2026 CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE · UTAH · LETTERS FROM LEO

# U.S. House, District 1

Open seat (Burgess Owens not running here). District lines redrawn for 2026 after a court-ordered map. Cook PVI D+12.



## Ben McAdams

**DEMOCRAT · OPEN SEAT**

Former U.S. Representative (2019–2021), Salt Lake County mayor and Utah state senator.



## Riley Owen

**REPUBLICAN · OPEN SEAT**

Navy Reserve intelligence officer; former White House trade policy aide who has worked in shipbuilding, critical minerals and drones.

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 MCADAMS**

Says Trump "has weakened America's standing in the world by picking fights with foreign friends" and pledges to "strengthen, not weaken, our alliances."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ben McAdams

**RILEY OWEN**

*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

**BEN MCADAMS**

Calls for "a clear national framework for AI governance" protecting safety, privacy and transparency, and says schools should treat "AI fluency as a basic form of literacy."

[1] Don't let AI become the next educational divide (Mar. 2026)

**RILEY OWEN**

*No public position found.*

### 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 MCADAMS**

Says "nobody should have to choose between paying the rent and seeing a doctor" and pledges to lower costs by "protecting coverage" and "reducing prescription drug prices."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ben McAdams

**RILEY OWEN**

*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

**BEN MCADAMS**

Says "democracy only works when leaders respect fair elections, independent institutions, and the will of the voters"; his campaign says he filed a court brief "to defend voters and fair elections."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ben McAdams
[2] Ben McAdams for Utah

**RILEY OWEN**

*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

**BEN MCADAMS**

*No public position found.*

**RILEY OWEN**

*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

**BEN MCADAMS**

*No public position found.*

**RILEY OWEN**

*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 MCADAMS**

Criticizes "ICE's lawless and dangerous raids" and immigrants "ripped from their families without an ounce of due process"; pledges to "dismantle the current enforcement model."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ben McAdams
[2] Ben McAdams for Utah: Priorities

**RILEY OWEN**

*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

**BEN MCADAMS**

*No public position found.*

**RILEY OWEN**

*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 MCADAMS**

Calls climate change "an existential threat that demands our immediate attention" and pledges to "restore and protect the Great Salt Lake."

[1] Ballotpedia: Ben McAdams

**RILEY OWEN**

*No public position found.*

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