



Polling 'alarm' and 'doubt' over climate change

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August 17, 2016

According to "Divided America," an ongoing *Associated Press* series about economic, social and political divisions in America, people vary on the extent of man-made climate change, not to mention its existence.

"It's more politically polarizing than abortion," says Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale program on Climate Change Communication. "It's more politically polarizing than gay marriage."

Based on surveys from Yale and George Mason University, 17 percent of Americans are now alarmed by climate change and want action taken.

That's the fastest-growing group. Another 28 percent are concerned while 27 percent are cautious and 11 percent are doubtful. Ten percent also reject the concept of warming and the science, while seven percent are focused on other, unrelated issues.

Meanwhile, *AP* science writer Seth Borenstein writes that many scientists believe climate change is man-made and a real problem.

Pointing to "dozens of scientific measurements that show Earth is warming," Borenstein writes the world has warmed by 0.44 degrees (0.25 degrees Celsius) since 1997.

"I agree with the first part, (but) I don't necessarily agree with the latter part," responds Chip Knappenberger, assistant director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute. "I think human activities are impacting the climate (but) I stop short - well short - of suggesting that they are a problem, especially overall."

Cal Beisner, founder and national spokesman of the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship Of Creation, says that's an exaggeration.

"Seth Borenstein has been a global warming alarmist for many years," Beisner claims, "and is just absolutely habitual at quoting exaggerated numbers and so on about climate change as he did in this article."

Borenstein managed to find an answer but it was "pretty tortuous to do so," Beisner adds.

He says reliable data from satellites and weather balloons show "essentially zero trend in global average temperature from early 1997 until now."

As for weather versus climate, Knappenberger says there is a difference, although you'd never know it the way some observers and news outlets talk.

"The media is definitely playing with our minds when it comes to climate change and what we should expect," he says.