



Rob Sand
DEMOCRAT



Zach Lahn
REPUBLICAN

Choosing Leaders Who Cultivate a Culture of Life

2026 IOWA GOVERNOR'S RACE · CANDIDATE COMPARISON

The following comparison is designed to help pastors and Christians consider how the candidates' stated beliefs, records, and policy priorities relate to the biblical principles outlined in *Choosing Leaders Who Cultivate a Culture of Life*.

1 Does this candidate recognize the God-given dignity of every human life?

ROB SAND

Sand has argued that biblical passages support the view that "life begins at breath," citing Genesis 2:7, Job 33:4, and Ezekiel 37:5-6. ^[S1] His broader agenda emphasizes improving health care, education, economic opportunity, and support for Iowa families. ^{[S3][S4]}

ZACH LAHN

Lahn states, "Every life is precious because every life is created by God." He says that "from the moment of conception to natural death, human life carries inherent dignity, purpose, and worth," and that every life bears the image of the Creator. ^[S7]

2 Does this candidate believe that life begins at conception and deserves legal protection?

ROB SAND

Sand does not hold the position that human life begins at conception. In 2018, he argued that biblical passages indicate "life begins at breath" rather than conception. ^[S1] He reiterated this view during the 2026 campaign, again pointing to biblical passages that he believes indicate life begins at breath. ^[S6] In 2022, Sand publicly identified himself as pro-choice and highlighted Planned Parenthood's support for his candidacy. ^[S2]

ZACH LAHN

Lahn explicitly describes himself as pro-life and states that "from the moment of conception to natural death, human life carries inherent dignity, purpose, and worth." He says that every life bears the image of the Creator. ^[S7]

3 Will this candidate defend those who cannot defend themselves?

ROB SAND

Regarding the unborn, Sand supports legal access to abortion. At a 2026 town hall, he said he believed Roe v. Wade was a "reasonable" decision and that it established a floor higher than Iowa's current six-week law, while saying there could be a reasonable middle ground. ^[S6] His position therefore does not recognize a legal right to protection for human life from conception. ^{[S1][S2][S6]} Beyond abortion, his policy agenda emphasizes expanding access to health care, supporting family caregivers, improving maternal health, protecting children, strengthening rural hospitals, and addressing the needs of vulnerable Iowans. ^{[S3][S4]}

ZACH LAHN

Lahn explicitly connects his pro-life position with protecting the unborn and "standing for the voiceless." He says "every heartbeat matters because every life bears the image of the Creator." ^[S7] In a campaign interview, Lahn called Iowa's Heartbeat Law "the right direction," said "we could do more to protect life," and opposed abortion pills being distributed through the mail. ^[S8] His campaign platform states that every life is a gift from God and that it is our duty to protect life before birth as well as after birth. ^[S5] His broader approach to protecting the vulnerable also includes children's health, cancer prevention, clean water, education, safe communities, and healthier lives for Iowa families. ^[S5]

4 Will this candidate strengthen families and promote human flourishing?

ROB SAND

Sand's proposals emphasize making life more affordable for families through lower health care costs, support for family caregivers, universal pre-K, universal school meals, housing assistance, and economic opportunity. He also emphasizes keeping young workers and families in Iowa and strengthening rural communities. ^{[S3][S4]}

ZACH LAHN

Lahn describes his vision as making Iowa "the safest, freest, most family-centered state in America." He emphasizes strong families, family farms, excellent schools, healthier children, clean water, safe communities, and policies designed to help young Iowans remain in or return to Iowa and build families. ^{[S5][S9]}

5 Will this candidate help cultivate communities where families are strengthened, churches are free to serve, and every human life is welcomed, protected, and valued—from conception until natural death?

ROB SAND

Sand's vision for human flourishing centers on health care access, affordability, housing, education, child care, economic opportunity, and creating communities where families can thrive. ^{[S3][S4]} His stated position on abortion, however, does not recognize a legal right to protection for human life from conception. ^{[S1][S2][S6]}

ZACH LAHN

Lahn explicitly grounds his understanding of human dignity in the belief that life is created by God and possesses value "from the moment of conception to natural death." ^[S7] His broader platform emphasizes strong families, healthy children, education, safe communities, clean water, family farms, and keeping young Iowans in Iowa so they can build their lives and thrive. ^{[S5][S9]}

SOURCES

[S1] Rob Sand — 2018 statement on when life begins. Rob Sand's May 2018 post discussing biblical passages and the beginning of life, along with contemporaneous reporting of his position. ([@RobSandIA on X](#))

[S2] Rob Sand — 2022 statement identifying as pro-choice / Planned Parenthood support. Rob Sand's May 2022 public statement regarding his pro-choice position and Planned Parenthood's support. ([@RobSandIA on X](#))

[S3] Rob Sand — Making Life More Affordable. Rob Sand's campaign proposals addressing health care costs, family caregivers, universal pre-K, school meals, housing, and affordability. ([robsand.com - Making Life More Affordable](#))

[S4] Rob Sand — A Healthier Iowa / Opportunities for All. Rob Sand's campaign proposals addressing health care, maternal health, rural hospitals, children, economic opportunity, rural communities, family farms, and keeping young Iowans in Iowa. ([robsand.com - A Healthier Iowa](#) | [robsand.com - Opportunities for All](#))

[S5] Zach Lahn — Official Policy Platform. Lahn's campaign platform states that "Every life is a gift from God" and that it is our duty to protect life before birth as well as after birth. It also outlines his priorities concerning families, children, health, education, farms, water, and communities. ([zachlahn.com - Policy Platform](#))

[S6] Rob Sand — 2026 town-hall comments on when life begins and abortion. At a 2026 town hall in Newton, Sand said there are "many verses in the Bible that say life begins at breath." At the same event, when asked about abortion restrictions, he said he thought *Roe v. Wade* was a "reasonable" decision. ([The Atlantic - Rob Sand and Zach Lahn](#))

[S7] Zach Lahn — Statement on the sanctity of life. Lahn's campaign Facebook post states: "Every life is precious because every life is created by God. From the moment of conception to natural death, human life carries inherent dignity, purpose, and worth." It further states that being pro-life means recognizing the sanctity of life and "standing for the voiceless." ([@ZachLahn on Facebook](#))

[S8] Zach Lahn — Pro-life position and Iowa Heartbeat Law. Lahn's campaign statements describing himself as pro-life, supporting Iowa's Heartbeat Law as "the right direction," saying Iowa could do more to protect life, and opposing abortion pills being distributed through the mail. ([Steve Deace Show](#))

[S9] Zach Lahn — Campaign vision for Iowa families. Lahn's campaign describes his goal of making Iowa "the safest, freest, most family-centered state in America" and emphasizes building a future where children can remain in Iowa, build families, and thrive. ([zachlahn.com - About](#))