



## **Climate change and the upcoming election**

Dave Yost

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Somewhat lost in this year's presidential race is the subject of what is in each political party's platform. This time around, there is virtually no similarity between the Republican platform and the Democratic equivalent. This is especially true regarding the very important subject of climate change.

For the record, the Republican platform completely dismisses this issue and even claims, "Climate change is far from this nation's most pressing national security issue." I found this to be an astonishing avoidance of reality.

Back when former Vice President Al Gore released his movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," I started to read about this issue and research what was going on behind the scenes. I ended up dedicating a lot of columns to this subject over the last 7-8 years. It turns out that organizations like the Cato Institute and Heartland Institute in Illinois are partially funded by fossil fuel interests: the big oil and coal companies. They employ writers with impressive sounding credentials to bend the truth in such ways that they mislead the public into believing that climate change is "not settled science." If anyone doubts how they do this, they need to read "Merchants of Doubt," by Naomi Oreskes and Eric M. Conway. There is a documentary film of the same title.

Given the recent polling data that a significant percentage of young people are not supporting Secretary Clinton, I find this situation to be very alarming. This particular presidential election campaign may in fact be our last chance to do something about the risks that our planet faces. It is not enough to just vote for the Democratic nominee for president. We have to make sure that our congress includes individuals who have open minds on the subject. Incumbent US Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) does not, having famously stated that he thought sunspots were responsible for global warming. More recently he stated in an interview that "First of all, the climate hasn't warmed in quite a few years. That is proven scientifically." His statement was rated false by Politifact Wisconsin. It is important that we work to make sure Colorado's US Senators Gardner and Bennet and all of our US representatives understand that climate change will have a major impact in on our lives here in the state.

When scientists state that natural events have previously made the planet as warm as it is now, they are talking about events that happened over hundreds of thousands of year cycles, not over a few lifetimes. Carbon dioxide is indeed the main culprit in this fight and that is why we have to reduce our use of carbon-based fossil fuels and find ways to help those whose livelihood depends on drilling for oil or mining coal.

Global warming does not mean that every place gets warmer. In fact, we have seen years with record cold spells in certain parts of the country and other years when it hit the '80s in Alaska. Climate scientists have stated for decades now that our planet will experience significant changes in weather patterns (have we not?), significant melting of polar ice and Greenland's ice cover (have we not?), as well as a tendency for many species to migrate to an area that better suits their needs. When I wrote a column about this a few years ago, I described how some animals are actually migrating north or to higher altitudes. Now we have humans migrating away from coastal areas. Have we ever heard of floods, dry spells, wildfires, and monster tornadoes occurring at the frequency we are now seeing?

Climate change is real and undoubtedly one of the most important issues of our time. God's creatures, including humans, better face the facts; climate change is upon us and those who reject the Democratic Party's platform on this issue are placing their grandchildren in grave danger.