2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · TENNESSEE · LETTERS FROM LEO

U.S. Senate

Incumbent Republican Bill Hagerty, unopposed in the Aug. 6 primary, faces Democrat Marquita Bradshaw, who won her primary with 54.7%. Several independents are also on the ballot.



Marquita Bradshaw

DEMOCRAT · CHALLENGER

Environmental justice organizer and founder of Sowing Justice; 2020 Democratic Senate nominee.



Bill Hagerty

REPUBLICAN · INCUMBENT

U.S. Senator since 2021; former U.S. ambassador to Japan and Tennessee economic development commissioner.

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)

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

No public position found.

BILL HAGERTY

Said in October 2026 that "the Iranians need to wake up" and will not get an "Obama-Biden break"; said Putin "needs to learn to work with us, not against us."

[1] Hagerty on Fox Business (Oct. 15, 2026)

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

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

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

Has called for "a national moratorium on data centers" (July 2026); backs a living wage, "fair wages" and green jobs.

[1] OnTheIssues: Marquita Bradshaw
[2] Bradshaw campaign: Priorities
[3] Ballotpedia: Marquita Bradshaw

BILL HAGERTY

Urges passage of the Ratepayer Protection Act so tech companies, not families, pay the power costs of AI data centers; calls "blanket data center moratoriums" the wrong answer.

[1] Hagerty: Ratepayer Protection Act (Sept. 30, 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

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

Would expand Medicaid, which she says would save rural hospitals, and calls for "Expanding Medicare for all," a living wage and a revised poverty index.

[1] Ballotpedia: Marquita Bradshaw (2026 survey)

BILL HAGERTY

Backed Medicaid work requirements in the 2025 reconciliation law, saying "the disincentives to work are a real problem" and that taxpayers should not cover able-bodied adults or noncitizens.

[1] Fox News: Republicans praise Medicaid work requirement

VOTING RECORD

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

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

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

Says "every eligible Tennessean should have equal access to the ballot" and backs independent redistricting.

[1] Bradshaw campaign: Priorities

BILL HAGERTY

Pushes the SAVE America Act requiring proof of citizenship to vote, saying voting "belongs to American citizens alone"; says states would keep authority over how elections are run.

[1] Hagerty release on SAVE America Act (Mar. 18, 2026)
[2] Washington Times (Feb. 8, 2026)

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)

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)

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

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

Lists "reproductive freedom" as a priority and says health coverage should include reproductive health care.

[1] Ballotpedia: Marquita Bradshaw (2026 survey)

BILL HAGERTY

After Dobbs, said "we have a moral duty to protect unborn children" and that the ruling returns abortion decisions to voters and their elected representatives.

[1] Hagerty statement on Dobbs (2022)

VOTING RECORD

Did not vote Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (S. 6), Jan. 2025 — vote to advance the bill (failed, 52–47; 60 needed)

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

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

No public position found.

BILL HAGERTY

Has said he supports the death penalty for human trafficking (2020).

[1] OnTheIssues: Bill Hagerty

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

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

Has supported protections for DACA recipients and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants (2020); her 2026 materials do not address immigration.

[1] OnTheIssues: Marquita Bradshaw

BILL HAGERTY

Campaign lists "Stop illegal immigration" as a top priority; he has said he opposes amnesty, DACA and sanctuary cities.

[1] Hagerty campaign site
[2] OnTheIssues: Bill Hagerty

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

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

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

No public position found.

BILL HAGERTY

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

CARE FOR CREATION

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

MARQUITA BRADSHAW

Calls for "Bold Environmental and Climate Action," green infrastructure and a just transition to "break our dependency on fossil" fuels.

[1] Ballotpedia: Marquita Bradshaw (2026 survey)
[2] Bradshaw campaign: Priorities

BILL HAGERTY

Says the U.S. must expand power generation to meet AI demand — "we need more energy" — and that localities should decide "when, where, and whether" to permit data centers.

[1] Hagerty: Ratepayer Protection Act (Sept. 30, 2026)

VOTING RECORD

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

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