2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · NEW YORK · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. House, District 12

Open seat (Jerry Nadler, D, retiring).



Micah Lasher

DEMOCRAT · OPEN SEAT

New York State Assembly member since 2025.



Caroline Shinkle

REPUBLICAN · OPEN SEAT

Attorney (MIT, Harvard Law School); Republican nominee, also on the Conservative line.

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)

MICAH LASHER

Criticizes recent U.S. military action against Iran and pledges to "Prioritize diplomacy, de-escalation, and long-term stability."

[1] Ballotpedia: Micah Lasher

CAROLINE SHINKLE

Cites Reagan's 1986 Reykjavik summit as a model for diplomacy and describes a challenge from "anti-Western forces" in U.S. institutions.

[1] Ballotpedia: Caroline Shinkle

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

MICAH LASHER

Supports the PRO Act, a national wage insurance program, a moratorium on new data centers and AI rules on hiring, surveillance and deepfakes.

[1] Ballotpedia: Micah Lasher

CAROLINE SHINKLE

Emphasizes "Rewarding work" and "protecting the paycheck," including lowering taxes on W-2 workers.

[1] Ballotpedia: Caroline Shinkle

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

MICAH LASHER

Supports "Medicare for All, or a similar plan that ensures universal care," expanded child care and an inflation-indexed federal minimum wage.

[1] Ballotpedia: Micah Lasher

CAROLINE SHINKLE

No public position found.

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

MICAH LASHER

Supports the For the People Act and John Lewis voting rights legislation to expand voting access.

[1] Ballotpedia: Micah Lasher

CAROLINE SHINKLE

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

MICAH LASHER

Pledges to "Fight to pass the Women's Health Protection Act," opposes a national abortion ban and supports repealing the Hyde Amendment.

[1] Ballotpedia: Micah Lasher

CAROLINE SHINKLE

No public position found.

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

MICAH LASHER

No public position found.

CAROLINE SHINKLE

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

MICAH LASHER

Pledges to "Fight to abolish ICE" and supports due-process protections for detained noncitizens.

[1] Ballotpedia: Micah Lasher

CAROLINE SHINKLE

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

MICAH LASHER

Supports the Do No Harm Act to "restore the original intent of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act"; emphasizes public schools.

[1] Ballotpedia: Micah Lasher

CAROLINE SHINKLE

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

MICAH LASHER

Pledges to "Prioritize supporting our clean energy transition and hold big polluters accountable" and to rejoin the Paris climate accord.

[1] Ballotpedia: Micah Lasher

CAROLINE SHINKLE

Lists "addressing the global environmental challenges through pragmatic positive solutions" as a goal, without specific policies.

[1] Ballotpedia: Caroline Shinkle

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