

Statement of Mr. Benji Backer
American Conservation Coalition
Submitted for the Record by Mr. Graves
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To whom it may concern,

When you examine the issue of climate change in this country, we are told that young liberals are invested and young conservatives don't care. However, as a college student and lifelong conservative political activist, I know firsthand this isn't true.

In 2017, alongside my Millennial peers, I founded the American Conservation Coalition, an organization dedicated to conservative environmental solutions, including climate change. In just over a year since our founding, we've expanded to 120+ college campuses with enthusiastic conservative leaders representing us on each respective campus. Why have we succeeded? Because young conservatives are concerned about climate change—and it's a priority for them. Young conservatives feel left behind by the opposing party, as well as their own, on the issue of climate. They care about it and want to see solutions, but they first want the status quo to change. In fact, [59% of Millennial conservatives believe climate change is having an effect on the United States](#), according to last year's Pew poll. The percentage has been rising each year, and over 90% of independents and liberals see it as a problem as well. Additionally, [recent polling shows that 66% of all conservatives believe in man-made climate change](#).

Young people, specifically young conservatives, are discouraged by the partisan bickering that the climate movement has embraced. Unnecessary partisan quarreling on climate change has alienated important voices and prevented meaningful results. Whether it's the Democratic Party proposing unrealistic resolutions such as the Green New Deal and perpetuating false doomsday scenarios, or the Republican Party's stagnant inaction and frequent use of climate denial language, both political parties have failed us on climate change thus far. To young people, the issue of climate change transcends party lines. Our environment is not a partisan issue, and it shouldn't be treated as such to promote political agendas. This is an issue that has massive implications for our children's futures, as well as our own.

In terms of solutions, we urge Congress to explore policies that mitigate climate change without an increase in taxes and big government. Through a smart policy proposal that includes the right incentives, public-private partnerships, an all-of-the-above energy approach, and technological advancements, the United States can continue to take the lead on climate change.

While other countries must act on climate change, and the United States has taken many steps in the right direction, I join my young conservative peers in calling for even greater action. We're tired of big-government and anti-economic policies that consistently fail. We're tired of the false alarmism and doomsday scenarios. We're also tired of conservative inaction and denial. We're ready for climate change to be a priority through bipartisan reforms that include important sources of energy (including nuclear, natural gas, and hydropower), technological advancements, smart market incentives, and corporate leadership. It's time for a new wave of climate action in this country that acknowledges and engages with a growing, improving economy to foster an improved climate.