnTheIssues: Ben Ray Luján

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)

LARRY MARKER

Strongly supports voter ID and proof-of-citizenship requirements, saying "free and fair elections are the foundation of our republic."

[1] Albuquerque Journal: Larry Marker Q&A (Oct. 2, 2026)

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

BEN RAY LUJÁN

Has said abortion should remain "safe and legal" and opposed overturning Roe v. Wade (2020 statements).

[1] OnTheIssues: Ben Ray Luján

VOTING RECORD

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

LARRY MARKER

In 2022 sued state officials over New Mexico's repeal of its old abortion ban, arguing "the rights of the baby are not considered."

[1] Santa Fe New Mexican: Marker abortion lawsuit (2022)

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

BEN RAY LUJÁN

No public position found.

LARRY MARKER

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

BEN RAY LUJÁN

Says "Trump's rogue ICE has killed American citizens in our streets"; has introduced legislation mandating training and accountability for ICE and CBP officers; has backed a path to citizenship for Dreamers.

[1] Luján campaign: Keeping New Mexicans Safe
[2] OnTheIssues: Ben Ray Luján

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

LARRY MARKER

Calls himself an "America First" candidate who agrees with many of President Trump's immigration policies; supports Border Patrol and opposes "policies that shield violent offenders."

[1] Santa Fe New Mexican: Marker interview (May 2026)
[2] Marker for Senate

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

BEN RAY LUJÁN

In 2015, opposed private and religious school voucher programs.

[1] OnTheIssues: Ben Ray Luján

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

LARRY MARKER

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

BEN RAY LUJÁN

Supports "historic clean energy tax credits and efficiency rebates"; led the bipartisan REGROW Act to plug abandoned oil and gas wells and reduce methane.

[1] Luján campaign: Making New Mexico More Affordable
[2] Luján campaign: Delivering for New Mexicans

VOTING RECORD

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

LARRY MARKER

Wants to make New Mexico "a leader in oil, gas, hydrogen, and nuclear innovation" and end federal "permitting paralysis"; generally opposes selling public lands.

[1] Marker for Senate
[2] Albuquerque Journal: Larry Marker Q&A (Oct. 2, 2026)

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