

NAMING THE PROBLEM

What It Will Take to Counter Extremism and Engage Americans in the Fight against Global Warming

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The Challenge Named

“I can’t work on a problem if I cannot name it.” The complaint was registered gently, almost as a musing after-thought at the end of a June 2012 interview I conducted by telephone with one of the nation’s prominent environmental leaders.

My interlocutor had played a major role in efforts to get Congress to pass “cap and trade” legislation during 2009 and 2010. Hefty DC players had worked together in the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (otherwise known as USCAP), a coalition of business chieftains and leaders of big environmental organizations that was publicly launched in 2007 to push legislation to place a cap on carbon emissions and create an open market for energy producers to trade allowances under the cap. Once legislated, caps were meant to be slowly ratcheted down in future decades, so U.S. companies and citizens would have an incentive to use less carbon-based energy and invest in green technologies. This “cap and trade” approach was seen by supporters as a quintessentially market-oriented way to nudge the vast U.S. economy through a gradual transition to reliance on sources of energy that would do less damage to the climate. The model originated with economists looking to harness market forces and found some favor with major corporations and Republicans, so it seemed to be a good bet for building bipartisan coalitions in Congress.¹ Votes from some Republicans would be essential, because votes for carbon caps would be hard to find among Democrats representing states with strong coal or oil sectors or states heavily reliant on electricity generated in coal-fired plants.

To many savvy players, prospects for a legislative push for cap and trade looked excellent during and right after the presidential campaign of 2008. Versions of this approach were touted not just by the Democratic nominee and eventual victor Barack

Obama, but also by the 2008 Republican standard-bearer, John McCain – who was one of the favorite GOPers among big environmentalists, because he had repeatedly co-sponsored carbon-control bills. Environmentalists who favored cap and trade presumed that John McCain would be on their side – it was just a question of when they could make it possible for him to play a pivotal role in forging a bipartisan deal in the Senate. With Democratic president Barack Obama moving into the White House in early 2009 and Democratic House and Senate leaders pledged to act on climate legislation, the time looked ripe to move full speed ahead. On January 15, 2009, USCAP leaders issued a meticulously negotiated blueprint for a new cap and trade system and geared up for non-stop lobbying to get legislation through Congress.² Visions danced in their heads of a celebratory White House signing ceremony nicely timed to tee up U.S. leadership in the next international climate confab scheduled for December 2009 in Copenhagen.

Following months of intricate bargaining, USCAP forces scored an initial, hard-fought success when, on June 29, 2009, the House of Representatives passed the Waxman-Markey “American Clean Energy and Security” bill by a vote of 219 to 212. Supporters were elated, but they got a big shock almost at once as oppositional lobbying and media campaigns went into overdrive and fierce grassroots Tea Party protests broke out. During the summer Congressional recess, telegenic older white protestors carrying homemade signs appeared at normally sleepy “town hall” sessions to harangue Congressional Democrats who supported health reform as well as the Waxman-Markey bill. Protests were bolstered by generously funded advertising campaigns targeted on Senators who would be asked to decide about cap and trade bills in the fall. In hasty response, cap and trade supporters threw together a national “war room” and public

relations campaign. They plowed ahead toward what they hoped would be a bipartisan deal in the Senate.

But one coalitional effort after another fell apart in late 2009 and early 2010, as putative Senate compromises came and went. In July 2010, Senate Leader Harry Reid finally pulled the plug when it became clear that no variant of cap and trade or any other kind of energy legislation had any prospect of coming close to the 60 votes needed to clear his chamber's filibuster bar. During this pivotal year, Republicans, including long-time supposed friends of the environmental movement like John McCain, simply melted away; and in the end GOP Senators unanimously refused to support of any variant of cap and trade.³ In public opinion polls, Americans registered increased wariness about government action on carbon caps – with public worries stoked by opponents claiming that new taxes and regulations would cost jobs, reduce family incomes, and stifle businesses struggling to recover from the Great Recession.

Prospects for action on climate change soon deteriorated further. In the November 2010 mid-term elections Congressional Democrats sustained massive setbacks, and very conservative Republicans were in many instances replaced by right-wing extremists. The 112th House that took office in January 2011 was one of the most right-wing in U.S. history, and it included dozens of Tea Party backed Republicans who would not bargain about any major Democratic legislative priority, certainly not carbon controls or green energy legislation.⁴ Republican hardliners in and beyond Congress set out on a crusade to strip the federal Environmental Protection Agency of its judicially affirmed powers to regulate greenhouse gases, and even to take away longstanding EPA powers in other areas of environmental protection. The 112th Senate remained in

Democratic hands by a small margin, but also saw an infusion of hard-right Republicans who would firmly oppose legislation and regulatory efforts to deal with global warming.

The hardening opposition of the Republican Party on environmental issues became unmistakable during 2011 and 2012, as the field of contenders for the GOP presidential nomination emerged and winnowed down to the last man standing – Mitt Romney, former governor of Massachusetts. Once a technocratic moderate of the sort courted by professional environmental organizations, Romney had signaled openness to cap and trade approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. But he turned against cap and trade during the 2008 GOP presidential primaries, and to win the GOP nomination in 2012, he began questioning whether human activities contribute to global warming.⁵ Romney eagerly signed on to strong anti-regulatory and anti-tax agendas pushed from the right of his party; and in August 2012 he named as his running mate Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan, a darling of the Tea Party whose career has been nurtured by American for Prosperity.⁶ This is an anti-tax and anti-regulatory advocacy group funded by the billionaire Koch brothers, who are leading opponents of carbon control measures.⁷

To be sure, Romney lost the November 2012 contest to Obama, although climate change was not addressed by either candidate on the campaign trail. The Democrats made gains in the Senate for 2013 and 2014, adding more pro-environmental legislators into the mix. But very conservative House Republicans were also overwhelmingly re-elected, and their party retains the ability to stymie new initiatives.

The set-backs of 2010 and afterwards left DC-focused environmental organizations puzzled about how to regain the legislative initiative or re-start a robust

national conversation about global warming. Looking back at the fizzle in 2010, postmortems were penned and conferences convened to figure out what went wrong and what should happen next. Diagnoses and prescriptions have been all over the map, as we will see in the concluding section of this report. Meanwhile, political consultants and public relations wordsmiths urged environmentalists to redouble euphemistic locutions already deployed during the cap and trade battle – to talk about “green jobs,” “threats to public health,” and the need to “reduce dependence on foreign oil to bolster national defense,” anything but the threat of global warming and catastrophic climate upheavals.⁸ Such advice tailed off during the record heat-waves of the summer of 2012; and after Hurricane Sandy devastated the East Coast shortly before the November elections, the New York media openly connected global warming to the unusual late autumn megastorm. Some environmentalists declared that politicians are now bound to take up the issue.

This almost certainly overstates the likelihood of sustained official attention. After his decisive re-election, President Obama may speak now and then about the threat of global warming. But official Washington remains mired in partisan standoffs over fiscal choices, and big fights loom over immigration, gun control, and a host of other issues. Whatever environmentalists may hope, the Obama White House and Congressional Democrats are unlikely to make global warming a top issue in 2013 or 2014; and there is no indication that pragmatic political consultants will soon advise most politicians in office or running for office to make this issue a top priority.

For America’s professional environmentalists it is profoundly disorienting to pull punches linguistically or in terms of policy recommendations. These are highly educated

people long invested in a logical, rational-minded approach to governance. They have built organizations staffed by thousands of scientists, lawyers, and lobbyists devoted to spreading scientifically backed messages to policymakers who are presumed to want to work out rational plans to solve problems. Global warming is, in their eyes, an overriding crisis. “We have assumed,” explained the leader I quoted at the start of this report, “that if you just realized the truths I know, you would agree” that the United States must take immediate strong actions to curb carbon emissions and mitigate global warming.

Obviously, it is deflating to move from such confidence to mincing words in the face of highly partisan attacks, popular consternation, and official evasions.

Yet the stark truth is that severe weather events alone will not cause global warming to pop to the top of the national agenda – let alone revive and strengthen the push for carbon capping legislation that surely must be one part of America’s (and the world’s) fight against global warming. For that undertaking to reemerge and triumph, fresh strategies will be needed, based on new understandings of political obstacles and opportunities.

MAKING SENSE OF THE CAP AND TRADE FAILURE

What holds true for talking about climate change also applies to dissecting a pivotal episode of failed policy advocacy and clarifying the alternatives for actors who want to resume the quest for carbon caps. The political problem must be clearly described. No one can illuminate why the 2009-10 cap and trade shortfall happened – or

properly weigh the collateral damage and lessons – without unflinchingly probing and naming the true obstacles. As a citizen, I am sympathetic to environmentalism in its twin guises of professional advocacy and grassroots activism. Yet my job in this report is to take a cold-blooded look, to use my skills as an empirical, big-picture political scientist to analyze the cap and trade battle against the backdrop of longer-term institutional and political changes in the United States. If environmental politics in America was ever a matter of working out shared bipartisan solutions to expert-assessed problems, it is now far from that – but in what ways and why? And what is to be done? My report ponders these matters.

In the course of my research, I have conducted some interviews with key actors and pulled together data of my own along with findings from press coverage and other scholars. I have been fortunate to consult with journalists Petra Bartosiewicz and Marissa Miley, who have done a superb job of interviewing most participants in the immediate battles and describing and assessing what happened in 2009 and 2010.⁹ Similarly helpful are the findings in “Cold Front: How the Recession Stalled Obama’s Clean Energy Agenda,” a careful dissection of presidential and Congressional developments prepared by MIT political scientist Judith Layzer for *Reaching for a New Deal: Ambitious Governance, Economic Meltdown, and Polarized Politics in Obama’s First Two Years*. This Russell Sage Foundation book reported on a project coordinated by me and Lawrence Jacobs to track and assess the policy changes attempted in seven different spheres during the first two years of the Obama presidency.¹⁰ The aim in that project is similar to my goal here: dissect the policy shifts that were attempted, see what succeeded and failed, and explain the causes and political consequences.

I have also relied heavily on *The Climate War*, an interview-based account of the cap and trade effort that was published in mid-2010 by Eric Pooley, who was at that time a journalist and has since become a Senior Vice President at the Environmental Defense Fund.¹¹ Pooley's well written and meticulously researched book is not a value-free account. As signaled by his subtitle invoking "the Fight to Save the Earth," Pooley saw the principal USCAP players as earth-striding heroes. Yet Pooley's sympathy allowed him incomparable access. He was able to interview the key USCAP leaders in real time during the unfolding struggle for cap and trade, and he put his book to bed before the final death throes in 2010. That is precisely why his material has been so helpful, freeing me from sole reliance on after-the-fact interviews. Pooley's account explains what key USCAP actors thought they were doing and might accomplish *before* they knew the effort would fall short in Congress. From *The Climate War*, we can track the strategies and maneuvers of the coaches and players into the fourth quarter – until just before it was clear that the game was lost, and before the Monday morning quarterbacks took to the airways with their rationalizations and I-told-you-so's

My analysis is grounded in empirical details, but is also examines the long term and the big picture. I start with a discussion of what should – and should not – puzzle us about the 2009-10 episode, and move from there to show why this was not just any routine policy shortfall. To help clarify similarities and differences in ideas, resources, and political strategies, I make comparisons between the years-long battle for cap and trade and the parallel campaign for comprehensive health reform legislation.¹² Amid just as many Perils-of-Pauline twists and turns as any climate bill ever faced, the health reform effort ultimately succeeded in getting legislation through both houses of Congress

and signed into law by President Obama. Success for health care reformers happened even as the cap and trade effort faltered and backfired, much as the earlier 1993-94 health reform effort had done. The two policy areas are of course different in many key respects, which I will not downplay, but a comparison of the strategies and organizational capacities of health reformers and cap and trade advocates is instructive.

In spelling out political obstacles to cap and trade, I look more closely than other analysts at the role since 1990 of the rightward-lunging Republican Party, which was pivotal in the collapse of bipartisan negotiations and the growing backlash against carbon caps. For this part of the analysis, I am able to draw on not only on a wide variety of surveys, journalistic pieces, and political science studies, but also on research I did with my co-author Vanessa Williamson for our book *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*.¹³ We interviewed grassroots Tea Party activists, tallied the incidence and agendas of some 900 local groups, visited and observed local meetings, and probed the nationwide activities of wealthy, ideologically extreme funding and advocacy groups that sought to use grassroots conservative activism to push the Republican Party far to the right and prevent GOP officeholders from compromising with Democrats. Our research shows that opposition to environmentalism and governmental action to redress global warming have been and continue to be top concerns for grassroots Tea Partiers and elite ultra-conservatives alike.

My report concludes that the cap and trade failure both expressed and deepened power imbalances tilting against supporters of carbon emissions limits for the United States. The USCAP campaign was designed and conducted in an insider-grand-bargaining political style that, unbeknownst to its sponsors, was unlikely to succeed given

fast-changing realities in U.S. partisan politics and governing institutions. What is more, this partially successful yet ultimately abortive attempt did much to provoke and mobilize fierce enemies and enhance their populist capacities and political clout for future battles. As I will spell out, the capacity of opponents to stymie carbon-capping legislation does not depend on general popularity or appeals to middle-of-the-road public opinion. It depends, instead, on leverage within the Republican Party, which in turn can use institutional levers in U.S. government to stymie or undermine governmental measures to fight global warming.

The failure of the 2009-10 policy push for cap and trade legislation was, in one respect, quite unsurprising – attributable (in political science 101 terms) to Senate rules setting an insurmountable 60-vote bar in combination with intractable regional divisions of interest within the Democratic Party. Even so, the abortive push for cap and trade legislation is an interesting failure to probe, because this was not a routine shortfall and may not amount to just a temporary setback. The expiration of cap and trade bargaining in the 111th Senate marked a watershed not an interruption, because the ground has shifted beneath the feet of those who urgently want to take economic steps to mitigate human-spurred climate change. We can be sure their efforts will resume. But reformers will probably not be able just to pick up where the earlier cap and trade effort left off, trying to get the job done with insider grand bargains.

Environmentalists can no longer presume that most officials in Washington DC or in many non-coastal state capitols are looking for expert solutions to agreed-upon problems. Many politicians and officeholders now have powerful ideological and career-related reasons to shun environmentalists and other elites, including business people,

allied with them. Ever since global warming became prominent on the environmental agenda, an all-out political fight has been underway, and reformers do themselves no favor by refusing to clearly understand the scope of the battle or the degree to which politicians, including almost all Republicans now in office, have been recruited into the opposition. Reformers of all sorts who want to change energy production and use in the United States will have to publicly dramatize the challenges and offer understandable solutions that do not appear inimical to the everyday values and economic concerns of ordinary American families struggling in an era of stagnating incomes and contracting opportunities. Climate change warriors will have to look beyond elite maneuvers and find ways to address the values and interests of tens of millions of U.S. citizens. To counter fierce political opposition, reformers will have to build organizational networks across the country, and they will need to orchestrate sustained political efforts that stretch far beyond friendly Congressional offices, comfy board rooms, and posh retreats. Compromises with amenable business interests will still be necessary. But insider politics cannot carry the day on its own, apart from a broader movement pressing politicians for change.

BEYOND EASY ANSWERS

Anyone who interviews DC environmentalists will repeatedly hear two explanations for the failure of the 2009-10 push for cap and trade legislation. One is a kind of retrospective fatalism – people now realize, they say, that the financial crisis of

2008 and ensuing deep economic downturn made it impossible to pass this kind of legislation. Stated more often and with much more feeling, the other rationale amounts to griping about President Obama: Their cause could have prevailed, say many cap and trade supporters, “if only” the President had made it his top reform priority rather than getting bogged down in a protracted and polarizing push for comprehensive health reform – or “if only” the White House had “exercised leadership” in the penultimate Senate struggles for cap and trade.¹⁴ It will not escape most readers that these arguments are contradictory; one implies that proponents of carbon-capping legislation should not have launched their big 2009 legislative effort at all, while the other suggests that all the ducks were pretty much in a row “if only” President Obama had gone to bat for climate-change legislation as his top priority reform.

Did the Economic Downturn Do It?

We can safely question the adequacy of either argument, however, starting with the idea that the economic downturn automatically ruled out cap and trade. The deteriorating economy in late 2008 and 2009 certainly *did* prompt most Americans to place economic recovery and job-creation at the top of their to-do list for Washington DC. Environmental concerns – and other once-important public concerns, too, like worries about health care – receded as issue priorities when the economy took a plunge.¹⁵ In response to public concerns, the fledgling Obama administration and Congressional leaders acted quickly to launch what they thought would be an adequate stimulus by passing the massive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in February 2009. A year

later it became clear they had not done nearly enough; but at the time, they thought they were acting first on the public's top priority. Most officials in the White House and Democratic offices on Capitol Hill believed they had done enough, or at least all that was politically feasible to do.

President Obama and the new Democratic-controlled Congress were hardly likely to stop legislating after the Recovery Act was in the books, however. Obama made it clear from his first weeks in office that his administration's efforts to rescue and jump start the economy would not keep him from pursuing the long-term reforms he promised when he ran for office. In his first budget message, Obama listed climate-change and energy legislation along with health reform and educational improvements as his top reform priorities; and he called for a 38% increase in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency, to support new efforts at greenhouse gas regulation.¹⁶ Despite the deep and persistent economic downturn, Obama and the Democratic-led 111th Congress succeeded in getting cap and trade legislation through the House; and after fifteen months of effort they managed to pass through both the House and Senate the Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act of 2010 – which was, like cap and trade, a massive, complex legislative effort to remake regulations, taxes, and expenditures affecting the entire U.S. economy, all citizens, and powerful interest groups.

During 2009, both proponents of health reform and supporters of carbon caps adjusted their appeals to the public and key stakeholder groups in response to the economic downturn. Health reformers stressed that families had greater need for assured and affordable insurance when jobs might be lost; and they dangled revenues and profits in front of health providers, insurance companies, and medical-sector manufacturers.

Analogous efforts were made by cap and trade proponents. USCAP bargaining was all about buffering and padding profits for key industrial sectors that would have to grapple with higher carbon-energy prices– and such efforts carried over into Congressional legislative sausage-making, with due attention to the cost and profit worries of industries experiencing the economic downturn. At the public level, moreover, President Obama framed his support for comprehensive legislation as a “green jobs” initiative and a path toward U.S. energy independence, as did reformers when they attempted to explain cap and trade legislation to the larger public under the slogan “Better Jobs, Less Pollution, and More Security.”¹⁷

Attempts to tailor bargains and public appeals to fit the realities of a down economy were not decisive in either the health or environmental battle. Surveys during 2009 and 2010 showed the public growing increasingly wary of omnibus legislation in both policy arenas. And of course powerful interest groups went to war against omnibus legislation in both cases. Good economic times might have been a better time to pursue both comprehensive health reform and carbon caps – though let’s not kid ourselves into thinking that the political opposition would ever be less than fierce. The key point is that the depressed economy did not prevent either effort from moving forward in 2009, or determine that health legislation squeaked through in March 2010 even as cap and trade was staggering to its death in the endless desert of the U.S. Senate. The dynamics of mobilization, counter-mobilization, and political coalition building mattered much more.

Did Obama Fail to Lead?

This brings us to what many cap and traders really believe – that they could have succeeded despite the economic downturn if only the President had backed their horse instead of health reform. For a political scientist like myself who has interviewed key actors in both the Affordable Care drama and the cap and trade episode, it is surreal to listen to “if only” comments about President Obama and his White House advisors. I heard exactly the same gripes from both health reform proponents and cap and trade supporters – phrased in almost the same words and aggrieved tone of voice! Obama was too passive. The President did not exercise “real leadership,” but laid back and left Congressional committees and reform advocates to muddle through. “If only” he had boldly outlined what he wanted and knocked Congressional heads together, things would have moved faster – and whatever position the speaker supported (in either policy drama) would surely have carried the day and/or happened a lot faster. In the health care instance, such complaints certainly came from those pushing to include the “public option” in Affordable Care; yet similar gripes came from others, too, including the ultimate winners, who during the fifteen month battle complained about the length and uncertainty of the legislative process. In the cap and trade case, complaints about the President’s failed leadership come not only from the Monday morning quarterbacks of the losing team, but also from those commenting at the time at particular tough junctures in the House and Senate deliberations. In a modern variant of blaming the King’s advisors rather than the King himself, opprobrium is sometimes assigned to White House aides – especially to Obama’s famously ornery and foul-mouthed chief of staff, Rahm

Emmanuel, who had verbal run-ins with both health and environmental advocates. He hurled insults at progressive health reform advocates who wanted to run ads opposing Democrats foot-dragging on health reform legislation.¹⁸ And he rudely rebuffed pressures from cap and trade proponents for Obama to get more involved in their cause, exhorting them (as one key player recalls) “to get me some Republicans.”¹⁹

But whether we finger Obama or his aides, “failure of leadership” was not really the issue, because the Obama administration was working from a well-considered strategic playbook that makes good presidential sense. The White House team would not let the President fully engage until and unless sufficient House or Senate majorities were almost in place, because it was thought to be politically dangerous – and not likely to help – to get Obama directly involved in the messy, shifting horse-trading over taxes, regulations, and side-payments that necessarily played out over many months while Congressional committees tried to assemble the majorities necessary for comprehensive health reform or cap and trade. The White House saw its role as facilitating consultations and quiet bargains – for which proud, ambitious Congressional kingpins would take public credit, should maneuvers succeed. In both legislative dramas, the Obama White House staged public speeches, forums, and hand-holding sessions in the Oval Office to try keep things moving along. Above all, when votes were close, the White House deployed the President and his top aides to help round up the final votes. The President and his top aides did this first and most visibly for the Waxman-Markey House American Clean Energy and Security Act. “It would not have passed without the White House,” an aide to Congressman Markey acknowledged to Eric Pooley.²⁰

Chart 1a. Campaigns for Affordable Care and Cap and Trade, 2008-2009 Key Presidential and Congressional Steps

HEALTH REFORM LEGISLATION

2008: Obama campaign pledges comprehensive reform including cost controls and expanded coverage.

Feb 2009: FY10 Budget includes \$630B reserve fund to cover part of the cost of health reform.

March 5: White House forum on health reform with officials, stakeholders, and Congress people.

July 14: Three House committees pass a joint health reform bill, with no Republicans in favor.

July 15: Senate Health Education and Labor Committee passes health reform bill (with no Republicans in favor).

September 9: President addresses Joint Session of Congress to urge action on health reform.

October 13: Senate Finance Committee passes health reform bill, 14 to 9 (with only one Republican in favor).

November 7: House of Representatives passes Affordable Health Care for America Act, 220-215 (no Republicans in favor).

December 24: Senate passes Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 60 to 40 (no Republicans in favor).

CAP AND TRADE LEGISLATION

2008: Obama and McCain campaigns endorse caps on greenhouse emissions to fight global warming.

Feb 2009: FY10 Budget projects \$80B revenue starting in 2012 from cap and trade system, with most to be rebated.

March 24: Environmental Protection Agency moves toward regulating greenhouse gases under Clean Air Act.

March 31: House Energy and Commerce Committee releases draft "Waxman-Markey" bill for cap and trade.

April: EPA authority formalized, with Obama warning that EPA will regulate greenhouse gases unless Congress does.

May 21: House Energy and Commerce passes Waxman-Markey 33 to 25, on largely party lines.

June 29: With Obama involved in the vote roundup, House of Representatives passes the Waxman-Markey "American Clean Energy and Security Act" 219 to 212 (with 43 Dems and all but 8 Republicans opposed).

October 11: Democrat John Kerry and Republican Lindsey Graham write a New York Times OpEd calling for climate change legislation instead of EPA regulation.

November 5: Democrats (11 out of 12) on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee draft and pass a cap and trade bill. Republicans boycott the vote.

Chart 1b. Campaigns for Affordable Care and Cap and Trade, 2010 Key Presidential and Congressional Steps

HEALTH REFORM LEGISLATION

January 2010: President and Congressional Democratic leaders negotiate reconciled legislation.

January 19: Republican Scott Brown wins Massachusetts Senate special election, giving GOP 41 votes to filibuster any final health reform legislation.

Feb 22: After weeks of vagueness, Obama releases his own plan for final legislation, closely mirroring the December 2009 Senate bill.

Feb 25: Obama convenes the Bipartisan Meeting on Health Reform, and pushes for up or down vote.

March 3: President Obama gives a speech calling for action on health reform.

March 21, 2010: House of Representatives passes the Senate version, Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, by 219 to 212 (with only one Republican in favor), followed by a fiscal revisions bill destined for Senate action by majority reconciliation rules.

March 26: Senate passes reconciliation bill, 56 to 43 (with no Republicans in favor).

March 23 and March 30, 2010: President Obama signs to the two pieces of health care legislation into law.

CAP AND TRADE LEGISLATION

Jan 2010: FY11 Budget banks on climate legislation, endorsed by President in the State of the Union Address.

February: Pentagon labels climate change a threat to U.S. national security, and Council of Economic Advisors calls energy and environment initiatives vital to recovery.

Feb-March: Congressional Republicans and some Democrats oppose EPA regulatory efforts and powers.

March: Senators Kerry (D), Lieberman (Independent), and Graham (R) work on compromise cap and trade bills. Republican Senator John McCain pulls back.

March 9: Obama meets with 14 key Senators to urge compromise on climate change legislation.

April 20: Deep Horizon oil rig explodes, precluding compromises involving expansion of offshore drilling.

April 22: On Earth Day, bipartisan legislation is scheduled to be unveiled, but Senator Graham pulls out.

May 12: Senators Kerry and Lieberman release American Power cap and trade bill with no Republican co-sponsors.

July: Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid decides there is insufficient support to take legislation to the floor.

Some presume that Obama and the Democrats of the 111th Congress could manage only one “heavy lift” and assert that cap and trade necessarily suffered in those intervals when health reform moved forward. For short periods in particular House or Senate committees, that might have been true, but looking at the entire fifteen month period from early 2009 through the spring of 2010, this zero-sum presumption just does not make sense. A lot of presidential and Congressional action happened on both cap and trade and comprehensive health reform. As the timelines displayed in Charts 1a and 1b show, cap and trade actually moved more quickly in 2009; and there were moments of extreme peril for health reform as well as cap and trade. The August 2009 Tea Party protests at Democratic Congressional town halls threatened both legislative efforts. And no body-blow that might have stalled and killed legislative momentum was greater in the cap and trade saga than the shocking victory of Republican Scott Brown in January 2010 Massachusetts Senate special election. Yet somehow the political momentum resumed in the health reform case, and not because Obama boldly took the lead.²¹ He had to be pushed into the perilous health reform end game by Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House. In the final accounting, the President was duly and fully engaged in rounding up cap and trade votes in the House months before he engaged in similar efforts for health reform in either the House or Senate. When Obama did fully commit during both legislative efforts, moreover, he did so to round up the last necessary votes – mostly from Democrats.

Partisan dynamics were different in these two efforts. In the House of Representatives, all but one of the votes for health reform came from Democrats, and in the squeaker Senate vote about health reform held on Christmas Eve in 2009, the parties divided cleanly, with 58 Democrats and two Independents who caucused with Democrats

in favor and all 40 Republicans opposed. In the cap and trade instance, however, when Waxman-Markey finally cleared the House, eight Republicans voted for it – just enough to allow the legislation to pass while 44 Democrats voted against the measure. In both the House and Senate, a bloc of Democrats from oil and coal states and states dependent on coal-fired electricity generation were always going to vote against cap and trade – everyone knew that going into the effort. Consequently, some Republicans had to support bipartisan legislation for cap and trade (or any related legislation) to prevail.

To hold a “failure of leadership” by Obama responsible for the ultimate shortfall for cap and trade, we would have to imagine that, in the spring of 2010, the President could have done something better or different than the USCAP leaders or Senate bargainers to satisfy Rahm Emmanuel’s realistic demand to “get me some Republicans.” We have to picture Barack Obama being more persuasive with leading Republicans than, say, Environmental Defense Fund honcho Fred Krupp, who had successfully cajoled votes out of GOP Senators in the past. I do not find that plausible. Presidential arm-twisting and sweet-talking were not the issue. Developments in the two parties, especially among Republicans, were pivotal.

A closer look at the organizational underpinnings of two ambitious efforts – to pass carbon caps to deal with climate change, and to reform costs and coverage in the U.S. health system – can help clarify why comprehensive health reform legislation could ultimately ride through, while cap and trade was undone by a suddenly widening political crevasse – not just between Democrats and Republicans, but within the Republican party itself, between extreme right-wingers and formerly compromise-minded conservatives.

AN ANATOMY OF TWO REFORM CAMPAIGNS

When one of America's two major political parties moves toward decisive, across the board victories in pivotal elections, supporters of policy causes that have been dismissed or sidelined in the previous regime start preparing to seize the new moment. By 2005 and 2006, it was pretty clear to America's political class that Republicans were faltering and Democrats were on the rise. The sitting GOP President was in his second term and could not run again; his party was bogged down in an increasingly unpopular war and facing fiscal and economic difficulties and a bevy of scandals. Policy entrepreneurs started gearing up to take advantage of new political openings, including those who wanted the United States to address climate change and those who believed it was, again, time to attempt comprehensive health reform (defined as a simultaneous effort to control sharply rising costs and extend insurance coverage to growing ranks of the uninsured). Preparations in both camps intensified following 2004 and especially after the Democrats made substantial Congressional gains in 2006.

As both health reformers and global warming warriors geared up, there was a key difference. One set of reformers looked to learn from past failure, while the other wanted to extend partial successes. Looking back at the "Health Security" debacle of 1993-94, would-be health reformers concentrated on learning from mistakes made when Democrats last controlled both the White House and both houses of Congress.²² They set out to do better at policy specification, expert preparations, and political coalition-building. Meanwhile, climate change reformers prepared to extend and recapitulate what

they saw as earlier accomplishments – with the acid rain amendments to the Clean Air Act of 1990 serving as their lode-star. Climate-action reformers hoped to repeat methods used to ensure bipartisan support for that watershed accomplishment; and they also planned to build upon bipartisan Senate coalitions that had supported legislation for an economy-wide cap and trade system in 2003, 2005, and 2008. Health reformers, in short, were looking to correct for failures they (and their like-minded predecessors) had made in a past political juncture analogous to the one they might soon face, whereas climate reformers eagerly anticipated building upon an earlier triumph during another political opening with a sympathetic president and woo-able legislators in both parties.

In retrospect, it looks as if health reformers anticipated the political nature of the opening during 2009 and 2010 correctly, while those supporting action on climate change did not. But let's not get ahead of ourselves or commit the sin of anachronistic assessment. As of the time Barack Obama took office, not to mention during the transition period between 2006 and 2008, nothing looked irrational about either the learn-from-past-mistakes approach favored by the health reformers or the let's-do-it-again-but-better variant of anticipatory strategizing followed by the cap and trade proponents. It made sense that Democrats would primarily carry the ball on comprehensive health reform, which had been a holy grail for their party for decades; and it also made sense that bipartisan coalitions would have to play a stronger role in delivering Congressional votes for climate-change legislation. The ultimate presidential victor, Barack Obama, was clearly prepared to practice both partisanship and bipartisanship. Throughout his quest for the presidency, Obama stressed that he would pursue key Democratic Party priorities *and at the same time* look to encourage compromises to tackle fundamental

national challenges. As he took the oath of office after an extraordinary electoral victory and at a time of national economic crisis, the new president did not expect to face zero-sum choices between partisan mobilization and cooperation across the aisle. He thought he could bring DC players together, at least to some degree, to address America's biggest problems.

Both health reform and legislative action on carbon caps would require a push from Democratic leaders in the Obama White House and the 111th Congress, coupled with a modicum of support and cooperation from some Congressional Republicans. Anticipating that, health reformers and climate-action reformers girded for their efforts well in advance – by preparing policy proposals, teeing up expertise, and organizing new political coalitions. As we are about to see, intellectual preparations in both policy areas embodied a shared convergence on market regulations intended to nudge businesses rather than displace them. But political coalition-building by health reformers and carbon-cap supporters went down different paths. In climate reform, the biggest investment was in stakeholder bargaining through USCAP. In health reform, many actors prepped in advance to push variants of an overall shared policy framework, yet the biggest new organizational investment went into creating a center-left network with reach into states and localities, a far-flung coalition that would push DC insiders to include a particular favored provision in health reform legislation.

A Regulated Market Approach to Health Reform

As the next big opening beckoned for comprehensive health reform, debates among self-styled “politically realistic” experts focused on developing a better version of the “managed competition” approach promoted by Bill Clinton in 1993-94. Tellingly, the single-payer approach – where government taxes everyone and pays for everyone’s care, as happens in Canada and in the extremely popular U.S. Medicare program – remained marginalized in the 2000s as it had been for many years. Instead of looking to push private insurers out of the health care marketplace, the most influential experts, all economists, fine-tuned plans to regulate private insurers, give people and businesses subsidies to buy private health plans on regulated “exchanges,” and mop up most of the rest of the uninsured by expanding Medicaid (the federal insurance program for the very poor). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a major player in the health policy world, funded a steady stream of studies from the 1990s into the 2000s, designed to work out pieces of the overall health reform puzzle and keep the goal of expanding coverage front and center for politicians, along with the need to control rising costs.²³

By the time major Democratic candidates discussed health reform in debates and primaries during the run-up to the 2008 election, they were all consulting with the same experts – such as Harvard economist David Cutler and MIT economist Jonathan Gruber – committed to the same overall approach. Gruber, in fact, had designed a variant for Republican Mitt Romney during his time as Governor of Massachusetts; and RomneyCare included a pivotal regulatory provision sponsored by the conservative Heritage Foundation, the “individual mandate” rule that all every person would need to

have or purchase health coverage once it became universally affordable. This rule was pleasing to insurance companies, even if they hated other regulations to which they might be subjected. So well-understood was the basic script for what eventually became the Affordable Care Act of 2010 that it was published in early 2008 in a popularly focused book, *Critical: What We Can Do About the Health-Care Crisis*, two of whose co-authors were prominent Democrats willing to cooperate with business interests: Tom Daschle, who was slated to become the next Secretary of Health and Human Services and chief White House health policy czar (until he was sidelined by a controversy about his subsidized limousine driver from a wealthy donor) and Jeanne Lambrew, who actually did move into a key policy leadership role in the Obama White House in 2009.²⁴

Readying the next health care push also involved putting the right technical expertise in place, above all via the appointment of Peter Orszag to head the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) after Democrats gained partial control in 2006. As Orszag understood, in the failed Clinton health reform episode CBO scoring practices had been politically as well as fiscally consequential. CBO had called cost-reducing parts of the Clinton plan “taxes,” and that had scared off Blue Dog Congressional Democrats, who always say they want cost controls and federal budget limits, but who fear the word “taxes” more than any other in the English language. CBO had also been slow to move during the 1993-94 legislative battles. So during the 2000s, Orszag prepared the way for the next reform push. Between 2006 and 2009, he had CBO scoring protocols worked out in detail, so the green-eyeshades guys and gals would be able to work quickly and, hopefully, label and score health reform provisions in ways more amenable to holding together Democratic legislative coalitions. After Obama won the presidency, Orszag

moved into the White House as head of the Office of Management and Budget, from whence he could bird-dog health reform negotiations and facilitate cooperation with the Congressional Budget Office.

Harnessing Market Forces to Mitigate Global Warming

Looking at intellectual preparations to legislate carbon caps, we see a similar story of adaptation to market forces and established business interests as the developments just discussed for the health reform arena. Influential environmentalist supporters of “realistic” climate-change efforts had worked for years to promote market-accommodating policy frameworks, reaching out to receptive business chieftains in the process.

The decades of the 1990s and 2000s brought controversy and realignment in the U.S. environmental movement, whose primal legislative victories had been scored decades earlier, when landmark laws like the Clean Air Act of 1970, the Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 were put on the books. Once those laws and federal regulatory bureaucracies to enforce them were in place, the DC political opportunity structure shifted – and so did the organization and focus of environmental activism. Big environmental organizations headquartered in Washington DC and New York expanded their professional staffs and became very adept at preparing scientific reports and commentaries to urge the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) onward. They also filed lawsuits when necessary, and lobbied Congressional staffers who were frequently open to improving regulations about clean air and water. Setbacks certainly

happened in the 1980s when President Reagan Republican and other GOP conservatives pushed to stall and roll back environmental regulations. Yet even then the professionalized environmental organizations proved adept at fighting on defense – by continuing to lobby in Congress and recruiting hundreds of thousands of additional adherents using mass mailings that dramatized the conservative threats to environmental gains.²⁵ As long as they could work with friendly Congressional Democrats and their staffers and appeal to moderate Republicans in Congress, the professional environmental organizations did not need to rethink the big picture.

By the 1990s, global warming was recognized among environmentalists as a threat to the environment very different from traditional kinds of air and water pollution. The EPA is not optimally organized to cope with such an overarching issue for the national economy, because its parts are focused on pollution in land, air, and rivers, lakes and oceans – and the same was true of the original organization of expertise in professional environmental organizations. To address the new global threat, major environmental organizations added experts and new divisions, but at first, most professional environmentalists envisaged responding to climate change by extending or supplementing regulatory powers at the EPA, the ones they were accustomed to thinking about. They pushed for new EPA authority to regulate particular types of dangerous emissions. At the same time, many environmentalists wanted wary legislators to vote for highly visible new taxes on carbon-energy sources such as gasoline or electricity from coal-fired plants. The taxes would raise prices on dirty energy and generate revenues for government to direct toward green technology subsidies and investments.

Gradually, however, a new strain of market-friendly environmentalism gained ground.²⁶ Not long after he took over, at age 30, as head of the faltering Environmental Defense Fund, Fred Krupp launched a bold strategy to place less emphasis on lawsuits and regulatory enactments and instead pursue environmental goals through “strange bedfellows” coalitions between environmental experts and particular business leaders.²⁷ Krupp made a splash – and sparked acrimonious debates among environmentalists, too – with a November 20, 1986 *Wall Street Journal* editorial called “New Environmentalism Factors in Economic Needs.”²⁸ Not only was the venue well chosen to attract sympathetic attention from Republicans and business leaders; Krupp’s rhetorical strategy was equally brilliant. He started by pointing out that “new leaders” were being chosen to lead old-line environmental organizations – sending the not so subtle, time-honored message that the old guys should give way to fresh blood – and then announced that it was time for a new “third stage” in environmentalism. This was a clever way to promote his business-oriented strategy as the inevitable next phase, the coming thing. Pioneering U.S. environmentalists, Krupp explained, sought to conserve resources and beautiful enclaves like Yosemite; and the second-phasers took over in the 1960s and 1970s, looking to punish and regulate polluters. But now it was time for a less “relentlessly negative” phase that would move beyond “reactive opposition” to industry to work with business and channel market forces, looking for ways to pursue at the same time environmental protection and the valid economic goals of furthering “growth, jobs, taxpayer and stockholder interests.”

Not surprisingly, Krupp’s approach at EDF caught the attention of advisors to Republican President George Bush, Sr., who would soon be looking for a way to deliver

on campaign promises to fight the “acid rain” (caused by sulfur dioxide emissions from Midwestern power plants) that was harming northeastern lakes and forests. Many in the broad environmental community looked askance when Krupp later teamed up with electric company executive Jim Rogers and with the Bush White House to back an emissions trading system to reduce the pollutants causing acid rain. Before long, Congress installed this experiment in the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act, and the new approach soon proved itself. At a lower than expected cost, acid-rain causing emissions were ultimately reduced far below initial projections.

The acid rain success launched an enticing policy model. Thereafter, emissions trading under a cap rapidly gained new acceptance among professional environmentalists – on its way to becoming “the holy grail of environmental policymaking.”²⁹ The 1990 federal approach to acid rain encouraged the design of similar policy proposals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the entire economy. The first applications were in regional compacts among state governments in the Northeast and Northwest, followed by adoption of a kind of carbon capping and trading system by the European Union. As environmental policy scholar Leigh Raymond explains, in the early efforts, environmentalists focused mostly on the regulatory caps set by governments, but as time passed they paid more attention to how allowances to emit greenhouse gasses were handed out to businesses – or sold at auction.³⁰ Instead of giving allowances away based on industry emission levels in the past, many environmentalists moved toward supporting auctions, which would in effect encourage efficient market decisions about investing in new technologies, and also generate government revenues to invest in green energy or remit to citizens and regions especially hard-hit by rising energy prices. In any event, the

early real-world experiments with cap and trade programs fed back into ongoing intellectual debates about how best to adapt this approach to the overarching challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the fight against global warming. “Cap and trade” became the favored approach for moderate environmentalists and the apparent key to forging alliances with some business leaders to push legislation that could gain Republican as well as Democratic votes in Congress. Business was presumed to have great sway with Republicans, so winning over some corporate chieftains and business sectors was assumed – simply assumed – to be the magic key to wooing Republican votes in Congress. The ideal combination of wise policy and effective politics seemed at hand!

Indeed, as ideas moved toward actual legislation, the momentum behind market-accommodating approaches to setting a carbon cap for the U.S. economy was faster from 2000 to 2009 than any movement toward comprehensive health reform. To be sure, regulated and expanded health insurance was enacted in Governor Romney’s Massachusetts in 2006, but despite a certain amount of cheerleading, Romney’s policy model did not inspire actual legislation in any additional states. With the Republican Party in charge in Washington DC, nothing advanced on the national health reform front. Democratic politicians, constituencies, and experts could only lay in wait and fine tune their plans. Meanwhile, key environmentalists kept reaching out to business and moderate Republicans, and managed to persuade teams of Senators to introduce cap and trade styled bills and bring them to vote.

With these warm-up steps, cap and trade proponents believed they were inching toward eventual legislative victory, and certainly looked to be moving closer than health reform supporters during the 2000s. In October 2003, Democrat Joe Lieberman and

Republican John McCain teamed up to maneuver a Senate vote on the “Climate Stewardship Act,” which garnered 43 votes in favor (from 36 Democrats and six Republicans) versus 55 votes opposed (including ten from Democrats representing states dependent on carbon-sourced energy). A modified McCain-Lieberman effort, called the “Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act” got a less favorable vote in 2005 (losing 60 to 38). Another effort in the same lineage, the “Climate Security Act” of 2008, sponsored by Lieberman and Republican John Warner went down by the closer margin of 48 to 36. The 2008 vote totals were disappointing, but proponents suggested that at least six Senators who had to be absent on voting day would have supported the legislation if it had come close to the 60 votes needed to break a filibuster. This was a bit of whistling in the dark, but cap and trade proponents remained optimistic, because the November 2008 elections seemed likely to strengthen their hand.

That John McCain was absent as a sponsor during the Lieberman-Warner effort – and in fact did not even leave the presidential campaign trail to register his vote – did not much disturb cap and trade proponents. They considered GOP presidential contender still to be tacitly in their corner; and they were pleased that during the GOP primary campaign season McCain stuck with his support of cap and trade in principle, even when attacked by all other GOP contenders (including Mitt Romney, who denounced cap and trade as a big tax increase on all American families and businesses).³¹ During the general election as well, McCain expressed occasional vague support for some kind of cap and trade legislation. To environmentalists invested in the holy grail of cap and trade, McCain appeared to be what they wanted to see, the same old GOP maverick determined to play for the votes of the Republican moderate voters and Independents who, according to

polls, wanted the United States to act on the threat of global warming. “We invested a lot in John McCain,” one pivotal DC player told me.³²

From 2006 on, cap and trade proponents were also creating and working within the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP), which was publicly announced in January 2007. USCAP brought together more than two dozen big business CEOs with the leaders of big environmental organizations – the Environmental Defense Fund, the National Resources Defense Council, the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, the World Resources Institute, and the Nature Conservancy. (Originally, the National Wildlife Federation was also on board, but it eventually dropped out in early 2009.) USCAP formed specifically to hash out the details of a legislative blueprint for a nationwide cap and trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The game plan called for CEOs and Big Enviro honchos to team up, work out a plan, and press their carefully brokered handiwork on Congress as soon as the hoped for opportunity arose after the looming 2008 elections.

When John McCain lost the presidency to Democrat Barack Obama, leading environmentalists and business leaders participating in the USCAP still hoped that the old maverick would team up with a number of other putatively environment-friendly Republicans to help push bipartisan cap and trade legislation in the Senate. They trusted that the steps taken to design and lobby for predecessor bills throughout the previous decade had honed the legislative provisions and tuned up the experts and lobbyists that would make success possible this time. By January 2009, when USCAP publicly unveiled its painstakingly negotiated blueprint, cap and trade seemed like a plane gathering speed down the runway, about to take off.

In some ways, the move from planning to DC policymaking went much more smoothly for carbon cappers than for health reformers, because the latter suffered an early snafu when Tom Daschle, potential Obama administration cabinet secretary, health reform czar, and ambassador to Congress, was derailed by a scandal over subsidized limousine rides he had accepted from a business supporter. Environmentalists of various stripes, meanwhile, were heartened by many of the initial appointments to the fledgling Obama administration.³³ These ranged from the appointment of former Clinton EPA administrator Carol Browner to head the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change Policy, and the designation of distinguished scientist and cap and trade proponent Steven Chu to head the Department of Energy. Another key appointment was “long-time proponent of climate-change regulation” John Holdren to head the Office of Science and Technology Policy.³⁴

Beyond appointments, President Obama’s first budget included promising down payments for the climate warriors as well as the health reformers. It designated close to a trillion dollars to pay for health reform, and it posited a new cap and trade system as a major source of federal revenues over the next decade.³⁵ Investments in green energy technologies were also included in Obama’s budget as well as in his stimulus legislation. Budgets matter, because they are where presidents and their advisors either put their money where their mouths have been, or not. DC players always peruse budgets with the kind of avid attention that most of the rest of America reserves for sports news, because the Beltway types know that, absent money, all the rest is empty talk.

New Investments in Coalition-Building and Political Capabilities

Reform campaigns place a lot of emphasis on early presidential appointments and policy signals, and both the health reformers and the climate change warriors got some of what they hoped for at the start of the Obama presidency. But the real battles for major legislation are necessarily waged in Congress, with coalitions of interest groups and public appeals unfolding in intricate interaction with the tortured progress of highly negotiated bills through committees and floor votes and conference committees. Both health reformers and cap and trade proponents knew they had to be ready for prolonged legislative maneuvers and pressure campaigns. But if both sets of reformers understood the legislative drill, they nevertheless laid organizational groundwork in different ways – and the *new* organizational capacities and networks they put in place leading into 2009 would make a difference at key choke points during the 111th Congress.

I say “new” organizational capacities, because of course, prior to any given legislative campaign, both of these policy spheres were already populated by long-established organizations – businesses, professional groups, trade associations and business lobbies, plus policy advocacy and popularly rooted organizations. In the health care arena, there were physicians’ and nurses associations, associations of hospitals, insurance companies, and pharmaceutical manufacturers – all of which tend to be called “stakeholder” associations. And there were more popularly rooted organizations involved in health reform, too, such as labor unions (especially the Service Employees International Union) plus consumer groups, nonprofits and charities. In the environmental arena, the long-established organizations ranged from major, professionally run advocacy

organizations (such as the USCAP participants and the Sierra Club), to protest-oriented operations such as Greenpeace International and the recently growing group called “350.org.” Many state and local environmental groups are also on the broad environmental playing field, including “environmental justice” organizations speaking for minorities and the poor.³⁶ Climate change and other realms of environmental politics also involve major corporations, especially energy producers and distributors. In the health reform and cap and trade dramas, all of the established organizational players were going to push and pull on DC during 2009 and 2010, and some would engage in media campaigns as well.

But beyond such established players, the Usual Suspects, what *new coalitions and capacities for sustained political action* were nurtured and prepositioned for 2009? New capacities for lobbying and mobilization required leadership and funding – and large foundations got involved in selecting the leaders and giving them millions of dollars to prepare for the anticipated politics of legislative sausage-making for health reform and cap and trade. In climate-change politics, the bets were placed on moderate, highly professionalized environmental organizations, and especially on the USCAP coalition that could work out the technical details and broker stakeholder partnerships around a cap and trade proposal and push Congress to move it forward. In health-reform politics, new funding and capacity-building went into various umbrellas for consumer advocates and, most importantly, into a slightly left-of-center effort called “Health Care for America Now” (HCAN) that would orchestrate organizational networks in dozens of states to conduct local events and pressure members of Congress from beyond the Beltway.

Chart 2. Organizational Capacities and Coalitions for the 2009-10 Campaign for Health Reform Legislation

DC LOBBYING CAPACITIES

2008-2010: Shifting, ad hoc coalitions of stakeholders – health care providers, insurance companies, pharmaceutical manufacturers, companies, and unions – consulted with Democratic candidates, the White House and with committee staff in the Senate and House. The sets of groups consulted were often constructed by the officials themselves.

CAPACITIES FOR PUBLIC MOBILIZATION

July 2008--: *Health Care for America Now*, a “left of center” coalition of hundreds of organizations with reach into all 50 states, launched at a DC event and simultaneous events in 52 cities, including 38 state capitals. Run by a steering committee with major unions, MoveOn.org, and ethnic associations. Spent about \$47M on the health reform campaign, raised from Atlantic Philanthropies (\$27M), other foundations (\$6M), private donations (\$6M), and dues and contributions from participating partner organizations (\$9M). Partners hammered out a shared statement of purpose about expanded coverage, regulated insurance, and a “public option” to compete with for-profit insurers. Coalition targeted insurance companies as enemies, and used designated lead organizations in each state to create a presence in local media, mount protests and mobilize people through existing organizations, and pressure Congressional representatives in states and districts.

2008--: *Community Voices for Coverage* jointly created by Community Catalyst and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to give consumer advocates in 18 states expertise and resources to participate in state and national debates about health reform.

Chart 3. Organizational Capacities and Coalitions for the 2009-10 Campaign for Cap and Trade Legislation

DC LOBBYING CAPACITIES

2007-10: U.S. Climate Action Partnership. Publicly founded in 2007 following earlier discussions; a high-level, strange-bedfellows coalition bringing together the heads of six major environmental advocacy organizations (until one pulled back in 2009) with about two dozen CEOs of major U.S. corporations. CEO-level participation was required, with dues of \$100k per year. Negotiated a detailed, consensually accepted cap and trade proposal to reduce economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions, which was publicly announced in January 2009. Participants then lobbied the White House, the House of Representatives, and the Senate to get comparable bills written and enacted into law.

2009-10: Environmental organizations that were not members of USCAP pushed for pending legislation during the House and Senate deliberations. Most were professional advocacy organizations, but some like the Sierra Club also have state affiliates and/or local organizations and members.

CAPACITIES FOR PUBLIC MOBILIZATION

2006 ---: Alliance for Climate Protection. Founded by Al Gore and funded at \$80-\$100M annually to do nonpartisan mass persuasion and “individual engagement activities,” deploying 16 state directors and dozens of field organizers to 28 states. Aimed “to persuade the American people... of the ...urgency of....comprehensive solutions for the climate crisis... [and] catalyze a culture shift...required for government and business leaders to develop an effective domestic framework and international treaty.”

Sept 2009 ---: Clean Energy Works. A coalition of 60 to 80 unions, environmental, hunters’ and veterans’ and religious groups. Targeted 28 midwestern, western, and southern states during the Senate deliberations, with about \$50M in advertising and 200 paid field organizers. Did not talk about climate change, but used the slogan “Better Jobs, Less Pollution, More Security.” Staged actions opposing big oil in 25 cities during August 2009.

Summer 2009---: 350.org involved 2,500 people in a campaign to pressure Senators in conjunction with the advocacy groups **15ky** and the **Energy Action Coalition**. Used a website tracking senators who got oil industry donations and spent \$100K for advertising.

In charts 2 and 3, I have pulled together a rough organizational inventory to show where major investments in new capacity-building were made in both reform arenas. In the health reform arena, interestingly enough, new organization-building investments seem to have been fairly minimal in the overall scheme of things – and certainly did not reach the level of funding or the scale of new organized undertakings that happened in the climate change area. There is a good reason for that. During 2007 and 2008, the campaign organizations of the major Democratic presidential contenders – John Edwards, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama – in a sense served as the focal points for everyone invested in the Next Big Push for comprehensive health reform. Experts, unions, health-industry stakeholders, citizen groups, pretty much everyone who believed that a new opening for comprehensive health reform legislation was on the horizon and wanted to shape the parameters of the possible and desirable, all jumped into the Democratic campaigns early and tried to grab the ears of the would-be nominees and their staffs. Health care reform was a long-time Democratic Party priority, so the party's internal debates and presidential campaign organizations were where much of the action was in 2007 and 2008.

Some major foundations, especially the massive Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJ), invested in expert and stakeholder projects that could feed into, first, the presidential campaigns, and then the administration of whichever Democrat won the presidency (if and when one did). RWJ also encouraged consumer networks through an umbrella organization called Catalyst. Beyond that, a few foundations took a more political approach, looking for ways to address with new organizational efforts what was widely seen as a deficit back in 1993-94: the capacity to mobilize support outside of DC

in the states and Congressional districts. The California Endowment moved from funding reform efforts that fell short in its home state toward looking for opportunities to influence national reform. And Atlantic Philanthropies, though it had no established history in health policymaking, decided to become a major, early player by seeding organization for “social justice” through health reform well before the 2008 elections.³⁷ Compared to the big environmental funding that went into USCAP and two major public-message organizations for cap and trade, the Alliance for Climate Protection and Clean Energy Works, the Atlantic Philanthropies investment in health reform was fairly paltry in the sense that it cost many fewer millions of dollars. But Atlantic’s seed support for HCAN was for an unusual kind of outside DC mobilizing effort that ended up creating pivotal leverage on the 2009-10 legislative process.

HCAN on the Left Edge of the Possible

In 2007, newly installed leaders at Atlantic Philanthropies were looking for ways to have a quick impact through actions, rather than via the usual kind of multi-year planning confabs that happen at foundations with new leaders. After some preliminary discussions tempted them with the possibility of influencing health reform politics during a (possibly) incoming Democratic administration, Atlantic’s board gave planning grants both to FamiliesUSA, a well-established small foundation oriented to speaking for health-care consumers, and to the organizing committee for a new undertaking called Health Care for America Now (HCAN). This new entity was a coalition of labor unions, consumer, and community groups that wanted to pre-position state-level field operations

able to involve hundreds of local union and community groups in lobbying for health reforms that met the coalition's principles.³⁸ Proposals to Atlantic Philanthropies were delivered for vetting in the early spring of 2008 – and they took alternative approaches to mobilizing for health reform.

FamiliesUSA presented a plan to engage supporters and spread information about the advantages of health reform, generally defined, in fifteen “battleground” states, that is, states where the partisan balance could be up for grabs. In addition, FamiliesUSA proposed to assemble broad stakeholder coalitions. The proposal from HCAN was bolder and more innovative. Rather than just focus on “battleground” or “swing” states, HCAN outlined a very detailed fifty-state plan for linking together already-existing union and community and advocacy organizations. HCAN included in its national steering committee organizations that had reach into dozens of states, and it also inventoried local organizational partners that could get involved in each state. By networking existing organizations, it aimed to be able to contact millions of citizens across the country and cooperate with national efforts by fielding events and lobbying in many legislative districts – not just “swing” districts, but in the districts of virtually all Democrats in Congress. HCAN wanted to be able to push and support nominal Congressional supporters of reform, as well as legislators on the fence.

The two proposals to Atlantic also took different stances on the substantive goals they would further. FamiliesUSA would not try to have its partners negotiate the content of reform proposals to support, but HCAN proposed to have groups sign on to a detailed common agenda. This was thought to be crucial to build trust and bridge tensions on the center-left, where in the past divisions about policy preferences had undercut

cooperation. Common principles would also facilitate accountability, because HCAN's national steering committee proposed to work on contracts with lead organizations in each state and hold them responsible for delivering efforts and events in the reform battles to come.

Fatefully, Atlantic Philanthropies chose the HCAN plan to receive what ultimately added up to \$27 million in foundation funding, with investments starting early in 2008 and continuing through 2010. Early money was critical, because it enabled HCAN to organize across dozens of states and build trust and test messages well before Obama arrived in the White House. In addition, HCAN got increments of funding from other sources – \$6 million from other foundations, \$6 million from individual donors, and \$9 million in dues from organizations in the coalition – to build what became a total two-year war chest of \$47 million.³⁹ The sheer amount of money was significant, but not huge by the standards of major DC legislative wars. What mattered was where the money went. In his retrospective book on the HCAN effort he led, Richard Kirsch quotes an Atlantic Foundation leader as being impressed by the shared specific principles of the HCAN plan, as well as by the fact that “while not entirely an outsider plan, it was an advocacy plan based on continued pressure from those left of center, although not so left as to be out of the discussion.”⁴⁰

Indeed, the HCAN coalition was committed to the same overall approach to health reform as all other actors in and around the Democratic Party establishment – the approach stressing regulation of private insurers combined with big new public subsidies to extend coverage to more than 30 million uninsured Americans. But HCAN had its own take on the overall game plan. While some DC health reform proponents were

negotiating with business stakeholders, HCAN targeted private insurance companies as “enemies” of reform, and called for a “public option” insurance plan like Medicare to be included as a choice for people buying new coverage with health reform subsidies.⁴¹ This idea, launched by Jacob Hacker at Yale University with backing from labor-funded think tanks, was at the leftward edge of the expert consensus feeding Democratic presidential candidates’ proposals for health reform. (Hacker got a hearing from all the campaigns, but David Cutler had more of the inside track.) By adopting Hacker’s “public option” as part of its shared principles for reform, HCAN was able to situate itself in a strategically pivotal place. HCAN filled the space between inside-DC elite players and brokers, on the one hand, and leftist health reformers who remained loyal to the idea of Canadian-style single-payer health insurance, on the other hand. HCAN activists continued to argue with progressives further to their left, even as they adopted much of the same progressive language demonizing private health insurance practices – and endorsed an overall regulatory framework acceptable to more moderate health reform supporters. It was quite a balancing act. HCAN’s focus on a key left-center reform provision, the public option, plus its mobilization against insurance company practices, allowed the coalition to rope in a lot of energy and support on the left for what ultimately became Affordable Care, but to do so without become captive to an entirely inside-the-Beltway bargaining process.

In the health legislation dramas that played out – and dragged out – from early 2009 through March 2010, the investments made by citizens organizers and Atlantic Philanthropies paid off handsomely, though not to achieve exactly what they set out to achieve. The vaunted “public option” was briefly incorporated in House legislation and

pushed by many Democratic Senators, too. But key brokers like Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus never accepted the idea, and the public option did not make it into the final rounds of legislation hammered out after the Scott Brown victory in Massachusetts concentrated the minds of most reformers on just getting some version of Affordable Care through Congress. Tellingly, in the final weeks, HCAN dropped its insistence on the public option, yet took that difficult step without standing down from the overall health reform push.⁴² The coalition used its connections in many districts, especially those of freshman House Democrats, to keep up the pressure to vote “yes” on the bills Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi finally presented in the House; similarly, HCAN affiliates played a role in getting Democratic Senators to turn to majority reconciliation voting procedures to get final compromises with the House through their chamber.

In sum, center-left-of-the-possible pressures, funded at a cost to foundations and donors well below the cost of the climate-change “public messaging” efforts I am about to discuss, ended up playing a crucial role in getting the compromised Affordable Care legislation to President Obama’s desk in March of 2010. The new health reform law was far from perfect, in HCAN’s view or the eyes of any major actor in the drama of its passage. But an enacted comprehensive reform bill is a big deal; once a framework, however imperfect, is in place, it is hard to undo and can serve as a platform for future progress. Establishment DC policy players in health reform often did not give HCAN conscious heed or credit. When Lawrence Jacobs and I interviewed DC players in health legislation, especially in the Senate, they all pooh-poohed HCAN’s efforts. But they probably owed their ultimate legislative victory in part to the inside-outside lobbying HCAN organized, because in the districts of dozens of Democrats across the country,

especially House Democrats, local groups in the network were always weighing in – and were especially well prepared to insist on final enactment of a compromise version of Affordable Care after the Brown election imperiled it.⁴³ Without pressure from far beyond the Beltway, Congress would surely have scurried away from the arduous and controversial end-game at that point.

Climate Reformers Invest in Insider Bargaining and Media Ads

The new organizational investments made to prepare for the 2009 opportunity to pursue carbon-capping legislation focused much more on insider bargaining and within the Beltway lobbying than on building capacities in states and localities for a push from the left edge of the possible. To prepare for carbon-capping legislative efforts, hundreds of millions of dollars were invested by major foundations and wealthy donors, surely more in total than was invested in laying groundwork for health reform. Journalists Petra Bartosiewicz and Marissa Miley tell the story in some detail and offer specific financial estimates in section three of their “Too Polite Revolution” narrative. Several major foundations – especially the California-based William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, plus the Minnesota-based McKnight Foundation – took the lead during the 2000s in encouraging professional environmental groups to place a priority on climate change both globally and in the United States. Their efforts were coordinated to carry through the strategic recommendations in *Design to Win*, an August 2007 report commissioned by environmentally oriented foundations to

delineate (as the subtitle put it) “philanthropy’s role in the fight against global warming.”⁴⁴

As the singular noun “role” suggests, this report embodied a quest for strategic unity among funders. “As scientific evidence of climate change has become clearer,” the report’s Executive Summary explained, “philanthropists... are inundated with a dizzying array of contradictory options and opinions.” To “chart a course through this maze,” the reports authors consulted scientific experts, corporate consultants (such as McKinsey), and representatives of major foundations, and in the end came up with a set of priorities for funding in the next decade. Actions across the globe were included, and the report called for conservation measures and steps toward new efficiencies in various industrial sectors. Yet “carbon reductions” in the United States and the European Union, achieved in significant part through “a cap on carbon output” was clearly laid out as a pressing priority. Only about \$200 million a year was being given by philanthropists to further the key priorities, the *Design to Win* report concluded; and it called for an immediate major increase in funding, by an *additional* \$600 million annually.

“As a direct result” of this influential report, explain journalists Bartosiewicz and Miley, major foundations “pooled their resources and committed over \$1.1 billion over five years” to be channeled through ClimateWorks, a new foundation focused on combating climate change.⁴⁵ The new organization was headed Hal Harvey, who had previously spearheaded Hewlett Foundation support for a bipartisan expert commission, the National Commission on Energy Policy, which in 2004 recommended a national cap and trade system for the U.S. economy. This body was meant to pave the way for federal policymaking, and eventual key players in the Obama administration, including Science

Advisor John Holdren, were involved in the commission. ClimateWorks was the next logical step. When launched in 2008, ClimateWorks was intended to aggregate the financial punch behind cap and trade along with other anti-global warming efforts. In the end, the sum total of philanthropic giving went beyond the ClimateWorks principals alone, because (in the words of Bartosiewicz and Miley) “two additional California-based foundations, the Energy Foundation and the Sea Change Foundation, also invested in cap and trade policy.”⁴⁶

Big new philanthropic investments in climate-change efforts including cap and trade did not go to anything analogous to the HCAN undertaking in health reform. Climate-change giving went into building new expert capacities in major environmental organizations, a number of which “elevated climate change to the top of their agendas” from the mid-2000s and redirected “personnel and resources to lobbying on the issue.”⁴⁷ Some multi-million dollar grants also went into efforts at the League of Conservation Voters and the National Resources Defense Council to “educate the public” about climate-change issues, while other hefty grants helped build expertise relevant to designing the specifics of cap and trade. At the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council, big foundation grants paved the way toward engagement in USCAP stakeholder bargaining in 2007 and 2008.

In addition to investments in commissions and the ClimateWorks funding channel, the United States Climate Action Partnership can in fact be seen as the major new organizational investment by climate reformers – the contrapuntal counterpart in the environmental sphere to HCAN in the health care arena. Both HCAN and USCAP worked out detailed shared policy programs to be pressed upon the White House and

Congress at the first opening; and both required major monetary and time commitments from the organizations that served in their steering arrangements. As we have already seen, HCAN negotiated detailed policy goals that all participant groups agreed to support; and HCAN also eschewed the usual leftist practices of requiring very little to join a coalition by insisting that member unions and community and consumer groups on the Steering Committee commit two staffers to work on the campaign and give at least half a million dollars in resources, including \$100,000 in cash (although the cash could be adjusted to get some smaller minority-led groups on board).⁴⁸ Similarly, the rules of the game for principals joining USCAP required major corporate and environmental organizations to pay annual dues of \$100,000 and also lend their CEOs to an arduous and protracted bargaining process.⁴⁹ That process sought to move the “strange bedfellows” in this stakeholder coalition from general principles to detailed legislative proposals. Organizational leaders and their staffs had to settle contentious specifics such as goals and timetables for greenhouse gas reductions and allocations of pollution allowances to specific industrial sectors. The back and forth, the blowups, the last-minute concessions – all the colorful details fill many pages in Eric Pooley’s *The Climate War*.

Without repeating Pooley’s account of the USCAP negotiations, the reality to underline is that the effort to hammer out a “strange bedfellows” agreement between some corporate leaders and some leading environmental honchos was inherently asymmetrical, binding participants unevenly in a way quite different from the all-around commitments to shared principles by members of the HCAN coalition. USCAP’s inherent asymmetry was grounded in the modus operandi of business organizations versus nonprofit advocacy groups – and the asymmetry is also attributable to the greater

investment of environmental groups in pushing cap and trade legislation of some sort over the top. When one side has fewer options for maneuver, and also needs a bargain to succeed more than the other, the needy, inflexible side will surely give more, and do so again and again.

The corporations that participated in USCAP could double their bottom-line bets – by participating in the strange-bedfellows effort to hammer out draft climate legislation that was as favorable as possible to their industry or their firms, and at the same time participating in business associations likely to lobby against much or all of the terms of that insider bargain once it faced Congress or the general public. As they should do given their role as heads of profit-maximizing businesses, the corporate CEOs in USCAP – such as Jim Rogers of Duke Energy – could work in more than one way to protect their firms’ bottom lines. But heads of the Environmental Defense Fund, the National Resources Defense Council, and the other the leading environmental organizations in USCAP had to stick by whatever commitments they made in the internal coalitional process, or else it would fall apart. How could Fred Krupp of EDF possibly allow a collapse in these negotiations, given that his entire career was premised on the notion that “third way” bargains with business are the key to saving the environment? Not surprisingly, the major environmental groups that stuck with USCAP throughout 2009 and 2010 steadily gave ground on issues like free allowances and offsets to carbon polluters. They steadily lost leverage, because they could not simultaneously stand up for negotiated compromises with their business partners in USCAP and have their own organizations push unremittingly for tougher, more environmentally friendly legislative provisions. Leaders like EDF’s Krupp and Frances Beinecke from the Natural Resources

Defense Council necessarily placed all their chips on cooperation with some industrial sectors and business chieftains, and had to hope that those business leaders could push Congress to act by convincing key legislators that not *all* businesses were opposed to cap and trade legislation. When encouragement from USCAP businesses proved to be far from enough in the Senate, the USCAP environmental groups had no other real arrows in their quivers. And since they were pretty much the entire ball game for carbon capping legislation, they had no equivalent of the nationally networked HCAN working on the left flank of the possible to push in their stead during the legislative end-game.

But is this a fair assessment – to say that too many of the chips for carbon capping were placed on USCAP alone, with all its inherent bargaining asymmetries? After all, as chart 3 shows, investments in climate-change lobbying and stakeholder bargaining were complemented by *separate – and in dollar terms, very large – investments in public “messaging” and mobilization.* Funded at about \$80-\$100 million annually, Al Gore’s organization, the Alliance for Climate Protection, was active starting in 2006, from the time of his big movie release and subsequent celebrity. The Alliance claimed field organizers in more than two dozen states, and it enrolled citizen activists and ran nonpartisan paid media advertising campaigns aiming (in the organization’s words) “to persuade the American people... of the ... urgency of adopting and implementing effective and comprehensive solutions for the climate crisis.”⁵⁰ More pertinent to the cap and trade battle itself, another public messaging effort, dubbed Clean Energy Works, was launched in the summer of 2009, right after the House passed the Waxman-Markey bill. Led by a Paul Tewes, a renowned former field organizer for the Obama campaign, the Clean Energy Works campaign reportedly deployed about 200 field organizers in 28

Midwestern, western, and southern states, and spent about \$50 million on mass advertising during the Senate deliberations of 2009-10, pushing the general message that action to combat climate change would lead to “Better Jobs, Less Pollution, and More Security.”⁵¹ Tens of millions more were spent on cap and trade-related public messaging by various other donors and green groups.

Overall, the new organizational investments for the cap and trade push could be described as furthering a clear political division of labor. Supported by experts, the insider stakeholders in USCAP would bargain out the details of actual legislation, while the pollsters, ad-writers, and field operatives in the messaging campaigns would try to persuade enough Americans to be generally supportive to open space for legislators in Congress to act. The messaging campaigns would not make it their business to actually shape legislation – or even talk about details with ordinary citizens or grass roots groups. Ordinary American citizens and street-level activists were not presumed to have an interest in or a need to know about the “how” of anti-warming legislation; they were just supposed to be persuaded to endorse the general principle of a legislative solution to a pressing problem.⁵²

This division of labor in the cap and trade effort – insiders work out legislation, pollsters and ad-writers try to encourage generalized public support – reflects the way most advocates and legislators in the DC world proceed nowadays. “The public” is seen as a kind of background chorus that, hopefully, will sing on key. Insiders bring in million-dollar pollsters and focus-group operators to tell them what “the public” thinks and to try to divine which words and phrases they should use in television ads, radio messages, and internet ads to move the percentages in answers to very general questions

in national polls. It all has a very distanced, antiseptic quality to it, as powerful and very economically secure people look down on the American multitudes with a kind of bemused amazement and try to find poll results about public attitudes to wave in front of policymakers. A typical scene at a posh environmental retreat in the summer of 2008 is recounted by Pooley. Advocates supporting cap and trade were trying to draw lessons from the ignominious showing of Lieberman-Warner in the Senate, getting ready for the next rounds. Drawing on public opinion studies that no doubt cost millions, the EDF Director of Communications reported that “people care more about jobs, gas prices, and their families than they do about the climate.”⁵³ Well, yes. This was an expensive rendering of the obvious about the worries of most Americans in an era of stagnant wages and rising economic insecurities.⁵⁴ Participants in the retreat do not seem to have concluded that their efforts and policy choices should henceforth directly address the top concerns of ordinary Americans. Rather, from reports like this came nonpartisan messaging strategies that, in general and gauzy terms, mentioned unspecified “green jobs” and “American energy independence” as the reasons for ordinary citizens to acquiesce to sweeping climate change legislation, whose specifics those citizens were supposedly not to worry about too much.

Both Gore’s Alliance and Tewes’s Clean Energy Works claimed to have airlifted state organizers into dozens of swing states to work on media-events at crucial legislative junctures. But most of their tens of millions of dollars in messaging resources went into mass persuasion advertisements, especially on television. And how effective were the ads? They rarely identified heroes or enemies in specific ways – beyond tentatively criticizing generalized “polluters” – and they maintained a lofty nonpartisan stance well

above the level of any policy specifics, offering very general calls for Americans to act together to address sketchily defined problems caused by climate change. Presumably, the climate-change ads were meant to get citizens to register more “concern” about global warming, which in turn would supposedly make it easier for legislators to support cap and trade. But from the ads – and from most of the media events that paid organizers airlifted into swing states to put together – citizens could not learn how, specifically, pending legislation would help their families deal with pressing concerns in a deepening national economic downturn. Admittedly, ad writers in the global warming arena may have an inherently harder time spelling out personal consequences than advertisers telling stories about patients who suffer when they don’t have health insurance coverage or when insurance companies refuse to cover an illness. But it is not clear that the climate change ad writers even tried to spell out concrete benefits that new legislation could bring to ordinary families – because, in fact, the cap and trade bills debated in Congress were all about inter-organizational deals among corporations, unions, advocates, and industrial sectors, not about specific benefits that would be directly delivered to individual citizens. The best ad writers would be able to do would be to personally dramatize threats from climate change, and they rarely even did that.

Not surprisingly, the opponents of carbon-capping had much more concrete things to say to voters. In their opulently funded advertising and astroturf organizing campaigns, the opponents demonized pending legislation as “cap and tax” and proclaimed that, if the nefarious measures DC insiders were cooking up actually passed Congress, each family would have to spend up to \$3,100 more per year for gas and electricity.⁵⁵ Opponents of carbon capping also painted lurid details about how regulations would hurt business

profits and discourage “job creators.” The opponents did a better job of scaring citizens than the proponents did of arousing enthusiasm for whatever it was they were trying to get through Congress. As cap and trade supporters in the Senate were making last-gasp efforts to rejigger proposals and assemble votes, the American public registered waning support for action and lack of comprehension of what was at issue. The scare-ads of opponents surely had an effect, and the incomprehension was nothing new. Back in May 2009, just before the House acted on Waxman-Markey, only 24% of respondents to a national poll told Rasmussen that they understood what “cap and trade” meant.⁵⁶

During the winter and spring of 2010, the very different end-games for comprehensive health reform and economy-wide carbon-capping legislation came into sharp relief – and revealed that political groundwork and organizational investments made long before were delivering different pay-offs. We do not have to pretend that the final enactment of the Affordable Care Act in March 2010 was inevitable to realize that, when push came to shove after Scott Brown was elected as a potential GOP blocking Senator in January, it meant a great deal to have a nation-spanning, outside-in mobilization effort to push Democrats in Congress to finish the job. At that time, HCAN and other popularly rooted allies favorable to comprehensive health reform kept the pressure on Congress and the White House; and almost all center-left groups with capacities for popular mobilization and messaging turned away from maximalist demands and instead just pushed DC insiders to get a law passed. But during the same months, efforts in the climate-change arena simply lost steam.

When the April 20 explosion of the British Petroleum oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico made it harder to work out cap and trade legislative bargains that included some

pay-offs for oil-state Senators, there was no HCAN equivalent to keep pushing – either for a variant of cap and trade or for some alternative legislation addressing carbon emissions. Inside the Senate, there were a couple of alternative bills put forward, including a proposal to regulate electric utilities and a bill to tax carbon energy and give the money back to individual citizens in the form of annual “dividends” that would help families defray rising energy costs. But both of these alternatives were tardy efforts with no real DC coalitions or national mobilizations behind them. On the environmental terrain, there was no outside-in lobbying network of vast scope with reach into most states pushing for much of anything. The proponents of carbon caps were unable to force a final Senate vote on any legislative approach at all – and the Democratic-led House was left hanging with the controversial measure it pushed over the top in the spring of 2009. For carbon-capping efforts during the early Obama presidency, the end came in a prolonged series of whimpers and cop-outs, as it became clear not only that no Republican Senators would support action, but that many Democrats, including Democratic Leader Harry Reid, also saw no point in carrying the issue further.

Failures of this sort almost always set the stage for further deterioration. After cap and trade faded in the Senate, legislators facing primary or general election battles stopped talking about climate issues and environmental measures altogether – except for conservative Republicans prepared to dispense ridicule, denial, and calls for rollbacks to EPA regulations on the campaign trail. This was the reality leading into the November 2010 elections, which brought massive losses for Congressional Democrats. And the same situation persisted during 2011 and through the 2012 elections. Democrats, including President Obama as he sought reelection, tip-toed around climate issues. With a

few exceptions from coastal-state delegations, Democratic officeholders and candidates were at best willing to talk about new investments in clean energy. Almost all Republicans, meanwhile, engaged in ever-more hyperbolic denunciations of the EPA and promised to remove all obstacles to coal-mining and new drilling by oil companies. A keystone of their “energy policy” is a loud commitment to speed approvals for the new Keystone Pipeline, which would further lock the North American continental economy into exploitation of carbon-intensive energy extracted from Canadian oil-sands. Most Republicans these days also promise to eliminate subsidies and tax credits that have helped make wind and solar power commercially competitive in the United States, while preserving special subsidies and breaks for big oil companies.⁵⁷

OUTFLANKED BY EXTREMISTS

In retrospect, the political terrain on which carbon-capping reformers were maneuvering in 2009 and 2010 was fatefully treacherous well before USCAP issued its legislative blueprint at the start of the Obama presidency. As we have seen, participants in the USCAP effort, along with their supporters in the broad environmental community, sincerely believed the DC stars were aligned for legislation to proceed; and they also trusted that the general American public would accept the need for action to combat climate change. Many of them understood that successful legislation would be watered down and compromised in the Congressional sausage-making process; but they had faith they could make a start at regulating the price of carbon in the U.S. economy, which

would in turn enable the United States to join as a credible partner in world-wide agreements. However, if we step back and look at long- and medium-term developments in party orientations and public views prior to the 2008 elections, we can see that gaping crevasses had opened in the slippery slopes the carbon-cappers were trying to climb. As I am about to spell out, the funders, experts, professional environmentalists, and cooperative business leaders who labored during the 2000s to prepare the way for a legislative push for cap and trade when a friendly president and Congress took office were not noticing the overall shifts in American politics that would make their insider-bargaining effort virtually impossible to pull off.

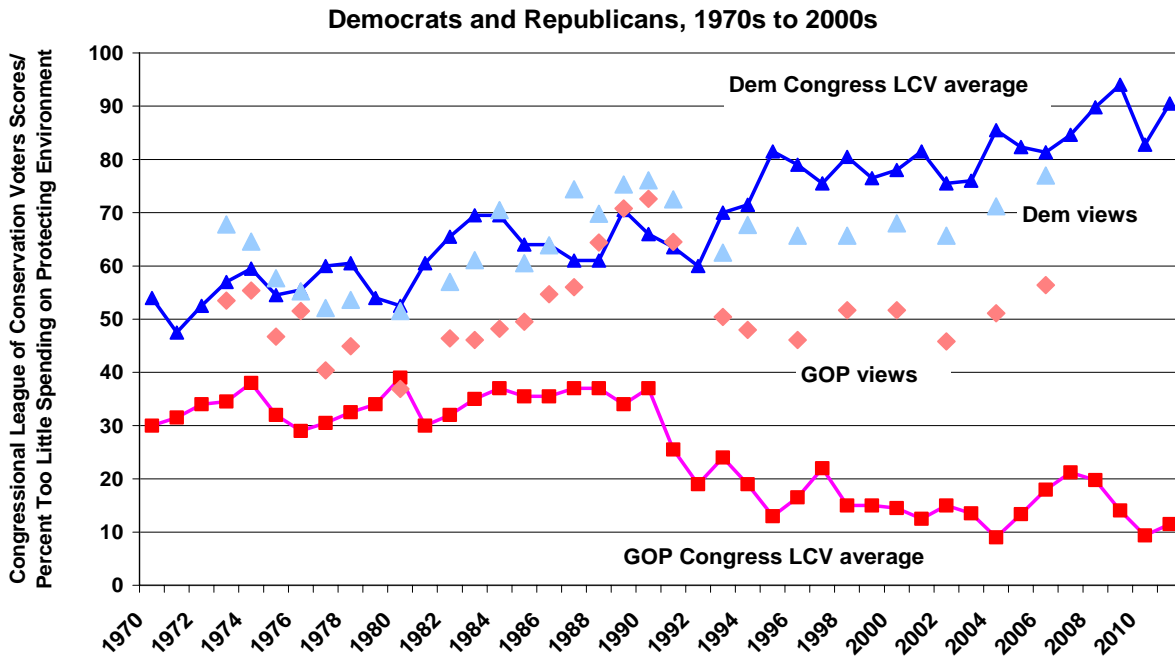
For two decades after 1990, the two major U.S. political parties pulled far apart on environmental issues, and particularly on global warming. Democrats became increasingly committed to taking action about carbon emissions they understood to be spurring global warming, while conservative elites and GOP legislators turned to denial and opposition. Matters arrived at a politically pivotal juncture in 2006 and early 2007, with a definitive U.N. report and Al Gore's influential documentary "An Inconvenient Truth." Public opinion shifted toward viewing global warming as a serious threat that government should address. In response, opponents of carbon-capping took active steps to heighten popular skepticism and change political calculations. Their efforts started to pay off in 2007, months before the economy plunged into recession in 2008 and well in advance of Obama's move into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Thereafter, Tea Party mobilizations finished the job, putting GOP politicians on notice that compromise on environmental issues is unacceptable to ultra-conservative funders and vigilant primary voters. Popular as well as elite pressures from the right flanks of the Republican Party

persist to this day, and raise serious concerns for policy campaigns that presume the possibility of using insider bargaining to forge bipartisan compromises.

The Roots of GOP Opposition

To see how we got here, let's start by dissecting long-term trends in Congress and public opinion. Modern environmentalism took shape in the 1960s and 1970s, when Americans gained new awareness of pollution as a threat to such life-sustaining basics as air and water.⁵⁸ Some twenty million Americans took part in pro-environmental events for Earth Day in 1970, and sustained citizen concern allowed the launch of the protective efforts chartered by the Clean Air Act of 1970, the Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. After the Environmental Protection Agency was set up in 1970, advocacy organizations built up professional staffs of lawyers, lobbyists, and scientific experts to spur and shape federal policy. During the Reagan years in the 1980s, business interests pushed back and tried to weaken or reverse federal environmental rules, but general public sympathy with environmentalism remained strong and a number of major advocacy organizations attracted new contributors and mailing-list adherents as they successfully defended the EPA and the basic edifice of federal environmental laws.

Figure 1. Congressional Pro-Environment Scores and Citizen Support for Increased Environmental Spending



Starting in 1973 and continuing regularly through 2006, the Gallup survey organization asked national samples of adults whether U.S. spending to “protect the environment” was “too much,” “too little,” or “about right.”⁵⁹ Unfortunately, other survey questions about environmental views have not been asked repeatedly over a comparably long stretch. Yet the long-running Gallup question is not bad for getting at partisan breakdowns, because Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, are known to take different positions on the general desirability of public spending. Figure 1 shows the year by year Gallup results, revealing that over several decades Americans were quite amenable to spending for environmental protection, with majorities or near-majorities of both self-identified Republicans and self-identified Democrats opining that

“too little” was being spent. This was true even in the 1980s when the Reagan-led Republican Party was trying to roll back many environmental regulations. During the GOP presidency of George Bush, Sr. from 1988 to 1992, citizens of both party persuasions showed very strong support for spending on environmental protection.

Thereafter popular opinion began to diverge more sharply along partisan lines, as Republican identifiers, especially, became much less likely to say too little was being spent on environmental protection. Partisan opinion gaps of ten to fifteen percentage points persisted from the mid-1990s through the end of the Gallup series in 2006. But even in this era of clear partisan differentiation in citizen support for environmental spending, two realities are worth emphasis. Partisan differences in public opinion remained very small compared to steadily growing partisan splits in Congressional voting about environmental policies; and public views evolved in closer relationship to the pro-environmental positions taken by Democrats in Congress than to the increasingly all-out oppositional voting of Congressional Republicans.⁶⁰

In this report, the principal measure I use to track elite partisan positions comes from scores assigned by the League of Conservation Voters to elected legislators in the House and Senate. Legislators stand at the intersection of public opinion and interest-group pressures; they need support from ordinary voters, but they also solicit donations and receive a steady flow of policy messages from wealthy supporters, economic interest groups, and ideologically inspired advocacy groups. We can presume that legislators are quite sensitive to what partisan elites around them are demanding, yet they do have to win votes, too. Taking both voter preferences and demands from advocates and funders into account, legislators vote on a steady flow of bills and amendments that push policy

in one direction or another. It is valuable to have a consistent way to track these votes, and that is what the League of Conservation voters provides in the environmental policy arena. Each year since its founding in 1970, the League has assembled leading environmentalists to designate important bills and amendments and decide what counts as a “pro-environmental” vote on each. The positions taken by each Senator and member of the House of Representatives are tallied and an average score assigned to that legislator. From the legislators’ scores, it is possible to derive average LCV voting scores for state delegations, entire regions, and party delegations in each chamber. For many years the League issued “National Environmental Scorecard” reports that included summary scores for Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate respectively – although, interestingly enough, it abruptly stopped publishing summary party scores after 2004, with no explanation offered. Nevertheless, the subsequent raw scores can still be averaged in the traditional way to create a consistent series for each party in the House and Senate from 1970 through 2011; and it is also possible to average the House and Senate party scores to come up with an overall party Congressional average for each year, as I have done. In some charts, I use the positive LCV score (where 100 designates the maximum possible pattern of voting in accord with League priorities and zero designates total opposition), while in others I present anti-environmental voting scores (derived by subtracting LCV scores from 100).

A mere glance at trends in the LCV scores displayed in Figure 1 makes it clear that Congressional partisan polarization on environmental priorities is deep and longstanding. Splits between Democratic and GOP legislators started much sooner and were always greater than partisan differences in public opinion, no doubt because

politicians in the two parties were responding to different interests and ideas among funders and interest group leaders. Business interests had more sway with Republicans, while environmental reformers had easier access to Democrats. Nevertheless, Congressional partisan divisions were not extreme during the 1970s and 1980s, and the partisan gap did not grow significantly during that early era. The 24-point difference between the party averages in 1970 was not all that different from the 29-point difference in 1990, despite big shifts in public issue agendas and presidential priorities. During modern U.S. environmentalism's earliest decades, Americans regardless of party tended to support spending on environmental protection, and business interests adjusted to new environmental guidelines as time went by. Broadly in tune with public sentiments, Democrats in Congress tended to support LCV priorities half to two-thirds of the time, while Congressional GOPers – who were more cross-pressured by business interests reluctant to accept environmental regulations – nevertheless supported the same LCV priorities thirty to forty percent of the time.

But after 1990 the modest partisan gap in Congress quickly splayed into a veritable chasm. By the year 2000, the Congressional partisan divide had more than doubled, from 29 points on the LCV scale in 1990 to an extraordinary 63.5 points a decade later. The divide widened even further over the next ten years, reaching an amazing 73.5 points by 2010. Pictures cannot tell us everything (which is why polarization researchers favor complicated regression equations), but Figure 1 makes it obvious that voter sentiment did not drive Congressional partisan splits. Between the early 1990s and the early 2000s, public opinion did *not* polarize anywhere near as much as Congressional voting did. Responses to the long-running Gallup question about “too

little” environmental spending showed a larger partisan split in this period than they had earlier, but ordinary citizens hugged two sides of the middle ground and did not part company with one another on partisan lines to the same extreme as their elected representatives. What is more, from 2002 to 2006, both Democrats and Republicans in the Gallup samples became more supportive of environmental spending; and the public overall was closer to Congressional Democrats than to the Congressional GOP.

At the elite level, the extreme polarization in Congress was certainly a two-sided sorting out. After the mid-1990s, Democrats who stayed in Congress or were newly elected became as pro-environmental in their voting patterns as GOP legislators became the opposite. But the Democrats drifted left gradually as an unruly herd, in which not everyone was always in lockstep. The Democratic House and Senate caucuses (and at times party leaderships) included legislators from the environmentally liberal coastal states, side by side with legislators from mid-continental states where oil, gas, and coal companies are economically powerful and households and businesses use electricity generated in coal-fired plants. Moderate Democrats from such regions break away from liberal Democrats on environmental votes that hurt key industries in their states – or they drive very hard bargains, as the House Democrats involved in the horse-trading over Waxman-Markey did in 2009.

Even so, since 1990, Democrats have moved on environmental issues largely in tandem with their voters, with elected Democrats responding to environmental advocates as they have given greater priority to systemic climate-change issues. From the 1990s, the League of Conservative Voters scorecards increasingly included votes on climate change rules and related issues such as motor-vehicle efficiency standards and limits on harmful

emissions from the production and use of carbon fuels. Environmental advocates remained concerned about classic issues of clean air and water and protection of habitats and species, but they also responded to United Nations reports and scientific findings that were sounding increasingly shrill alarms about systemic environmental degradation, about global warming spurred by energy production and use in modern and developing economies. As environmentalists' priorities evolved, many Democratic voters did too, and most Democrats in Congress followed.

On the Republican side it was a different story. In 1990, a Republican President, George Bush Sr., hammered out the bipartisan amendments to the Clean Air Act that established a cap and trade-like system to reduce sulfur-dioxide emissions known to cause acid rain. Yet soon after those amendments passed by overwhelming margins, Congressional Republicans, including many newly elected in the mid-1990s, lurched away from supporting environmental priorities. The year 1990 was to be the last in which the composite GOP LCV score fell above 30 percent; soon it would be mostly below 20 percent, with rising numbers of Congressional Republicans supporting LCV priorities only ten percent of the time or less. The rightward gallop of Congressional Republicans after 1990 is in some ways puzzling. While Democratic legislators moved largely in tandem with their voters, Republicans shifted right far ahead of rank-and-file party constituents. What is more, the GOP lurch happened as concerns about global warming grew internationally and in the U.S environmental community. President George Bush Sr. looked for more market-friendly methods to regulate emissions dangerous to the environment, but Republicans in Congress soon moved toward denying such problems as well as opposing possible solutions.

Climate Change Denial

Scholars who have looked at this GOP shift point to campaigns and lobbying by carbon-intensive industries and ultra-free-market ideological groups. Republicans had long been responsive to business lobbies, and U.S. business groups became more coordinated and effective at blocking regulations and pressing for reduced taxes during the 1980s and 1990s.⁶¹ Anti-tax groups such as Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform and the plutocrat-funded Club for Growth mobilized to press Republican officeholders and candidates against raising taxes, ever, for any reason.⁶² Instead of worrying about balancing budgets, GOP officials began to push tax cuts and reductions in domestic spending as the solution to all governing problems; and in the political arena the pragmatic conservatism of Ronald Reagan gave way to the bomb-throwing variety of Newt Gingrich. From the mid-1990s on, Republicans in Congress came to see bargaining and compromise with Democrats as morally reprehensible – or, at least, as tickets to worrisome primary challenges from the right.

Meanwhile, in the environmental arena specifically, conservative think tanks, well funded by carbon-industries, wealthy individuals, and ideologically conservative foundations, ramped up efforts to counter climate science findings and ridicule reformers who called for U.S. cooperation with international efforts to limit global warming.⁶³ Anti-environmentalists learned lessons from what they saw as their own limited successes during the 1980s, when the leading environmental organizations had been able to mobilize public sympathy and question undue industry influence in the Reagan

administration. To fight new regulations about warming, conservatives felt they needed “insulation” from overly visible ties to carbon industry groups. They also needed to “manufacture uncertainty” about the problem itself, not just oppose regulatory solutions.⁶⁴

International linkages also mattered. As social scientists Peter Jacques, Riley Dunlap, and Mark Freeman spell out, a pivotal event in the climate arena was the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, which happened just as the Soviet Union broke up and thereby removed a longstanding international bogeyman conservatives had wielded against liberals. With the “Red Menace” disappearing, conservatives “began to see global environmentalism as a threat to U.S. national sovereignty and economic power...,” a new international threat to which liberals were catering. Conservatives were determined to push back hard, not only by funding and lobbying Republicans in Congress, inspiring them to block environmental priorities and prevent the United States from ratifying international agreements, but also by fostering what these scholars call “environmental skepticism.”⁶⁵ Environmentalism, explain Jacques, Dunlap, and Freeman, is “unique among social movements in its heavy reliance on scientific evidence to support its claims,” so the most effective counter-tactic had to include questioning scientists and their findings.⁶⁶

But how were conservatives to accomplish this, given that university-based scholars were moving toward empirically grounded consensus about the threat of human-induced global warming? To get around academia, U.S. anti-environmentalists updated methods that had worked before in the fight against liberal welfare policies and in the fight to stave off regulation of tobacco as a carcinogen. They used non-profit, right-wing

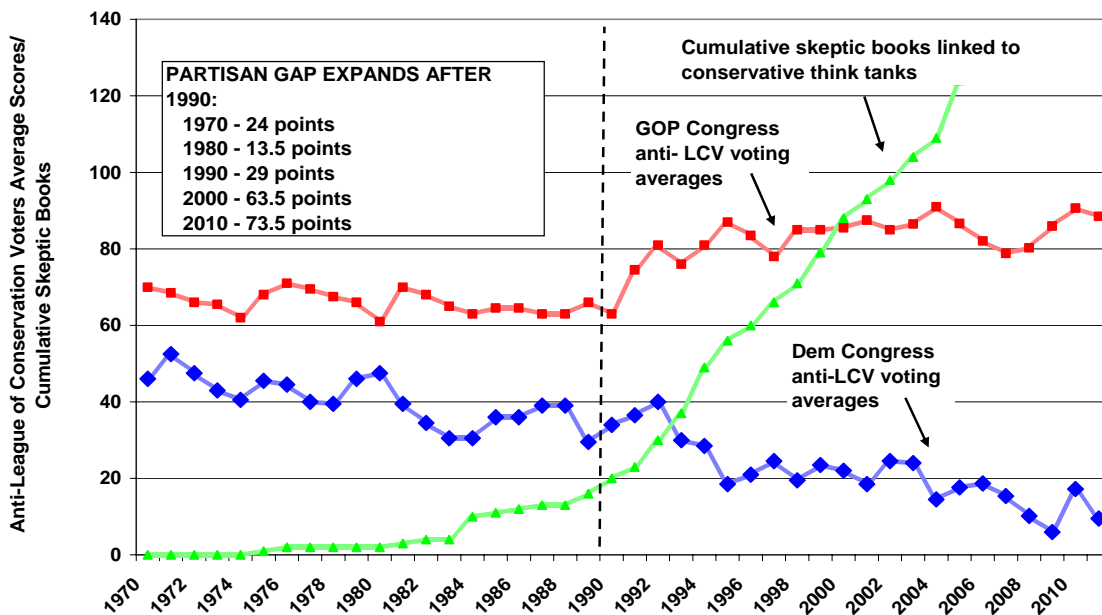
think tanks to sponsor and promote a cascade of books questioning the validity of climate science; and they pounced on occasional dissenters in the academic world, promoting them as beleaguered experts. A “counter-intelligentsia would be deployed to label mainstream academia as “leftist” and put forth a steady stream of books, reports, and policy briefs, not only to inform policymakers and their staffers directly, but also to induce media outlets to question the motives of reformer and present the science of climate change as, at best, controversial.

According to sociologist Robert Brulle, many think tanks involved in sponsoring research and publications raising questions about the threat of global warming are long-standing general-purpose conservative organizations that received new funds to support projects challenging environmental science and regulatory proposals.⁶⁷ In Brulle’s view, ideological funders and think tanks may have played an even stronger role than business interests in promoting climate-change denial, although it is often hard to tell who is funding what, because anonymous channels for directing money into politics have become more readily available in recent years. Brulle estimates that the total amount of money spent to raise questions about climate change and policies to deal with it has been considerably less over recent decades than the amounts spent in support of environmental efforts. “It’s the nature of the spending that makes the difference,” he explains. The environmental movement “actually tries to spend its money on developing solutions to climate change.... [T]hey spend hardly anything on political or cultural processes.” In contrast, the “climate change countermovement spends all of its money there.”⁶⁸ That makes sense, according to Brulle, because the oppositional forces are trying to block

policy changes, seeking to maintain the economic and political status quo that favors fossil fuel production, importation, and consumption.

To test the hypothesis that think tanks have been central to this broad political and cultural denial campaign – and to document that organized denial efforts ramped up sharply around 1990, just as global warming rose on the environmental agenda – Jacques, Dunlap, and Freeman compiled a list of 141 anti-environmental books published in English between 1972 and 2005, and then traced the affiliations and organizational ties of their authors and sponsors, almost all of whom were U.S. based. The overwhelming preponderance, 130 of the 141 books, were either directly sponsored by conservative think tanks, or had authors tied to one or more think tanks. Eight are major organizations – such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the Institute for the Study of Economics and the Environment, and the Weidenbaum Center -- that have led the charge against climate science and do extensive lobbying against environmentalist-supported policies.

Figure 2. Organized Climate Science Skepticism and the Growing Congressional Divide in Environmental Voting



As Figure 2 shows, the accumulated production of books and reports questioning environmentalism, including climate science, turned sharply upward in the 1990s, at the same time that GOP legislators lunged to the far right well in advance of the attitudes of ordinary Republican voters. Of course, the “Organization of Denial” study does not prove that the sharply rising cascade of anti-environmental books as such was the reason Republicans in Congress turned sharply right after 1990. We do not have to assume that GOP Representatives, Senators, and their staffers were burning the midnight oil reading these often turgid tomes to recognize that these books and reports are indicators of a broader, sustained, and well-funded set of efforts to challenge climate-change reformers intellectually, as well as through bread-and-butter lobbying. “Anti-environmentalists,” explain Jacques, Dunlap, and Freeman “learned that it was safer” and more politically effective to rely not only on economic lobbying, but to also “question the seriousness of environmental problems and portray environmentalists (and environmental scientists) as ‘radicals’ who distort evidence in order to exaggerate problems.”⁶⁹ Produced with generous backing from wealthy foundations and corporations channeled through non-profit think tanks, the sponsored books complemented and amplified political contributions and massive DC lobbying efforts. In a steady drumbeat, the denial books and associated reports and briefs undermined the appearance of growing scientific consensus, especially because their hard-working authors penned OpEds and appeared regularly on television, influencing public opinion on the right. Republican candidates and officials no doubt had longstanding, practical reasons to listen to friendly business interests and oppose liberal environmentalists. But the intellectual challenges – and the

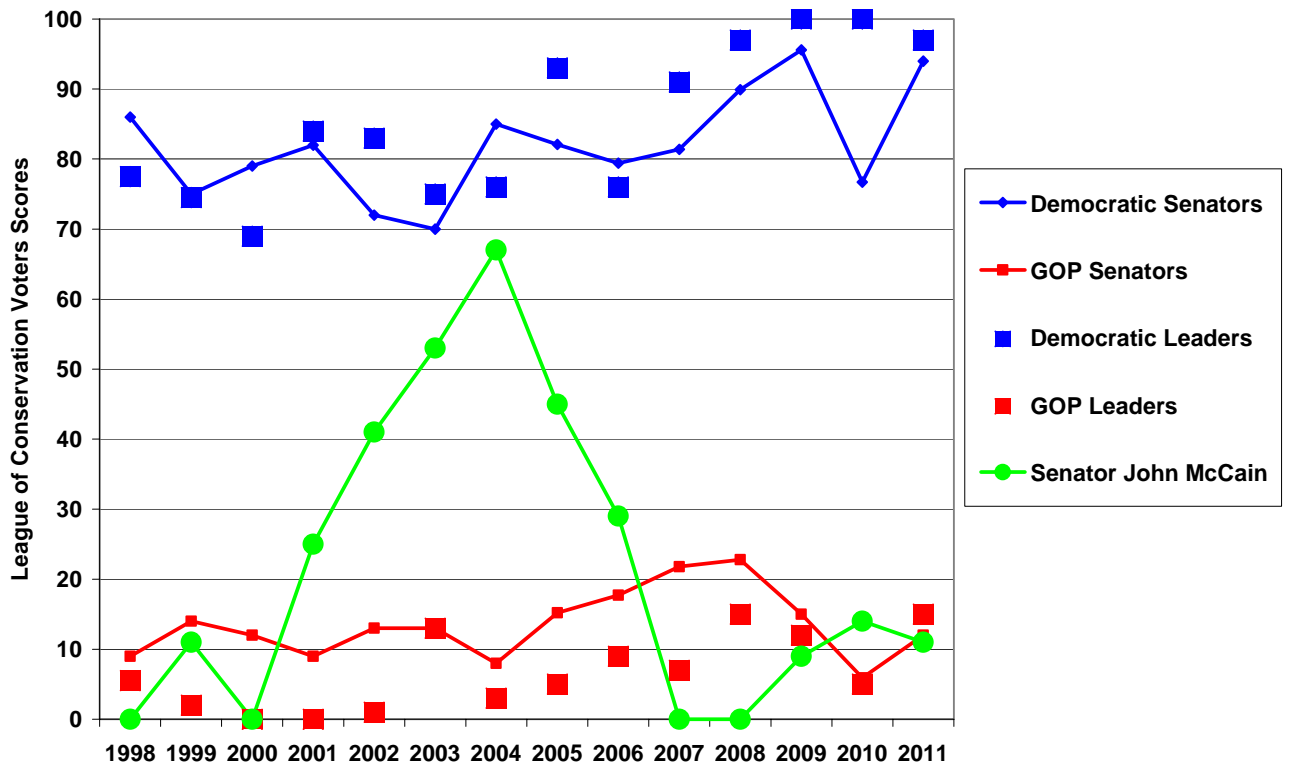
deliberately stoked public doubts about scientific findings – gave them additional rationales for foot-dragging, as long as the science could be called “unsettled.”

The Pivotal Battle for Public Opinion in 2006 and 2007

By the mid-2000s, opponents of carbon caps and other steps to reorient the U.S. economy to limit greenhouse gas emissions had to feel pretty good about where they stood – especially in the Congress of the United States, which would have to pass any legislation taxing carbon fuels or limiting greenhouse gas emissions. As Figure 3 shows, not only were Republican legislators taking oppositional votes on environmental priorities close to 90% of the time, members of the GOP leadership teams in the House and Senate were positioned still further to the right. In a number of years, their LCV scores averaged zero or close to it.

True, strange bedfellows coalitions were gearing up to push for legislated emissions caps accompanied by schemes for trading permits. Conversations between some environmental honchos and some corporate CEOs started in 2004, paving the way for USCAP negotiations to get going in earnest during 2005 and 2006. More important, bipartisan teams of Senators introduced bills and managed to force votes on the floor of the Senate – as they did for the 2003 Lieberman-McCain Climate Stewardship Act and the 2005 McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act. Arizona Republican Senator John McCain was a principal in these first two efforts, as he operated in full “maverick” mode following his challenge to George W. Bush in the 2000 GOP

Figure 3. Pro-Environmental Voting in the U.S. Senate, 2000-2011

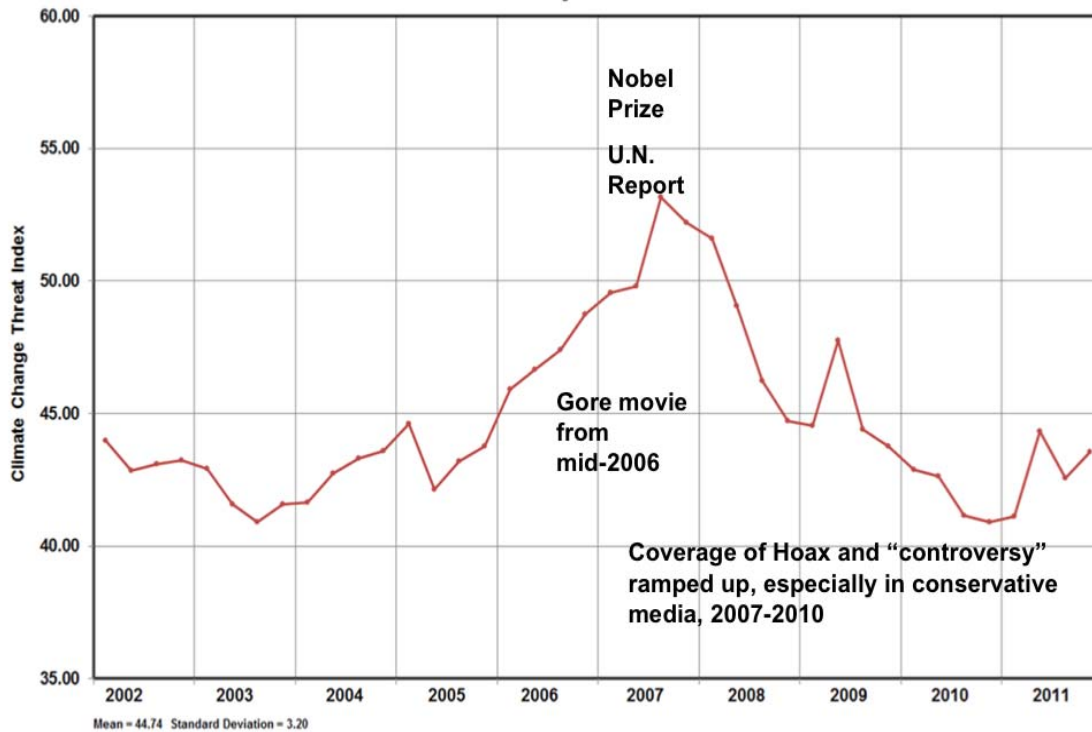


primaries and while he contemplated another run at the presidency from the center-right. In this mid-decade period, as indicated by his LCV scores displayed in Figure 3, McCain tacked toward the center, seeking to win sympathy and primary-election votes from moderate Republicans and Independents. McCain’s moves included voting for more environmental priorities than most other Congressional Republicans and joining with his nominally Democratic buddy Joe Lieberman to bipartisan bills calling for emissions caps to deal with the threat of global warming. Still, neither of the two bills McCain co-sponsored with Lieberman got anywhere near the sixty votes they would have needed to clear a GOP Senate filibuster; and when the second bill McCain-Lieberman bill came to a vote in 2005, it garnered fewer favorable votes (38) than did the Lieberman-McCain

variant in 2003 (which got 43 yes votes). By 2007, moreover, McCain tacked hard right on environmental votes as he competed for the presidential nomination of a Republican Party in which conservatives were on the rise. At first, McCain's allies at EDF and other environmental organizations might not have noticed – or maybe they just turned their eyes from the evidence – but their mavericky friend was on the way out the door. McCain's LCV scores in 2007, 2008, and 2009 fell even lower than the very oppositional scores of the Republican Congressional leadership teams.

Even as McCain was exiting stage right, high-profile events raised the hopes of cap and trade proponents that the GOP legislative blockade could be breached. In January 2006, Hollywood gave a celebratory send-off to “An Inconvenient Truth,” Al Gore's dramatic documentary about the catastrophic effects of global warming, which ran in theaters all over the country after its general release in April. By the beginning of February 2007, Gore was co-nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize along with the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, just as the panel released its much-anticipated Fourth Report saying it is “unequivocal that the earth is getting warmer, and that greenhouse gases, produced in increasing quantities since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, are very much to blame.” Later in February, Gore stood “before an adulatory crowd” to accept an Academy Award for his movie.⁷⁰ Coming in rapid succession, these events – along with expanding audiences for “An Inconvenient Truth” – caught public attention and increased Americans' concern about global warming.

Figure 4. U.S. Climate Change Threat Index Quarterly 2002 - 2011



The Gallup environment poll has repeatedly asked respondents whether various “environmental problems” “personally worry” them “a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all.” In March 2004, only 26% said the “greenhouse effect” or “global warming” worried them a great deal, but that percentage increased to 36% in March 2006 and reached a peak of 41% in March 2007. As with this Gallup question, most poll questions on climate change are asked only sporadically, and each survey organization uses its own wordings. This makes it virtually impossible to notice short-term shifts in public views. Recently, however, sociologists Robert Brulle, Jason Carmichael, and Craig Jenkins found a way around this problem, adapting a technique developed by political scientist James Stimson to measure shifts in public moods about public policy issues.⁷¹ By combining and calibrating data from all questions repeatedly asked by

different polling organizations, the Brulle-Carmichael-Jenkins team has created a “Climate Change Threat Index” they can measure every three months from 2002 through 2011.⁷² As Figure 4 shows, their data show a big spike in the index between mid-2005 and mid-2007, indicating that the American public did indeed become more concerned during the period when the Gore movie was widely shown and the findings in the Fourth Assessment Report of IPCC got major play in the media.

Brulle, Carmichael, and Jenkins do not have breakdowns on their index for Republicans versus Democrats, but partisan trends are available from Gallup, Pew, and other polling organizations that asked pertinent questions in the mid-2000s. Detailed trends for partisan subgroups show that, for a time, public concern rose across the board. Respondents who called themselves Republicans always registered less concern than Independents and Democrats, but their views moved in the same direction as overall U.S. opinion reached a peak of concern with global warming and its baleful effects in mid-2007. This is not entirely surprising. As we saw in our previous consideration of long-term trends, public opinion on environmentalism was never as divided along partisan lines as members of Congress were in their voting on environmental issues. As late as the mid-2000s, therefore, the possibility remained that most Americans – including a clear plurality if not a bare majority of Republicans – could converge on the view that global warming is very threatening and government must act to address greenhouse gas emissions.

As the Gore movie gained public praise and its message spread, opponents of government action to remediate global warming surely realized that their hold on Republican legislators could weaken if anything remotely resembling a new public

consensus took hold. If Republican voters became more supportive of action against climate change, additional defectors like McCain – in his 2003-05 “maverick” incarnation – might emerge from Republican ranks. Such a development would give a clear boost to the CEOs and environmental leaders working on the strange-bedfellows USCAP “Blueprint” for cap and trade legislation, because the chances would improve for peeling off a few Congressional Republicans to vote with most Democrats for a nominally bipartisan compromise.

Opponents wasted no time in going to war to cut off this possibility – and in retrospect it looks as if they moved so quickly that the USCAP members never understood the shifts in conservative popular opinion that followed. From the Brulle-Carmichael-Jenkins tracking of the Climate Change Index displayed in Figure 4, we see that public concern plunged soon after it reached the mid-2007 highpoint; and the decline continued through the presidential election year of 2008. These scholars have done sophisticated statistical tests of various hypotheses to probe what may have caused all of the ups and downs in public concern over the 2002 to 2010 period. Did the public react to severe weather events, to coverage of scientific findings? How did economic ups and downs, and the realities of U.S. casualties in foreign wars, interact with media coverage and political debates about global warming? And what about high-profile events like the Gore movie or Hurricane Katrina?

When all is said and done, Brulle, Carmichael, and Jenkins conclude that adverse economic trends and rising war casualties had modest effects in dampening public concern with climate change. Severe weather events and science news *did not* have any significant impact. Tellingly, *partisan debates were the biggest drivers of the ups and*

downs in public concern. As many political scientists have argued, voters not only press their views on elected officials; they also take cues from those officials.⁷³ Throughout the 2000s decade, Brulle, Carmichael, and Jenkins show, GOP Congressional votes and arguments against environmental bills were associated with declining public concern, while statements from Democratic politicians about the rising threat of global warming and the need to deal with it raised the level of public concern. Remember, these findings come from quarterly measurements of both dependent and independent variables, so the findings are unusually powerful.

Brulle, Carmichael, and Jenkins do not find an independent effect from media coverage, but they believe that partisan statements had their effects when disseminated through the media. To dissect in more detail what was happening in the crucial 2006 and 2007 period – when public concern with the climate threat first grew sharply, and then turned sharply downward leading into the 2008 presidential election year – we need data that breaks down opinion trends for Republican and Democratic-identified respondents and also probes the actual content of media messages. Additional polling data and a path breaking new study of media narratives by political scientist Frederick W. Mayer take us further toward filling in the blanks about partisan opinion trends.

Mayer's work on "Stories of Climate Change: Competing Narratives, the Media, and U.S. Public Opinion 2001-2010" recognizes that public opinion, especially on relatively abstract issues such as global warming, is influenced not so much by mere factual renditions as by the stories people see dramatized on television.⁷⁴ Surveying coverage of global warming by the three mainstream networks, NBC, CBS, and ABC, as well as coverage by the cable networks CNN, Fox, and MSNBC, Mayer developed a

typology of six narrative story-lines and measured how often each type appeared in television coverage of climate-change issues on each outlet. *Climate Tragedy* stories resemble the message of Al Gore’s movie: scientists and environmental reformers are the heroes, because they do studies that reveal the growing existential threat to the planet and urge us to action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions before it is too late. But other media narratives either muddy the waters or refute the *Climate Tragedy* storyline. *Hoax* stories suggest that climate scientists are wrong or corrupt, trying to push radical government regulations with false science; *Don’t Kill the Goose* stories stress that regulations pushed by climate-change warriors will do more harm than good, hurting the economy and the American way of life; and *He Said, She Said* stories stress that climate science findings are uncertain or disputed, and it is too early to take governmental action based on shaky science. *Policy Game* stories also stress conflict about global warming remedies, in this case by narrating the political “horse race” and often offering “a downward arc with a dark meaning, in that they chronicle the futility of policy processes.”⁷⁵ A final type of story, dubbed by Mayer *The Denialist Conspiracy*, highlights corporate-funded efforts to deny the validity of climate science and mislead the public into ignoring threats from global warming.

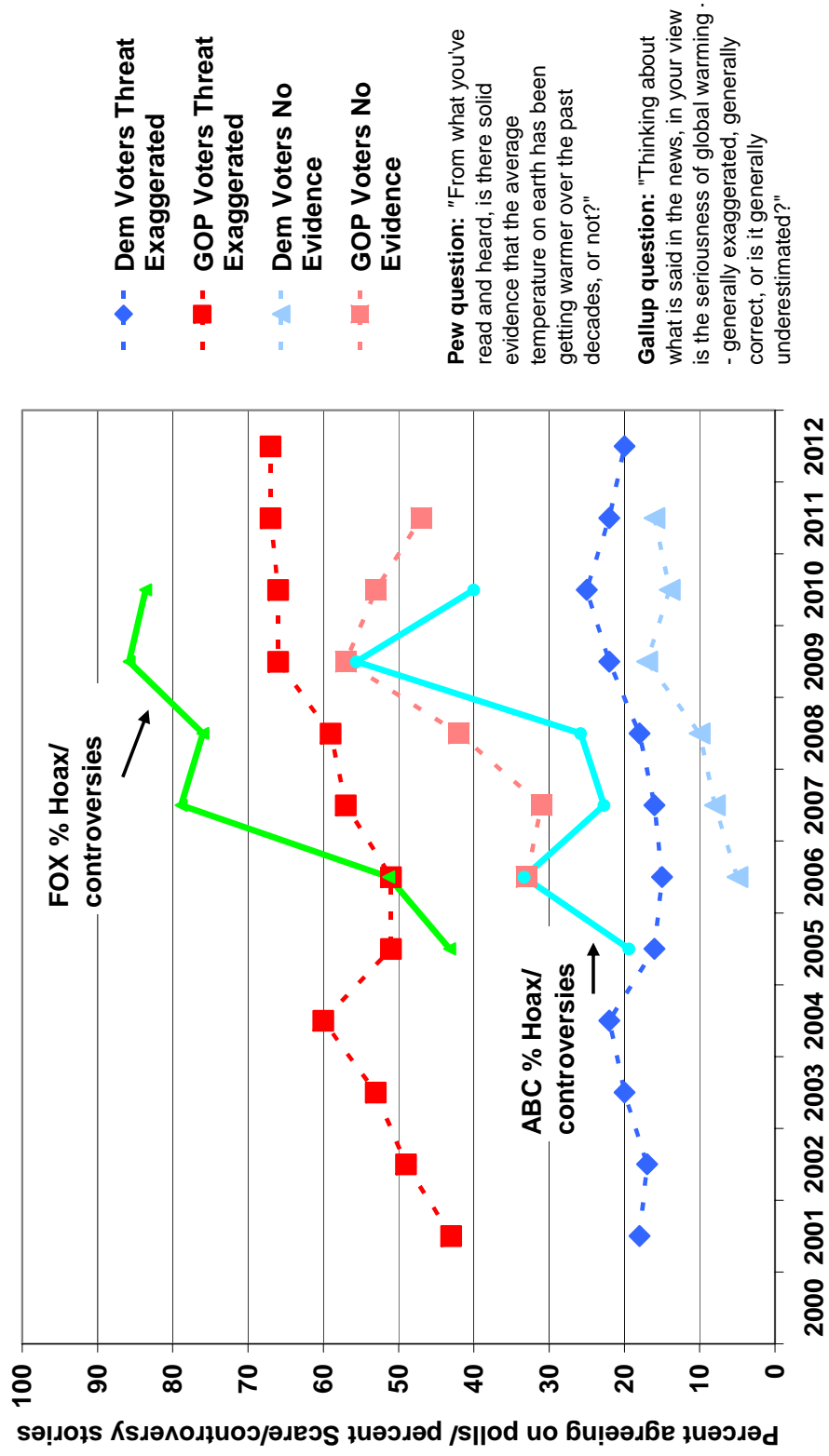
Although both *Climate Tragedy* and *Denialist* narratives can be considered pro-environmental and favorable to legislation to deal with global warming, only the *Climate Tragedy* type presents a straightforward narrative of consensual scientific findings. All of the other types, even the *Denialist* type, introduce the viewer to the notion that climate change science and politics is full of conflict and uncertainty. What I have done with Mayer’s data is concentrate on the sum total of all types of stories *except* his “Climate

Tragedy” type, in order to look at trends in media stories that either present global warming as a hoax or stress controversies about threats from climate change and what might be done to counter them⁷⁶

Climate change television segments did not become frequent until the middle of the decade; and Mayer shows that the classic networks (NBC, CBS, and ABC) followed similar patterns, so looking at ABC is good enough to capture their “mainstream” coverage. I set aside CNN, because Mayer shows that this cable network was divided and back and forth in coverage, sometimes echoing mainstream networks’ patterns, sometimes Fox patterns. We can assume that viewers of CNN got thoroughly mixed messages about whether climate science is valid. Fox network coverage is the most important to track, because much evidence on television viewership habits today shows that Fox’s older, white, conservative-minded audience overlaps closely with self-reported “Republicans” and conservatives.⁷⁷ Many of those citizens are loyal only to Fox and to other overtly conservative radio and Internet outlets.⁷⁸ Conservative-minded Americans often get the entirety of their news information from watching Fox for hours a day, or listening to right-wing radio hosts who echo the same story lines.

Figure 5 displays trends in the types of stories Fox and ABC broadcast about climate change along with partisan breakdowns in answers to key questions about climate skepticism posed repeatedly in polls by Gallup and the Pew Center on the People and the Press. Fox broadcast fewer than a dozen climate-change stories of any kind in the years 2002, 2003, and 2004 respectively; but its coverage rose thereafter (from 37 stories in 2005, to 39 in 2006, and 190 in 2007). On ABC, coverage was also sparse in 2002-04 and increased thereafter. All television outlets broadcast fewer stories in 2008 – it was an

Figure 5. Media Coverage on Fox and ABC and Popular Attitudes about Climate Threat



election year, and in a sense the primary and general-election candidates disseminated the key messages that year – and then resumed coverage of climate issues in 2009 and 2010, during the cap and trade debates in Congress and the run-up to the Copenhagen summit.

We can turn to Pew and Gallup for repeated polls measuring climate skepticism in partisan segments of the public. Pew regularly asked national samples the question “From what you have read and heard, is there solid evidence that the average temperature on earth has been getting warmer over the past decades, or not?” And Gallup repeatedly asked “Thinking about what is said in the news, in your view is the seriousness of global warming – generally exaggerated, generally correct, or is it generally underestimated?” Figure 5 is oriented so that higher percentages represent answers expressing skepticism about climate science and the threat of global warming. From the data it is clear that skepticism rose sharply from 2006 to 2007 or 2008, especially among Republicans compared to Democrats. Figure 5 also maps trends in the percentage of all Fox and ABC climate-change stories that either stressed the *Hoax* story line or in some way portrayed conflict or uncertainty among scientists and policymakers about climate change issues.

Media research often suffers from the difficulty that we cannot pin down whether outlets shape or merely echo shifting public beliefs. Yet for the 2007 turnabouts in public views about the threat of climate change, Mayer’s research strongly suggests that deliberate decisions by television executives may have been involved – especially in pushing skepticism among conservative-minded Americans who very loyal to Fox and like-minded media outlets. In a fascinating part of his research, Mayer looks in day-by-day detail at coverage in the month of February 2007, when critical events coalesced –

as the Nobel Prize nomination for Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was announced, the alarming findings of the panel's Fourth Assessment Report received blanket coverage, and "An Inconvenient Truth" won two Oscar prizes.

The ABC network, as Mayer recounts, pursued an unadulterated story line, typical of mainstream media, presenting the IPCC report as "a unique example of science in the service of society" with findings that are "definitive" and "frightening" on the reality of global warming. "No longer any question that the Earth is warming," declared an ABC reporter in a typical segment that month. "The warming is due to greenhouse gases and ...those gasses are produced by us."⁷⁹ But Fox made a sharp pivot the same month, toward presenting the IPCC and climate scientists as pushing a hoax, and ridiculing Al Gore and other reformers as hypocritical radicals. Fox's earliest February coverage of the IPCC report, during an evening segment on February 2, was straightforwardly descriptive, according to Mayer's meticulous review of transcripts. But "it was to be the last such report in Fox." Starting that very same evening, and unfolding in a rising crescendo in following days and months, Fox stressed the theme of climate science hoaxes and radical environmentalists attacking the American way of life in pursuit of long-standing "leftist" agendas, delivering a steady diet of messages such as these:

- February 2, with dissenting scientists featured: "Some scientists say the summary of the U.N. climate change report, we told you about earlier, distorts the actual scientific findings, because of a political agenda."
- February 5, conservative commentator featured: "Well I think this isn't science any more, I think this has become effectively a kind of religion of the left.... You know the religious right gets mocked when it says America is going to pieces

because of lap dancing and gay marriage and what not. Well this so-called religious left if you like, why is it any less ridiculous when they say America is going to pieces because we're driving Chevy Suburbans and eating cheese burgers. There's simply no evidence for that.”

- February 7, 6pm, featuring spokesman from the Competitive Enterprise Institute (a major denier-promoting think tank): “This is Gore being Gore, a member of the intolerant left manifesting... the very clear philosophy of the global warming alarmist movement.”
- February 7, 8pm, O'Reilly Show, featuring a dissenting Virginia professor: “The IPCC report is overhyped. Look, this new U.N. report comes out, and it says human beings are warming – warming the surface temperatures. To me that's like a breathless announcement that there's gambling in Las Vegas.”
- February 7, 9:30pm on Hannity and Colmes, a lopsided half-hour debate introduced with the bottom-line theme: “In spite of the recent cold weather across the nation, hysteria over global warming is not letting up. Al Gore continuing to push the environmental agenda.”

Going forward, explains Mayer, “Fox would tell a consistently negative narrative about climate change and the science behind it,” occasionally interrupting this story line with episodes touting conflict over climate science.⁸⁰

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that popular climate-change denial was deliberately stoked from above. The orchestration of doubt had been going on for many years, as indicated by the cascade of denialist books from the late 1980s documented earlier in Figure 3. Yet at the critical juncture in 2007 – when Americans in general might have been persuaded of the urgency of dealing with global warming – Fox

television went all-in at telling stories about “hoax” climate science and ridiculing climate experts and reformers as “religious” adherents pushing a radical-left agenda that would hobble the American way of life.

Of course, Fox is never alone in spreading messages such as the “hoax” claims about climate science. Mainstream networks also conveyed such stories when they played up controversies. What is more, Fox has a central role in an interconnected web of conservative media outlets that repeat and amplify story lines designed to challenge non-conservatives.⁸¹ Rush Limbaugh’s nationally syndicated radio program is a hugely important megaphone, reaching tens of millions of listeners for hours every day in their homes, cars, trucks, and work-sites.⁸² Each local area in the United States likewise has its own popular right-wing talk radio host, who chews over the themes featured on Fox and discussed by Limbaugh. Right-wing bloggers are active, too, and grassroots conservatives often spend hours a day emailing political rumors, accusations, and arguments to a wide network of friends and relatives.⁸³ The entire conservative media “echo chamber,” as it has been aptly dubbed, can very quickly hammer home a claim, however factually unfounded, spreading it not only to millions of conservative-minded people, but also to other media outlets that routinely take up controversies and thus spread misleading ideas to yet more viewers or listeners.⁸⁴

Mayer’s evidence about the rapid increase in Fox coverage of climate hoax stories should, therefore, be taken as indicative of a much broader, concerted messaging campaign – which almost certainly reached and influenced millions of Americans who identify as “Republican” or “conservative.” Climate denial got disseminated deliberately and rapidly from think tank tomes to the daily media fare of about thirty to forty percent

of the U.S. populace. As Figure 5 shows, available opinion evidence suggests that deliberate efforts to spread climate change denial were quite successful, especially among self-identified rank-and-file Republicans. In a lurid drumbeat, ordinary conservative-minded Americans watched and heard messages denying the validity of climate science and the reality of human-induced global warming – and those citizens were the ones who turned most sharply toward expressing skepticism in national polls in 2007 and beyond. No doubt, right-wing advocates waved the poll results in front of GOP legislators; and perhaps even more important, the stoking of popular climate-change denial shaped the terrain for the 2007-08 GOP primary season. Notably, the spike in climate-change denial among conservatives took effect months before the general 2008 presidential contest and the launch of the Obama presidency in January 2009.

As evidence for the bipartisan potential of cap and trade in 2009, reformers pointed to a few statements by presidential contender John McCain that acknowledged the climate change threat and espoused general support for market-friendly caps on greenhouse gas emissions.⁸⁵ Both 2008 presidential candidates, cap and trade reformers say, acknowledged climate change and pointed toward a USCAP-style solution. But such rosy views cherry-pick the evidence as it stood on the eve of the cap and trade push. McCain's scattered comments distracted from the more fundamental developments among GOP elites and mass supporters.

Reformers who fervently wanted to believe in GOP mavericks plugged their ears and closed their eyes as a chorus of climate-change denial and mockery of regulatory solutions blared out from the conservative media. Such messages grew louder especially during 2007; and they reverberated through the GOP presidential primaries, where all

other contenders attacked McCain's residual expressions of support for climate science and a cap and trade system. McCain did not really stand fast in the face of the pressures. As we saw in Figure 3, during his 2007-08 presidential run McCain stopped sponsoring environmentally backed legislation and closely hewed to the oppositional stances advocated by GOP Congressional leaders. And in the clearest possible signal that he was shifting his stance to appeal to core GOP outlooks, McCain picked as his running-mate Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, a flamboyant climate-science skeptic and an unabashed cheerleader for the "Drill Baby, Drill" approach to dealing with America's energy challenges, greenhouse gases be damned.

The Tea Party Seals the Deal

Conservatives GOP voters may have been more firmly roped into climate change denial and McCain may have been returned from his maverick wanderings off the GOP reservation, but in the endgame Barack Obama and the Democrats scored sweeping victories in the November 2008 election. To always excitable pundits, it looked as if a new era of liberal change had arrived in American politics, with a forward-looking president buoyed by youthful voters moving into the White House.⁸⁶ Reform communities long denied openings geared up for new legislative pushes, including health-care reformers and the proponents of economy-wide carbon caps as a tool to fight global warming. Starting two months before Obama's historic victory, the country was sliding into a deep economic crisis. Bold federal government action seemed both necessary and possible, and with the Republican Party in disarray following huge

electoral setbacks, many hoped that Obama would be able to further reforms with at least a modicum of cross-aisle cooperation. Among those so hopeful was the new President himself, as he offered policy compromises to Congressional Republicans in the design of his economic stimulus legislation and proposed market-accommodating versions of health care reform and carbon emissions controls. The Obama administration clearly hoped to appeal to some Republicans by pursuing important reform goals with modes of government action that, in the past, had garnered considerable business and Republican support.

It soon became apparent, however, that the leaders of the shrunken GOP caucuses in the House and Senate were in no mood for compromise. From the beginning, House Minority Leader John Boehner and GOP Senate leader Mitch McConnell whipped their caucuses to “just say no” to anything President Obama and the Democrats wanted to do.⁸⁷ Their theory was that Republicans would never get any credit for cooperation if things went well, but if they refused support and obstructed legislation in the Senate, where minority filibusters could grind legislation and nominations to a halt, Republicans might fare better in the next elections, especially if the nation did not recover from economic crisis by 2010 and 2012.

Beyond such cold-blooded strategic calculations, GOP Congressional leaders were also facing anger and pressure from their mass base. The extent of GOP electoral setbacks in 2008 meant that remaining officeholders were beholden to very conservative constituents in the South, the Inner West, and the Appalachian and Ozark regions. These mostly older, white, very conservative-minded voters were angry and fearful about Obama’s presidency – and they were also likely, day in, day out, to be watching Fox

television and hearing incessant fear-mongering from extreme media voices like Glen Beck and Rush Limbaugh. Conservative-minded Republicans were angry not just at Obama and Democrats, but also at “establishment” GOP leaders. McCain was considered by many to have lost because he was “too moderate,” and outgoing President George W. Bush was resented for increasing government spending and debt. Grassroots conservatives were not about to let their party’s Congressional leaders repeat old mistakes by cooperating with Obama’s initiatives in any area – and certainly not with his proposals for stimulus spending, the expansion of health insurance coverage, or regulations to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Strategic considerations and popular pressures alike make it understandable that GOP Congressional leaders chose a “just say hell no” approach to the new Obama administration.

But hard-line strategies attempted by Congressional leaders are one thing; success in herding all the normally wayward Congressional cats is another. Even if few in number, during 2009 and 2010 there were still Republicans in both the House and Senate who represented districts and states where Obama won by substantial majorities; and there were GOP solons who, in the past, had taken substantive positions on matters like health care reform and environmental regulations that aligned with key provisions in bills Obama and his Congressional supporters were planning to bring to a vote during the 111th Congress. So how did it come to pass that, especially in the notoriously undisciplined Senate, Republicans proved to be extraordinarily disciplined – almost unanimously unwilling to negotiate, compromise, and provide votes for initiatives such as a Romney-style health reform plan or the very watered-down versions of cap and trade that were bruited about in the Senate in the spring of 2010?

Much of the answer lies in the bracing impact of the suddenly emergent Tea Party on Republican officeholders and candidates for office.⁸⁸ Only weeks into Barack Obama's presidency, the Tea Party broke out, after a February 19, 2009 "rant" by CNBC financial commentator Rick Santelli invoked America's Founding Fathers to condemn the new administration's efforts to help underwater home mortgage holders. In subsequent weeks, older white men and women dressed in Colonial costumes took to the streets in many places, carrying hand-made signs condemning Obama and his fellow Democrats as "Communists," "Socialists," and "Nazis." Fox News and other right-wing media served as cheerleaders; and the protests were also encouraged by billionaire-backed professional advocacy groups that had, for years, done lobbying and political fundraising on behalf of tax cuts, reduced regulations on business, and efforts to privatize Social Security and Medicare. From the spring of 2009 onward, ordinary grassroots citizens of a conservative bent moved to organize not just demonstrations, but also what ultimately became about 900 regularly meeting local Tea Parties spread across all fifty states.⁸⁹ Those Tea Parties in turn sustained grassroots public agitation against the priorities of the Obama administration and the Democrats in Congress – with health care reform and cap and trade among the chief targets of their wrath. In addition, Tea Party forces set out to purify and discipline the Republican Party, to make sure that GOP officeholders would never compromise with the hated Obama and Democrats. The "Tea Party" efforts came simultaneously from below – from local Tea Parties and the very conservative-minded voters who made up about half of all Republican-identified voters – and also from above – from ideological advocacy groups such as FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity and big-money political action committees like Tea Party

Express that stood ready and able to channel millions into GOP primaries to boost uncompromising conservative candidates.⁹⁰

By the late summer of 2009, grassroots Tea Partiers – with television cameras following their every move – deployed loud demonstrators into town hall meetings convened by Democratic legislators in their districts. Protestors railed against House Democrats who voted for the Waxman-Markey cap and trade legislation, and denounced those who had supported health reform bills making their way through various Congressional committees.⁹¹ These protests did not stop Congress from moving forward in either area, but they dramatized how ill-prepared Democrats and reformers were – especially in the cap and trade fight – to respond in kind to right-wing populist demonstrators. Health reformers were slow to respond, but could eventually call on Health Care for America Now, with its unions, consumer advocates, and pro-reform nurses and other medical-care providers, to push back against the Tea Party demonstrators.⁹² By contrast, in the climate area, there were only a few responsive events staged for the media; in the summer of 2009, Clean Energy Works was just gearing up for the forthcoming battles in the Senate and managed to do only a few events here and there on the ground.

During 2010, Tea Party grassroots activists and ultra-right big money funders moved aggressively to reshape electoral politics.⁹³ Tea Partiers and ultra-conservative funders were instrumental in electing Republican contender Scott Brown in a January 2010 special election held to fill the seat of recently deceased liberal lion Ted Kennedy; and after his victory, Brown promptly went to DC to start voting against both health reform and environmental priorities (his LCV score in 2010 was zero and climbed only

modestly in 2011 as Brown peered forward to a tough reelection effort in 2012; this was a sharp shift in a New England state delegation that had previously held near-perfect scores in support of environmental priorities). But in a way, the Brown instance was exceptional, because the biggest Tea Party impact came in GOP primaries, starting in Florida – where Marco Rubio knocked off the excessively moderate Charlie Crist – and extending to many other House, Senate, and state-level primary races. Again and again, Tea Party voters and funders teamed up to substitute more right-wing Republicans for slightly more moderate GOP officeholders or candidates. Long-serving, heretofore well-respected conservatives were among the displaced, such as Senator Bob Bennett in Utah; Representative Robert Inglis in South Carolina; and Mike Castle in Delaware, who saw his sure-fire bid to move from the House to a vacant Senate seat destroyed by a Tea Party challenge from marginal candidate Christine O’Donnell. She, of course, went on to lose in the general 2010 election, and the same happened to a few other extreme Tea Party candidates, including Sharon Angle in Nevada. In a way it did not matter, because the Tea Party forces – a pincer operation including grassroots voters sure to turn out in primaries and big money funders who could send in checks worth hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars for television ads – intended to send a message to any would-be moderate or compromise-oriented Republican officeholders and candidates. And the message sent in 2010 was definitely received. The displacement of long-entrenched GOP legislators like Castle, who had supported cap and trade legislation, sent a loud, intimidating message to all Republicans: Get with the no-compromise program, or else. Thus during 2010 GOP legislators and candidates who might conceivably compromise on

any Democratic-leaning issues, including environmental priorities, were either picked off or cowed into changing their voting positions.

By the spring and summer of 2010, with cap and trade legislation on its last legs in the Senate, it was no wonder that GOP Senators ran for the hills, even those like John McCain who had formerly dallied with bipartisanship and mouthed support for climate change bills. McCain was himself being challenged in a GOP primary by J.D. Hayworth, a Tea Party-oriented right-wing radio talk show host, and he knew from watching other GOP primaries what would surely happen to him if he cooperated in any way with pushing a companion to Waxman-Markey through the Senate. Knowing that Fred Krupp and others at the Environmental Defense Fund were primed to blame the White House for the expiration of cap and trade efforts during 2010, McCain may have distracted attention from his abandonment of the cause by huffing and puffing about personal slights from Obama.⁹⁴ But surely it was his own party's radicals that really caught his attention. Other supposed GOP moderates like South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham also found pretexts to pull back (in his case, pretending that he was offended by Democrats' stands on immigration issues). During the run-up to the 2010 elections, Republican Senators pushed back against any climate-change legislation, and nineteen out of twenty "serious GOP Senate challengers... declared that the science of climate change is inconclusive or flat out incorrect."⁹⁵ The Tea Party, in short, became the enforcer for the lock-step anti-compromise course that GOP leaders Boehner and McConnell might not have been able to pull off on their own in the 111th Congress.

Given the crystallization of concerted GOP anti-environmentalism during Obama's first two years, it took just one midterm election to go from the unanimous GOP

refusal to engage on cap and trade in the 111th Congress to Tea Party-supported GOP efforts in the 112th Congress to roll back environmental laws and weaken the EPA. The November 2010 elections brought huge defeats for Democrats – including loss of control in the House of Representatives, losses in the Senate, and massive setbacks in state legislatures and governorships. Democrats fared poorly not just because Republicans and Tea Partiers eagerly turned out on Election Day, but because the national economy was not recovering rapidly from the 2008-09 recession and many younger and minority people did not bother to vote. Many Americans who pulled the levers for Republicans in November 2010 did so without realizing how extreme and uncompromising the GOP candidates would prove to be once in office. Environmental issues were certainly not high on most voters' agendas, and a majority of voters, including moderate Republicans, do not back extreme Tea Party positions on environmental topics. But whatever voters wanted, the policy after-effects of 2010 were severe.

Following the 2010 elections, the 112th House of Representatives took the biggest leap to the far right in recorded quantitative measurements of the kind political scientists use to track legislators' positions.⁹⁶ Prior to 2011, House Republicans already hewed more to the very conservative side than House Democrats leaned to the left in standard political science measurements of voting positions; but after the November 2010 elections, the new majority GOP House contingent registered even further to the nether-right, with Tea Party supported ultraconservative candidates accounting for the shift. Policy consequences soon became clear. The anti-regulatory, Tea Party-supporting billionaire David Koch visited the new GOP House as soon as new committee chairmen were installed, lobbying to make certain that no new regulations would be considered to

deal with global warming and urging actions to curtail the EPA.⁹⁷ House Republicans responded with a “war on the EPA,” holding hearings and unleashing a flood of bills to put the EPA intended to “erase decades” of laws and regulations protecting the environment.⁹⁸ Koch-supported Republicans, many of whom signed pledges to oppose cap and trade, filled key committees with jurisdiction over environmental and energy issues.⁹⁹ Perhaps most telling, in order to remain in line for the chairmanship of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, a longstanding moderate on environmental issues, Republican Representative Fred Upton of Michigan, renounced his former statements suggesting that climate change is a serious problem and joined with Americans for Prosperity in lawsuits to keep the EPA from regulating greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁰⁰ By 2011, Beltway reporters could no longer get Republican lawmakers to even acknowledge the existence of global warming issues. A December 2011 headline in the *National Journal* says it all: “Heads in the Sand: As Climate-Change Science Moves in One Direction, Republicans in Congress are Moving in Another...”¹⁰¹

The Republican run-up to the 2012 elections brought no wavering toward moderation on the environmental front.¹⁰² Mitt Romney had started denouncing cap and trade ideas during his unsuccessful bid for the 2008 GOP presidential nomination; and during the 2011-12 primary season, with Tea Party voters and funders holding sway, Romney adopted every priority of the oil companies, coal companies, opponents of green-energy subsidies, and enemies of climate change.¹⁰³ Romney expressed doubts that human activities contribute to global warming; and like McCain in 2008 he propitiated his party’s extreme right wing by naming a prominent anti-environmentalist as his running mate. Congressman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, Romney’s vice-presidential

pick, was groomed by Americans for Prosperity, a group funded by the Koch brothers that has gained a mass mailing list following and much greater lobbying clout during the Tea Party era.¹⁰⁴ Throughout his Congressional career, Ryan has been a firm and effective opponent of environmental regulations and taxes.

On November 6, 2012, the Romney-Ryan Republican White House ticket went down to defeat, as President Barack Obama was reelected to a second term by a comfortable margin. Republican efforts to claim control of the Senate also fell short; indeed, the Democrats actually gained two Senate seats, solidifying their majority, and the new Democratic Senate caucus will include a higher proportion of younger and in some instances more liberal members. The Sierra Club, the League of Conservation Voters, and other environmental groups were pleased that their advertising campaigns, grassroots efforts, and financial contributions had helped to elect good people and defeat candidates deferential to anti-environmental industrial interests.¹⁰⁵ But their happiness should be tempered. Global warming and possible actions to address it did not come up in the 2012 presidential debates, and both presidential candidates avoided climate-change issues.¹⁰⁶ Media coverage of campaign issues largely followed suit, even as adverse weather events punctuated the campaign season and warnings from climate scientists escalated.¹⁰⁷ No sense of urgency came from the 2012 election, in short. And the results left Republicans in control the House of Representatives, as most of the GOP winners backed by the Tea Party in 2010 managed to keep their seats in 2012.

In the 113th House that will serve through 2014, the GOP not only retains majority control – with all that means for initiating budget legislation and making decisions about which bills can advance to President Obama’s desk – it will continue to be anchored in a

very strong ultra-conservative bloc. Overall, the new House Republican contingent is likely to be even more conservative than already extreme caucus in the 112th House.¹⁰⁸ Not only are most House Republicans uncompromising in their outlooks; all but half a dozen come from GOP majority districts where the only electoral challenges they fear would come from the right in low-turnout primaries.¹⁰⁹ Analyst Nate Silver estimates that Majority Leader John Boehner may not have a reliable majority to support any compromises he might try to negotiate with the Obama White House or the Democrat-controlled Senate.¹¹⁰ The GOP Senate minority during 2013-14 will also include more ultra-conservatives, which will allow it to bring legislation to a screeching halt if Senate rules continue to allow routine filibusters.

At the grassroots, self-identified Tea Party sympathizers (about half of all voters who support the GOP) remain vigilant to punish any Republicans who compromise; and like-minded ultra-conservative funders are not backing away from pressing their priorities on GOP officeholders. The “Tea Party” may now be a label unpopular with most Americans (including many Republicans), but its disparate grassroots and elite components are still able to buck up – and back up – Republican officeholders who refuse to compromise on regulations and taxes.¹¹¹ More to the point, these forces stand ready to mount primary challenges against any GOPers who show signs of wavering.

There is no reason, in short, to believe that today’s radicalized Republicans will be willing to stand down any time soon from their fierce opposition to virtually all environmental regulations and their refusal to countenance legislation to deal with climate change. So extreme is the Republican Party center of gravity right now, and so cowed are any would-be moderates remaining in GOP ranks, that majority office-holding

by this party – in the House of Representatives, and in half of all U.S. states where it remains strong – precludes any possibility of new steps to limit dirty energy subsidies and regulate greenhouse emissions. Even regulatory measures are hard to carry through when legislators stand ready to retaliate against agency budgets.

The United States stands increasingly alone in the advanced industrial world in its unwillingness to fully acknowledge the threat of global warming, let alone use government to do anything systematic about it, and the consequences are global in scope. As journalist Ron Brownstein explains, “it will be difficult for the world to move meaningfully against climate disruption if the United States does not. And it will be almost impossible for the U.S. to act if one party not only rejects the most common solution proposed for the problem (cap-and-trade) but repudiates even the idea that there is a problem to be solved.”¹¹² That is what the leverage of ultra-conservative forces in and around the Republican Party portends, because (as a clear-cut statement of this outlook puts it) “free-market environmentalism” holds “that nature should not be elevated above human and property rights” and “argues that private property rights and the marketplace, if not obstructed by big government, can better protect the environment than can big government.”¹¹³ Radicalized Republicans currently do not want to bargain over how best to deploy U.S. government capacities; they want to block and eviscerate those capacities, and in the process increase public distrust of government.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED?

When a big reform effort sputters to defeat as the cap and trade push did in July 2010, a painful period of disillusionment, finger-pointing, and postmortems is sure to follow. So it was in the broad environmental community, both among those who had been on board with the USCAP effort and among those who were critical from the start or had gotten off the wagon along the way. Starting with finger-pointing in the immediate aftermath and extending through post-mortem conferences and reports over the next year and a half, environmental leaders and organizations tried to come to terms with what went wrong and figure out what new approaches should be undertaken moving forward. As often happens in post-mortems, each player tended to blame others and conclude that whatever approach he/she/it favored all along would be the best one to double-down on moving forward. That's just human nature and normal organizational maintenance behavior. Still, what is striking to me as a political scientist is how few of the post-mortems have looked deeply into the overall political dynamics that preceded and accompanied the USCAP effort – or considered what should change in future efforts to get carbon-capping legislation.

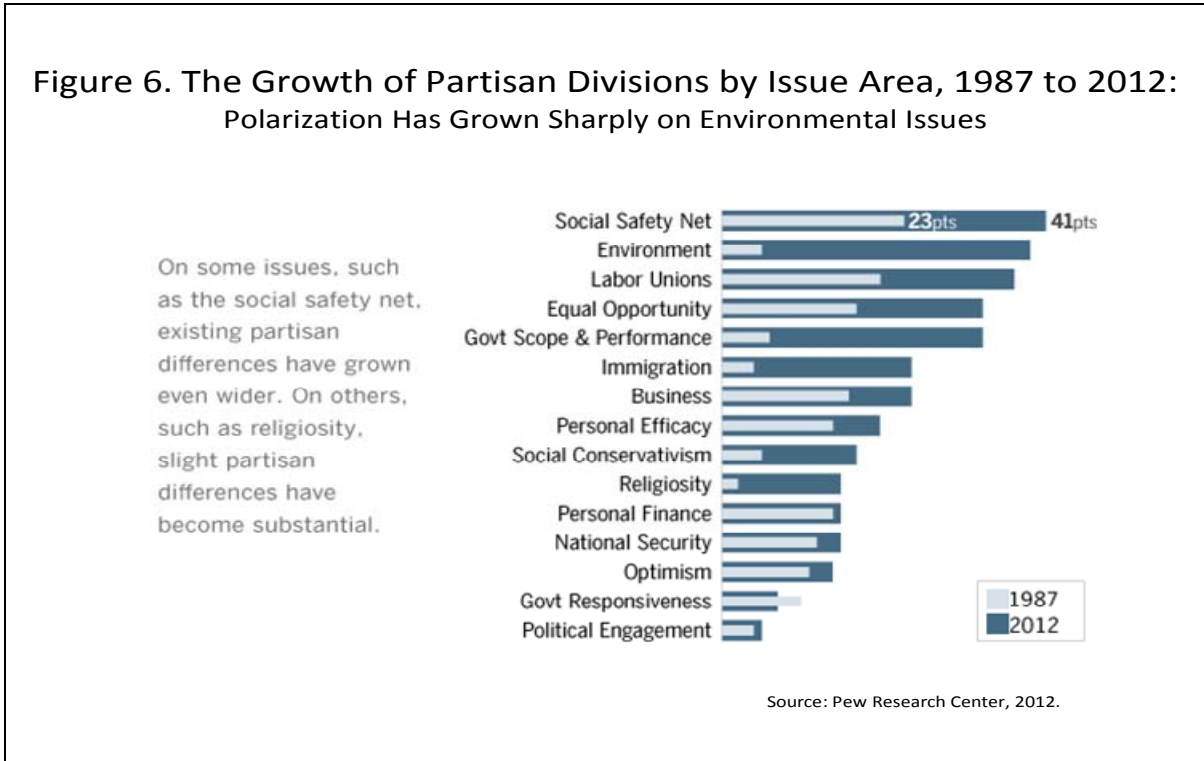
Environmentalists Diagnose the Causes of Death

Just a few days after Democratic Leader Harry Reid gave the official benediction to efforts to bring cap and trade legislation to the Senate floor, Dan Lashof of the Natural Resources Defense Council, a core USCAP player, went on his organization's Staff Blog

to lay out lessons from what he called the “Senate Climate fail.”¹⁴ “Obstructionism by the Republican Leadership” was clearly a culprit, Lashof posited, yet he tarried not at all on the crucial question of why the GOP leadership had been so effective in preventing even “a single Republican Senator” from working with Democrats to pass carbon pollution limits. He did not ask why USCAP had so misjudged the likelihood of support from Republican legislators, and he offered little reflection about USCAP strategy, except to suggest that more business interests should have been included in the legislative bargaining process. Lashof picked USCAP’s favorite scapegoat, President Obama, to shoulder much of the blame and chastised “the environmental community” for being too “patient” with the White House. Like many of the core USCAP participants even two years later, Lashof as of July 2010 was particularly exercised that President Obama had not pushed climate legislation ahead of health reform. Remarkably, he blamed the health reform effort for provoking partisan warfare, as if the USCAP proposal to cap carbon emissions and change energy prices across the U.S. economy was but an innocent bystander caught in “partisan” cross-fire between liberal Democrats and Tea Partiers.

But this notion – that cap and trade is an unobjectionable approach that stands apart from partisan polarization – is pure nonsense. If anything, ultraconservatives in the United States today are more fiercely opposed to regulation of greenhouse gasses than to publicly subsidized health care. As documented earlier in this report, conservative elites have been mobilized for years to block any effort at limiting carbon emissions, and during the mid-2000s they stepped up their efforts to shape outlooks and mobilize anti-environmental anger in the conservative grassroots. When Vanessa Williamson and I interviewed Tea Partiers and visited local meetings in 2010 and early 2011, we heard

adamant opposition to any and all environmental initiatives, and we learned of many professional advocacy efforts on the right to demonize the EPA and block reforms ranging from local bike paths to global warming remedies. Such reforms are often portrayed on the right as part of a conspiracy to impose socialism on the United States – a conspiracy said to have been hatched at the United Nations and carried forward for decades by American environmentalists and their political allies.¹¹⁵ Climate change doubt is, in the apt phrase of journalist John Broder, a “Tea Party article of faith” capable of arousing real passion at the grassroots of the Republican Party.¹¹⁶ So strongly are conservative citizens now opposed to environmental reforms that partisan polarization about the environment has grown more sharply since 1987 than polarization about any other set of issues. Figure 6 displays the relevant results from a recent Pew Research Center study.¹¹⁷



USCAP environmental leaders have comforted themselves with the presumption that their preferred policies are outside of unseemly partisan politics. But that is a truly dangerous fantasy for USCAP leaders to subscribe to, because it causes them to misunderstand the political realities they must face. The question that USCAP supporters should have asked themselves post-mortem was how they could have missed so many indicators of extreme Republican opposition. Even if the “Tea Party” as such did not erupt until just after USCAP issued its blueprint in January 2009, the signs that there were few, if any, “moderate” Republican legislators prepared to lead in forging bipartisan legislative compromises were plain to see – in the League of Conservation Voters’ own scorecards, the very statistics that the DC environmental bigwigs assemble and each and every year. Why did the USCAP principals miss what was plainly there before their very eyes? And after supposed GOP friends like John McCain left them high and dry, why were they so quick to accept rationalizations shifting the blame?

Failures to ask hard questions were not confined to USCAP, however. As the insiders at the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council swapped “if only” stories blaming President Obama and lamenting health reform, left-leaning environmentalists fingered USCAP itself for supposedly missing golden political opportunities. All along, groups like Greenpeace, Friends of Earth, and 350.org had been disillusioned with what they considered an excessively “pro-business” approach to sparking U.S. government action to fight global warming. During the spring of 2010, these groups and others, including the Sierra Club, were especially galled by the willingness of the USCAP-supported Senate negotiators to eliminate EPA authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. As the environmentalist critics saw it,

the whole USCAP exercise was a bad deal with the devils in the carbon-polluting industries, in which way too much was conceded, only to have the devils walk away in the end.

Because they had their doubts about bargaining with carbon-energy corporations all along – doubts that seemed to be confirmed by the endgame in the Senate – left-leaning environmental groups did not feel much need for self-criticism after the collapse of cap and trade. The left critics never asked themselves whether they might have done more in an overall push to get basic emissions controls through the Senate – and then come back in later months and years to strengthen the legislation. Left-environmentalists focused instead on what more they should have done to demonize business interests. Most groups soon redoubled such criticisms, along lines well-summarized in a December 2010 *In These Times* article called “A Wasted Crisis: How the Environmental Movement Missed the Moment on Climate Change.”¹¹⁸ Reflecting the left-environmentalists’ views, this article’s author, Eric Weltman, posited that an aggressive approach against the oil industry and other carbon producers might have led to broad popular mobilization when the BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig blew up on April 20, 2010. Left environmentalists seem to have believed that ongoing USCAP legislative efforts at that point made it impossible to mount popular protests. Protests for what is not at all clear – and I find it quite implausible that widespread protests could have been suddenly mounted in the spring of 2010 without months of prior organization and preparation.

Whether or not the Deepwater Horizon blowup was the opportune moment left-leaning environmentalists imagined it to be, that crisis did underline the chasm that existed between USCAP bargainers and many other environmental organizations. In the

health reform drama, as we have seen, inside players and the left-edge groups working through HCAN pushed in the same overall direction after Affordable Care bills almost died following Scott Brown's special election victory in January 2010. But in the spring of 2010, the full range of climate-change reformers did not come together – to push for anything at all. The British Petroleum disaster exacerbated tensions about goals as well as means among environmental groups, and sent organizations on the left into stronger opposition to the final draft versions of cap and trade legislation floating around among Senate negotiators.

The Sierra Club was one left-leaning player that did engage in a measure of organizational self-reflection in the wake of the USCAP failure. This century-old federated environmental association has both central professionally run offices and membership networks in many states and localities. Sierra hovered on the edge of supporting the USCAP effort throughout 2009 and much of 2010, and took its own path toward the end. The organization's leadership turned over in March 2010, and the new Executive Director, Michael Brune, committed Sierra to a more aggressive anti-corporate political stance, which has been maintained in the wake of the cap and trade episode.¹¹⁹ The Sierra Club continues to engage in electoral politics and lobby in Washington DC, and at the same time it mounts protests and runs hard-hitting ads opposing coal-fired electric plants, defending the EPA, and targeting coal and oil interests plus the Koch brothers. Sierra now appears to be part of the left-environmental consensus questioning any revival of inside-the-Beltway bargaining involving compromises with carbon-industry interests.

Indeed, the environmental left since the cap and trade episode has converged on a strategy of building new grassroots passion and power, opposing business interests more aggressively, and “building a movement that can play hardball.”¹²⁰ This makes sense as far as it goes, but it does not look very hard at the role that left-edge-of-the-possible forces might play in any future efforts to get carbon-capping legislation through Congress. Are left-environmentalists giving up on that broad goal altogether? What will they do if the Environmental Defense Fund and other core USCAP players decide to renew their efforts down the line? Even if we assume that the second Obama administration will continue to use the EPA’s regulatory powers to, say, ratchet up standards for cars and appliances and limit emissions from coal-fired electric power plants, it is hard to imagine a sufficient revamping of energy production and use for the entire U.S. economy without consistent Congressional backing plus some sort of legislation for carbon capping. What role do left-leaning environmental groups plan to play in efforts to pass emissions legislation – and what kind of approach do they favor?

Lastly, we should look at green energy boosters, a third sector in the environmental movement that, like the leftists, held themselves largely aloof from the USCAP drive. For some time, there have been environmentalists who prioritize new kinds of business and technological investments in green energy development as the best way to counter global warming – and these players developed their own strategy for moving “beyond cap and trade,” as the savvy *New York Times* journalist David Leonhardt put it in an October 2010 overview of their ideas.¹²¹

USCAP was a strange-bedfellows coalition of moderate environmentalists and big industry leaders, including many from the “brown energy” sector, carbon-energy

producers and users in the oil and electricity industries. Left out of USCAP were not just left-leaning environmentalists, but also clean energy entrepreneurs and boosters. Months after the demise of cap and trade, reporter Leonhardt found the clean energy folks to be of surprisingly good cheer. They had not been convinced that the cap and trade bills would actually have worked to control carbon emissions in the United States, or that they would “have done anything about fast-growing emissions in China and India.” In their view, a better alternative would be ramped up investments in clean-energy research and in government-aided efforts to bring new “green” technologies to market. The California-based Breakthrough Institute led by Michael Shellenberger has pushed this approach for some time.¹²² And in October 2010, as Leonhardt reported, a new proposal for \$25 billion in annual federal spending on clean energy innovation was issued jointly by the conservative American Enterprise Institute and the moderately liberal Brookings Institution. This proposal also called on the Defense Department to play a stronger role in sponsoring clean energy research.¹²³

Here, too, as with the left environmentalists, the goals and ideas of the green energy boosters seem reasonable as part of what is bound to be a multi-pronged movement to fight global warming. The U.S. economy and other developed and developing economies will not only have to reduce the production and use of dirty energy, they will also need to develop cleaner energy sources. But even if it makes good sense to urge public investments in research and deployment of green technologies, is that a substitute for raising the price of carbon energy production and use? Will the new green technologies be able to get off the ground if U.S. regulations and taxes continue to subsidize oil production and encourage the use emissions-producing energy sources? If,

in fact, progress with green energy requires changing incentives across the U.S. and global economies, then there is no escape from government decision-making. Political efforts will still have to be organized, and political realities faced, not avoided.

Where Should Philanthropic Money Go?

Another notable kind of post-mortem took the form of reports and conferences about environmental funding priorities. This was bound to be part of the after-assessment because, as we have seen, major foundations and donors inspired by the 2007 *Design to Win* plan had converged to orchestrate a generous burst of support for the environmental organizations and bargaining efforts that fed into USCAP. Was all that money well spent? Should foundations and donors proceed differently next time, perhaps by spreading their bets on a variety of strategies and organizations, rather than putting most of their chips on a single policy push?

The Ecological Innovation program at the Nathan Cummings Foundation gave a sizeable evaluation grant to Matthew Nisbet and his colleagues at American University to support an assessment published in a spring 2011 report called *ClimateShift: Clear Vision for the Next Decade of Public Debate*.¹²⁴ This report quickly became controversial for its strong claims – widely criticized and partially debunked – that pro-USCAP environmental reformers had been so generously funded that they were fully competitive with conservative opponents of climate-change legislation.¹²⁵ Without stopping to sort through the controversies, let me simply note that, in my view, although Nisbet made mistakes and considerably over-stated the resources available to the environmental

reformers, he and his team did establish that the USCAP effort was probably better funded (in absolute terms and in relation to the opponents) than any previous legislative effort favored by environmentalists. The cap and trade reformers surely did not have or spend anywhere near as much money as their industry and ideological opponents, but the USCAP folks were not lacking in resources. The more relevant question is how they deployed their resources.

Nisbet has too little to say about that key issue; instead, he concludes that future resources should be shifted away from mainline environmental organizations. American environmental politics today consists of “two major coalitions,” Nisbet claims, one a liberal “Green network” allied with the Democratic Party and focused primarily on pricing and controlling carbon emissions to fight climate change, and the other a more bipartisan “Innovation network” of business leaders and university groups focused on “increasing research spending; ... creating regional hubs for technology development; reforming subsidies for the fossil fuel industries; using defense spending...to catalyze wider changes in energy technology and use” and promoting a range of clean-energy technologies.¹²⁶ This recipe is pretty much the same as the Breakthrough Institute’s approach and the proposal made by October 2010 AEI-Brookings team discussed above. Nisbet argues that, going forward, funding should go in a more balanced way to both the Innovation and Green parts of the climate change effort, encouraging more cooperation between them. Nisbet does not address future potential political cooperation between the two wings of professional environmentalism he identifies, and the report pretty much ignores left environmental activists.

Innovation-oriented environmentalists are not the only ones who can ask for more funding. In February 2012, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy issued a “Philanthropy at Its Best” report called *Cultivating the Grassroots: A Winning Approach for Environment and Climate Funders*, taking up the cause of hundreds of social-justice oriented environmental groups, many of them relatively small and locally focused, who also felt slighted by the concentration of 2000s philanthropy on the USCAP effort.¹²⁷ This report criticized the major foundations that had united to channel resources into mainstream environmental organizations at the center of USCAP, arguing that philanthropists would be better advised to spread their bets and fund many different kinds of organizations and initiatives that could contribute to the fight against global warming.

The fine print of the report, however, revealed a clear agenda – to designate a fixed share of funding to go to small, social justice-oriented groups, pretty much regardless of their relevance to any realistic policy agenda about climate change or the limitation of dangerous emissions. Like the *ClimateShift* report, the *Cultivating the Grassroots* report does not explicitly assess the politics of what went right or wrong in the USCAP effort to bring about carbon-capping legislation. Neither analyzes the U.S. political scene, and neither has much to say about the legislative goals and strategies of global warming warriors. Instead, these reports are efforts to attract for their favored groups some of the funding and energy that went into the USCAP-linked environmental organizations in the 2000s. They seem to be pleading for environmental philanthropists to spend their money on something other than legislative efforts. But they make this plea without addressing the key question of whether some form of legislated carbon controls is worth fighting for in the U.S. electoral and representative system – and, if so, how.

Immediate cap and trade post-mortems were, in sum, all over the map, and tended to reinforce the proclivities of different sets of organizations already active in environmental and climate-change efforts. This was true both for assessments of philanthropic funding choices and for post-mortems on organizations' political choices during the cap and trade episode. Missing from all of these reports was any clear analysis of the larger political context in the United States. How is that context shifting, and what do the changes mean for groups, leaders, funders, and movements committed to shifting energy use and making America an effective partner in transnational efforts to counter global warming? Without a big-picture political analysis – and a frank dialogue about the political forces and issues this report tries to highlight – progress in the fight for limits on emissions will be difficult, because a resumption of old approaches will not suffice.

THE POLITICS NEXT TIME

By late 2012 and early 2013, many climate change reformers were beginning to hope, once again, that forward movement might be possible. The spring and summer of 2012 were blazingly hot across much of North America, and a few polls suggested that public belief in the reality of global warming was on the uptick, along with support for government action to regulate greenhouse emissions.¹²⁸ Hurricane Sandy kicked off more national media attention to the links between catastrophic weather events and warming trends; and since the 2012 elections, advocates and editorialists have called on the re-elected President Obama to support strong regulatory steps to reduce carbon

emissions and start using the bully pulpit to talk about global warming and the need for new U.S. actions to address it.¹²⁹ As Washington DC remains mired in fiscal disputes, environmentalists are jockeying for leverage and debating their strategies for the next two years and beyond.

Yearning for an Easy Way

Starting even before the 2012 election outcomes were known, and continuing apace afterwards, climate-change reformers of various stripes have been trying to find quick fixes or easy ways to get around – rather than confront and counter – all-out GOP obstructionism. Several of these hoped-for fixes and detours deserve review. Could there be a prompt insider bargain on some form of emissions controls such as a carbon tax? Could the market solve climate-change problems on its own, without much government intervention? Or could purely grassroots activity carry the day, working its magic entirely outside of Washington DC, headquarters to so many confusing maneuvers and imperfect bargains? Each of these nostrums is currently inspiring hope, yet none of them is likely to suffice. Singly or together, these approaches may bear some fruit, but they cannot do enough to reorient incentives for energy production and use across the entire economy or to allow the United States to cooperate effectively with other nations in the fight against global warming. For that, there must be changes in the course of national politics – changes to render GOP extremists less effective in setting national agendas, and changes to mobilize popular support for new legislation and ongoing regulatory steps with muscle.

New Kinds of Insider Deals?

Some reformers never give up hoping for insider bipartisan bargains, no matter what real-world politics says about their likelihood. I realized this on August 7, 2012 when I opened my copy of the *Wall Street Journal* to see a remarkable OpEd called “A New Climate-Change Consensus” written by the indomitable head of the Environmental Defense Fund, Fred Krupp. At first, I thought I was in a time warp, because this OpEd read like a replay of Krupp’s pivotal November 20, 1986 OpEd, “New Environmentalism Factors In Economic Needs,” which also ran in the *Wall Street Journal*. Same conservative-friendly outlet, and an identical rhetorical structure. In both OpEds, Krupp announces hopes for “bipartisan” deal-making between warring camps of anti-environmental business and Republican leaders, on the one hand, and business-bashing environmentalists, on the other. In both OpEds, he takes a hard swipe at fellow environmentalists for (in 1986) being “relentlessly negative, opposing industry by reflex, standing in the way of growth and driving up costs” and (in 2012) for ignoring “the economic impact” of climate solutions that “could damage the economy and stifle short-term growth.”¹³⁰ Likewise in both messages Krupp touts a supposedly “new” way forward that respects what he characterizes as the heretofore downplayed valid economic concerns of conservatives.

Wait a minute, I said to myself, didn’t Krupp and his EDF just spearhead a years-long campaign to enact a business-friendly, market-based cap and trade system? Didn’t USCAP, as Eric Pooley aptly puts it, embody “EDF’s strategy for changing the world...?”¹³¹ I could understand the strategic brilliance of Krupp’s move back in 1986.

But now that his project to forge an insider deal for cap and trade and bring about the enactment of such legislation with bipartisan support had fallen on its face after years of effort – because Republican support did not materialize – why does it make sense to, once again, blame environmentalists to EDF's left? Wouldn't some reflection on the earlier strategy be more in order than calling for yet another round of the same thing, with no reflection or explanation?

Puzzled, I placed a call to an environmentalist who understands the smoke signals coming from Beltway tepees better than an outsider like me. Fred, he explained, is gesturing toward conservatives in the hope that some sort of carbon controls might be included in bipartisan DC budget deals – steps that might appeal to legislators trying to reduce the federal budget deficit, yet would also alter economic incentives and raise the price of dirty energy. From his OpEd it was not clear exactly what policy bargains Krupp had in mind, and my source speculated that it might be a carbon tax, which was getting some attention in DC as a way to tackle both climate change and deficit reduction. Whether or not he was flirting with this idea in mid-summer, some months later Krupp's EDF clarified that, no, it still prefers a cap and trade scheme to a straight carbon tax.¹³² Apparently, Krupp has not given up looking for a way to get a variant of his preferred approach done. But other key players – some environmentalists, a few businesses including ExxonMobil, and lots of professional economists – are supporting a straight tax on carbon energy imports and production, the latest quixotic DC quest for an insider bargain on climate change.¹³³

The push for a carbon tax started a while ago. As *The Hill* explained on July 12, 2012, an “ad-hoc, left-right group” including some conservative economists and

advocates plus assorted liberal experts had since 2011 been “gathering on Wednesday afternoon at the conservative American Enterprise Institute... in Washington, D.C.... to discuss a path forward on climate and fiscal policy, including proposals for a carbon tax.”¹³⁴ The discussions were supposed to be entirely confidential, but (as always happens in DC) someone leaked an agenda document titled “Price Carbon Campaign/Lame Duck Initiative” to Marlo Lewis of the ultra-free-market, climate-science-denying Competitive Enterprise Institute, who in turn immediately denounced the “carbon tax cabal” and mobilized an outcry on the right. Four days later, on July 16, *The Hill* ran a predictable follow up article quoting spokespersons for House Speaker John Boehner and Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell to the effect that “Capitol Hill’s most powerful Republicans say advocates who have been discussing a carbon tax behind closed doors are wasting their breath.”¹³⁵

Months later, following the November elections, Boehner and McConnell again vetoed a carbon tax, their message reinforced by denunciations in a *Wall Street Journal* opinion column and a fatwa from conservative anti-tax enforcer Grover Norquist – who had earlier explained to journalist Ezra Klein that a “Republican Party which creates a new tax would not be long for the world.”¹³⁶ Proudly, Americans for Prosperity (the Koch-backed advocacy organization affiliated with Tea Party activism) touted the fact that the entire GOP leadership for the 113th House consists of legislators who have signed its “no climate tax pledge.”¹³⁷ None of this has prevented economists like Lawrence Summers from continuing to push the carbon tax idea on the (let’s face it) politically irrelevant grounds of logical economic efficiency.¹³⁸ Even occasional beyond-the-Beltway voices support this approach, as did the editors of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in

their recent call to carbon taxes to “save the planet” and raise revenues for Social Security and federal health care programs.¹³⁹ But, as we have seen, today’s Republican Congressional leaders cater to extreme anti-tax and anti-environmental forces in their party, forces that show no signs of letting up.

Does this mean that a carbon tax has absolutely no chance in Congressional budget bargains that will have to be brokered, again and again, during 2013 and 2014? No – one can imagine President Obama and the Democratic-led Senate forcing a modest, loophole-riddled version of such a tax on the GOP House majority during one of the coming rounds of “emergency” fiscal deals. But several points are worth stressing. First, getting any version of a carbon tax via insider bargaining in DC will be a very heavy political lift, achieved only if Democrats hold most of the cards, achieve unwonted unity, and decide to lay them down for this goal. That could happen only if a lot of moderate Congressional Democrats got exceptions for their favorite regional fossil-fuel industries and were convinced that revenues from this tax are vital to reducing the deficit without eliminating or squeezing other federal programs they want to preserve. Secondly, if a carbon tax happens this way, it will look corrupt and not be very understandable to most ordinary American citizens – and so it will be easily ridiculed and demonized by right-wing advocates and media figures who have already demonstrated their ability to rouse populist opposition and stoke public fears about complex, opaque insider measures.

Perhaps most important, even a lot of messy insider politics could not produce any sort of silver bullet in the war against climate change. Many experts do indeed believe that a (non-loophole-ridden) carbon tax is a simple and efficient way to nudge the economy toward cleaner energy.¹⁴⁰ But “nudge” is the operative word. Even passing an

optimally designed carbon tax (not very likely in today's U.S. Congress) would not solve the greenhouse gas emissions problem. According to a recent MIT study, "a modest carbon tax, on its own," would leave the United States "far short of its long-term climate goals.... [T]he tax would either have to be hiked dramatically or combined with other clean-energy measures in order to make a significant dent in tackling global warming."¹⁴¹

Are Market Forces Enough?

Next up in the looking-for-an-easy-fix category is an argument keyed by a report from the U.S. Energy Information Agency that carbon dioxide emissions in the national economy fell to a twenty-year low during the first four months of 2012.¹⁴² The slow recovery from the 2008-09 economic crisis is partly responsible, but experts agree that the welcome drop-off in emissions is "mainly because of low-priced natural gas." Shale gas drilling in various places around the country has reduced the price of natural gas and enabled electric-generating plants to substitute it for coal. Natural gas burns cleaner than coal and its increased use has allowed the United States to "cut carbon dioxide emissions more than any other country over the last six years."¹⁴³

Some might be tempted to say, you see, the market can take care of the greenhouse gas emissions problem without government intrusions. But that would be too hasty a conclusion. The "fracking" process used to extract natural gas from shale rock can leak heat-trapping methane into the environment. Technological solutions can help to prevent most of these dangerous leakages, but government will have to enforce the use of the safest extraction methods. What is more, even in the best-case scenario for the

displacement of coal by natural gas – in the United States, and in China and India, too, through exports that displace coal – experts say that the world would still be “on track to increase atmospheric carbon emissions” to an environmentally unsustainable level.¹⁴⁴

The other worrisome reality is that, absent hard caps on carbon-energy use, cheap natural gas would hinder the development of the cleanest new energy sources such as wind and solar power. If that happens, gas could in the end actually lead to relatively higher greenhouse-gas emissions. All of this leads us right back to the need to develop economy-wide controls and new incentives to develop and use a variety of steadily cleaner energy sources.¹⁴⁵ Government regulations, investments, and tax incentives all have to be part of the solution. Existing market forces alone will not do it. Getting the politics right cannot be avoided.

What Kind of Politics?

When, exactly, the next opportunity to push for Congressional legislation to limit carbon emissions will arise is not easy to predict. Continued partisan deadlock in Washington DC seems likely for the immediate future. The 2014 Congressional elections might strengthen Democrats willing to support climate-change legislation (and encourage moderate Republicans, if any should emerge). But probably not, because mid-term elections have much lower turnout than presidential-year elections, and those who turn out are skewed toward older, white, conservative-minded Republicans – exactly the GOP base voters whose opinions have been swayed since 2006 toward global warming skepticism.

As I have stressed in this report, a crucial byproduct of the fights over cap and trade from 2006 to 2010 was a renewed effort by elite climate-change deniers to influence popular views and mobilize grassroots forces in opposition to Congressional and EPA action. This counter-mobilization was remarkably successful in reaching the highly attentive ultra-conservative half of the GOP voter base, arousing anger and fear in their ranks that could be directed not just against liberal environmentalists but also against moderate politicians and business leaders who wanted to forge market-friendly carbon caps. Now the Republican Party is heavily tilted toward popular and elite forces who question whether human-induced climate-change is problem for government to deal with at all; and these forces have the capacity to prevent most elected Republicans from compromising on tax, regulatory, or legislative steps to reorient the U.S. economy. Recruiting a few sympathetic business leaders will not suffice to counter these radical-right forces in and around the GOP.

The impact of the GOP's rightward lurch goes beyond shrinking possibilities for new legislation. Even bold regulatory steps by the EPA – such as using its authority under the Clean Air Act to crack down on existing coal-fired electric-generating plants – are likely to be blocked or undercut as long as GOP radicals have major leverage in Congress.¹⁴⁶ Some anti-global warming reformers fantasize that the second Obama administration can act freely through the EPA without worrying about Congress or national popular support. But there are many moderate Democrats in Congress who are queasy about a purely regulatory approach, and federal administrative agencies always have to have a modicum of backing from Congressional committees that control their budgets and have the authority to convene hearings and launch investigations.

Here, then, is the bottom line: The political tide can be turned over the next decade only by the creation of a climate-change politics that includes broad popular mobilization on the center left. That is what it will take to counter the recently jelled combination of free-market elite opposition and right-wing popular mobilization against global warming remedies. However, in stating this conclusion, I want to be clear about what I am *not* arguing. Some of the environmental left seem to be calling for a politics that gives up on legislative remedies – and avoids altogether the messy compromises that fighting for carbon-capping legislation would require – in favor of a turn toward pure “grass roots” organizing in local communities, states, and institutional settings such as universities. Of course, environmental activists can encourage (and already have achieved) very valuable steps in the states – such as California’s new effort to raise the cost of greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁴⁷ And both professional advocates and grassroots activists can prod businesses and universities to “go green” in purchasing decisions and investment choices.¹⁴⁸ These kinds of efforts add up over time – and they may in due course prompt corporate chieftains to support economy-wide regulations, if only to level the playing field and create more predictability about business costs and profit opportunities. Some day, the national Republican Party might again start listening to such business leaders more closely than to right-wing ultra-ideologues. But rescuing the GOP from its destructive radicals will take time – not to mention more courage from non-Tea Party Republicans, who must rouse themselves to do that job. In the meantime, liberals and friendly moderates need to build a populist anti-global warming movement on their own side of the political spectrum. Reformers looking to fight global warming cannot simply turn away from national politics.

Since the 1970s, U.S. environmental organizations have been split into two broad types: national, professionally run organizations with headquarters in Washington DC and New York City, on the one hand, and smaller groups focused on local issues, on the other.¹⁴⁹ Given this organizational landscape, it is not surprising that environmental advocates tend to think in either/or terms about politics: EITHER the focus should be on professionally managed “insider” DC-focused legislative lobbying, OR it should be on volunteer “grassroots” mobilization apart from legislative efforts. But in fact, neither approach by itself is likely to work – certainly not for tackling huge challenges like global warming. To make progress on such an encompassing challenge, Americans must, on the one hand, make changes in national laws and regulations (and foreign policies) and, on the other hand, modify the ways we live our lives – build homes, travel, do business – in every region and local community.

A successful drive to engage a majority of Americans in effective measures to fight the ill effects of global warming is going to have to be organized through inter-organizational networks that link together efforts in DC with widespread efforts in the states and localities. That is true not only because many different kinds of efforts will have to unfold in complementary ways, but also because U.S. politics itself is institutionally structured through Congress to give local public opinion and advocacy a good deal of sway in national politics. In the end, members of the House and Senate will decide to support new laws and regulations to help nudge the economy in climate-friendly directions only when they think that articulate leaders and well-organized voters back in their home states and districts really want them to act.

This will never be just a matter of merely pointing to national opinion polls in which aggregates register tepid support for “environmentalism” or vaguely endorse pending pieces of legislation. Professionally run organizations and DC insiders take national surveys too seriously. A lot of what they measure amounts to nothing more than momentary shifts in aggregate opinion, swayed by events, elite debates, and the latest television coverage. Public sympathy for a cause can be broad but very shallow – and that has been true for decades now with U.S. national public sympathy for environmental priorities. Environmental organizations are investing way too much money in polling operations, and spending too much time imaging which phrases they should use in messaging campaigns disconnected from organized networks. The new vogue to pay psychological researchers to come up with phrases that subliminally appeal to individuals is even more of a waste of resources for organizations facing serious political challenges, not because psychology is uninteresting, but because it tells us nothing about networks and organizations, the real stuff of politics. Opponents of climate-change legislation do not worry about shallow, inert aggregate individual opinions. Key actors in Congress and the economy know that only organizationally mobilized public opinion matters. As the HCAN experience in the health reform battles of 2009 demonstrated, a nationwide network with organizational reach into states and localities will have much more ability to pressure and persuade Congress than any inside-the-Beltway advocates waving episodic national opinion polls.¹⁵⁰ And mass persuasion advertisements are likely to matter only in the context of organized, clashing groups and coalitions. That is why the millions USCAP spent on disconnected messaging campaigns in 2009 and 2010 were largely wasted.

Using Policy Goals to Build a Broader Political Coalition

Muscular U.S. legislative efforts to cap carbon emissions are almost certainly going to be one necessary part of any future nationwide effort to fight global warming. Not the whole of it, but a necessary part of it – because energy production use in the U.S. economy must change. The trick in preparing for the next drive for carbon capping legislation will be to work out an approach that can inspire widespread public understanding and enthusiasm and, at the same time, build organizational networks in which national and local activists can work together. Policy ideas have a role to play in this, but not as detailed blueprints that anyone should imagine will simply be accepted and passed into law by Congress. Instead, new legislative goals should be hammered out over the next few years as part and parcel of pulling together forces that can push from beyond Washington DC even more than inside the Beltway. If this approach is taken, policy goals will have to be grounded in broad citizen understanding and backing, not just insider interests.

The USCAP effort of the 2000s was premised on the idea that a legislative proposal had to express the shared, pre-compromised interests of “inside players” – the belief that a carbon-capping plan should embody a bargain hammered out among national environmental organizations and corporations. Although they may not have realized it, the CEOs in USCAP were basing their efforts on a tacit (and mistaken) assumption about how U.S. politics works. USCAP principals tried to work out economic compromises among stakeholder groups – corporations, unions, regional industries – because they

thought this would set the stage to get bills through key committees and the two houses of Congress. Endless time was spent negotiating the exact regulatory targets for carbon-emissions reduction and details about the allocation of free “allowances” to polluters. In essence, the USCAP bargainers put in so much effort because they thought that if heads of professional environmental organizations and corporate chieftains could lay down together like lambs with lions, then Congressional committee leaders would accept the plan, only need to put the finishing touches on the bargains by throwing extra sops here and there to regional or business interests of special importance to key legislators. Voila, the job would be done. Properly brokered legislation would pass and head to Obama’s desk.

What’s wrong with this? Some might answer that deals with businesses, especially deals with “devils” in the “dirty energy” sectors, are inherently immoral. I do not agree; there is nothing inherently wrong with bargains that involve business interests; and strange-bedfellow coalitions can sometimes be very effective in politics. Rather, the difficulty with the blueprint strategy is that USCAP tried to operate as if the United States were a parliamentary democracy where a pre-brokered bargain could just be handed to the legislature and the executive. But that is not how U.S. politics works at all. American governing institutions do not lend themselves to control by corporatist bargainers.

In many parliamentary systems, if policy advocates can broker a bargain among nationally organized representatives of business, labor, and public interest advocacy organizations, then it is often easy enough to get the bargain through parliament. The majority party or coalition can crack the whip. But in the United States, law-making power is divided between the executive branch and a sovereign Congress run by disparate

committees and full of representatives separately elected from states and hundreds of local districts. In this decentralized, federalist polity, corporatist bargaining rarely works, and certainly cannot succeed amidst ideological polarization when widely organized forces can mount counter-pressures through states and districts. The U.S. president cannot crack the legislative whip, and legislators often respond to local and interest group pressures more readily than to their own party's leaders. In any event, legislators and Congressional committees insist on having an independent say about the provisions included or excluded from every major piece of legislation.

Think of what happened when President Bill Clinton back in 1993 tried to arrange a big-player bargain for health care reform. Five hundred representatives of organized interests convened behind close doors for months to hammer out the details of the Health Security bill, but the resulting 1,243-page proposal got nowhere in Congress.¹⁵¹ Even if they had already been included in the White House bargaining process, business interests, health-care providers, and conservatives subsequently lobbied or conducted grassroots campaigns to keep bills or crucial provisions of bills from passing so much as a single one of the seven Congressional committees that chewed over the Clinton proposal. The USCAP effort from 2006 through 2010 was another effort to do a Congressional push for a largely pre-cooked corporatist bargain on a huge economically weighty reform. The surprise was that a USCAP-encouraged cap and trade bill managed to get through one house of Congress, not that the effort fell short altogether. Tellingly, cap and trade legislation squeaked through the House during a very unusual moment – in which a large Democratic majority was directed with near-Leninist discipline by one of history's strongest House leaders, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who had loyal, strongly pro-

environmentalist allies in key committees. When the effort moved into the Senate, the usual dynamics returned: not just GOP minority obstruction and oppositional campaigns in the states, but the feckless wanderings of Democratic Senatorial cats that Leader Harry Reid could barely corral. Left to its own devices, facing no popularly rooted pressures except from fossil fuel businesses and the Tea Party, the Senate was not going to move forward with carbon capping of any sort.

Some years from now – mostly likely after 2016 – another, better-conceived legislative push for carbon capping might be able move forward, especially if it has carefully prepared, strong backing from a broad alliance constructed on the basis of a more realistic grasp of the underlying dynamics of U.S. politics. To build leverage on Congress, and to push back effectively against elite and populist anti-environmental forces, global warming reformers must mobilize broad, popularly rooted support for carbon-capping measures that have something concrete to offer not just to big corporate players, but also to ordinary American citizens and to local and state groups. Another legislative effort based on insider bargains and pay-offs is not likely to be successful – given conservative capacities to mobilize grassroots opposition, plus the level of distrust that most Americans now have about complex insider bargains in Washington DC.

Perhaps professional environmental organizations led by the Environmental Defense Fund will decide to try again the strange-bedfellows, insider bargaining approach. That would be a mistake in my view; I think the USCAP principals should step back, think again, and find a legislative approach that offers more incentives to a broad array of green forces operating in regions and localities as well as nationally – an approach that is also more transparent and understandable to average voters. But even if

the USCAP principals go for another round of insider cap and trade bargaining, other forces and funders in the green movement can, like the center-leftists in the health reform battles of 2009-10, coalesce around a variant of carbon-capping more suited to federated democratic political mobilization. There is no reason why the next legislative effort should put all of its eggs in one basket. Funders and green groups alike should recognize the advantages of multiple coalitions using different strategies to push broadly in the same direction. Various wings of a new army for carbon capping legislation could deploy complementary organizational networks and follow distinct strategies to move toward the same overall goal – getting Congress to pass a comprehensive system of emissions controls and support its continued enforcement.

What policy approach might serve as the basis for a strategy of popular mobilization through inter-organizational alliances stretching into states and localities? During the 2009-10 episode, an alternative carbon-capping bill was put into the legislative hopper – the so-called “Carbon Limits and Energy for America’s Renewal” (CLEAR) legislation introduced on December 11, 2009 by Democratic Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington and Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine.¹⁵² This was an instance of what has been dubbed the “cap and dividend” approach to limiting carbon emissions.¹⁵³ Like cap and trade, cap and dividend measures aim to raise the price of carbon-based energy production and use. They may place a tax on producers or importers of such energy, or they may establish a regulatory cap and sell permits at gradually escalating prices. But permits are not given away (and corporations may not be allowed to compensate for domestic emissions by paying, say, for rain forest plantings abroad, because such diversions are difficult to track and measure). Crucially, the

substantial revenues that are raised from a tax or sales of permits are put into a public trust fund; and most of the proceeds are divvied up each year to pay “dividend” checks to every individual citizen. (A variant of a public trust fund with citizen dividends exists already in the state of Alaska, though not for the purpose of fighting global warming. In Alaska, oil companies pay royalties to the state for permission to drill on state lands, and each Alaska citizen gets a fairly hefty dividend check paid out from the fund each autumn. As a result, the state of Alaska has one of the most equal income distributions in the United States – because a family with low or moderate income can count on multiple dividend checks every year adding up to a portion of family income that exceeds the portion such checks add up to for more privileged families.)¹⁵⁴ The Cantwell-Collins CLEAR proposal called for dividend remittances amounting to about \$1100 for each family of four each year, so this approach, like the Alaska fund, would have boosted the incomes of ordinary Americans compared to the more economically privileged.¹⁵⁵

I have not spent typeface on the Cantwell-Collins bill earlier in this report, because it was not a realistic alternative in 2009 or 2010. The CLEAR bill was introduced relatively late in the cap and trade game and – more to the point – had no broad democratic movement or ramified coalition behind it.¹⁵⁶ It was an interesting legislative gesture that had been goosed along by a few advocates, foundations, and green business interests.¹⁵⁷ At the time, USCAP leaders and cap and trade proponents dismissed the bill as an unwanted diversion; and in the interviews I did after the fact, mention of the cap and dividend approach aroused little comment (or in some cases even recognition of what I was talking about). I mention CLEAR now not to claim that it could have been a viable legislative alternative in 2010; nor do I necessarily endorse the specific provisions

of this or any other cap and dividend proposal. My purpose, instead, is to highlight the alternative kind of politics that could be built to work for a cap and dividend bill whose details would need to be hashed out by players involved in a new supportive coalition.

Politically speaking, the cap and dividend route has a number of advantages. Instead of building political support by bargaining with industrial interests about how many permits they may get cheaply or for free, the cap and dividend approach makes it possible to speak with average citizens about what they might gain as well as pay during the transitional period of increasing prices for energy from carbon sources. Cap and dividend is simple to spell out (the Collins-Cantwell bill was 39 pages, compared to over a thousand pages for cap and trade) and it is also relatively transparent. Citizens could understand and trust this policy. Like Social Security, taxes or proceeds from auctions are collected for a separate trust fund – and the revenues are used to pay for broadly valued benefits for each citizen and every family. No opaque, messy, corrupt insider deals. The dividend payments also deliver a relatively greater economic pay-off to the least-well off individuals and families, precisely the people who, as energy prices rise, would have to spend more of their incomes as home heating, electricity, and gasoline. Popularly rooted organizations like labor unions, churches, and old people’s associations might rally behind such an approach, because it is economically just in its impact.¹⁵⁸

Indeed, for some years after it started, a cap and dividend system would reduce the expanding income inequalities that have plagued American society and politics in recent decades.¹⁵⁹ Some environmentalists speak as if social benefits and economic fairness are not “their issues” (remember the contempt USCAP leaders expressed toward health care reform, which provides major new protections for low and middle-income

Americans). But all U.S. environmentalists should recognize that they have a stake in combating income inequality. Environmentalism has a reputation for appealing mostly to white, upper-middle-class educated citizens, even as stagnating wages for less privileged Americans have made it easy for right-wing forces to demonize carbon-capping as a new tax that will burden already hard-pressed families. Cap and dividend would allow anti-global warming advocates to say – loud and clear, and very truthfully – that promoting cleaner energy will also boost the economic fortunes of average Americans. The claim would not have to rest only on pie-in-the-sky green energy jobs. Those jobs will appear, indeed are already appearing in the tens of thousands, but the promise of future jobs for some people is not going to be enough to counter right-wing scare campaigns that stoke the well-founded economic anxieties of the majority. Reformers who want to remake energy use in the United States need to deliver concrete economic help to ordinary families along the way, and ideally they should do it in easy-to-understand, transparent ways.

A cap and dividend approach could be advantageous for many environmental activists and green businesses, too. Each year, when the dividend checks go out, environmental advocacy groups could ask their supporters to donate a portion of the dividend to their causes, thus rechanneling some of the money raised by capping carbon emissions to pay for complementary kinds of environmental advocacy. Environmental groups, along with nonprofits, religious groups, and citizens' groups could encourage local businesses, nonprofits, and families to install energy-saving devices that would, in effect, allow more of the rebates to go for purposes other than offsetting higher electricity and gasoline prices. Furthermore, the yearly arrival of the dividends would allow green

businesses to advertise energy-saving appliances, cars, and home-heating solutions. They could say to Americans that “an investment in new green technology is a good use for this year’s dividend check, and it will allow you to keep more of next year’s check.” The ads practically write themselves.

All of the examples listed here are instances of what political scientists call “positive feedback loops” from a policy breakthrough. The most powerful kind of reformist policymaking uses an initial law to create material benefits and normative claims that, in turn, reinforce and enlarge the supportive political coalition behind the new measure. A classic example is Social Security, which in addition to furthering the economic wellbeing of older Americans, also enhanced their capacities and willingness to be active citizens – who in turn have lobbied and voted to sustain Social Security over the decades.¹⁶⁰ Cap and dividend has the clear potential to launch such reinforcing feedback loops as well, attracting voter support and enhancing the leverage of the businesses and reform organizations that have an interest in completing America’s transition to a green economy. Cap and dividend is a deal with the angels, not the devils.

Of course, cap and dividend approaches do not appeal to everyone. In fact, global warming reformers trying to build political coalitions around this approach will get plenty of push-back from actors who have good reason to prefer cap and trade approaches. Carbon-energy industries stand to get free allowances or low-cost permits from cap and trade bargains, while carbon taxes or caps with dividends would leave them with higher costs, reduced profits, and the need to charge higher prices to consumers. Labor unions with members currently working in carbon industries may well ally with corporations on such issues. In addition, many politicians in Congress and experts in the executive

branch prefer cap and trade bargains that allow them to hand out allowances to favored organized interests. Insider negotiations allow these politicians and officials to maintain control and claim credit for the pay-offs to powerful interests. In Washington DC today, politicians also have an incentive to use revenues from carbon controls to offset income taxes or pay down a portion of future federal budget deficits. A trust fund with automatic annual dividend checks appeals to average citizens, but it more or less cuts politicians and their stakeholder bargains out of the loop.¹⁶¹

There is, in short, a real choice to be made about the kind of policy strategy and coalition-building that could enable the United States to enact and sustain effective carbon caps. For inside the Beltway types, the easy choice will be to try ever more insider efforts to get a cap and trade system or carbon taxes, with new revenues to be dispensed in relatively opaque ways through complicated stakeholder bargains. But for strategists who suspect that more of the same kind of politics will not work, cap and dividend approaches hold the possibility of constructing a new political movement in the next few years. A carefully organized drive for cap and dividend might well bring together environmental advocates, green businesses, and many unions and citizen associations to support the enactment of carbon-emissions caps and the subsequent ratcheting-up of the tax levels to ensure that the United States completes a transition to a green economy, with ordinary citizens reaping economic benefits along the way. Values and moral vision would inspire action, of course, but so would pocketbook payoffs for most families and future-oriented businesses. Doing good and doing well would go hand in hand.

In addition to simplicity and widely distributed benefits, cap and dividend strategies could link local activists and national environmental advocates. Everyone in the

movement, capaciously understood, could get involved in both the moral and the material mobilizations that it will take to change U.S. energy use and promote a growing green economy. Many groups not currently focused on environmental concerns would also be happy to join the coalition. In the process of hammering out a cap and dividend campaign, far-reaching networks reaching into each state and most Congressional districts could be put in place, as they were in the Health Care for America Now effort, laying in place the capacities that will be needed to push Congress from the states and districts. Without sustained pressures and inspiration from outside the Beltway, Congress will never do what is needed to enact new energy regulations and sustain them from counter-pressures over the years it will take to transform the economy.

The Challenge Named

Back in the introduction, I said that the political problem in the cap and trade shortfall needed to be named before it could be addressed. Now I have spent a lengthy report arguing that the USCAP strategy was based on misplaced hopes for bipartisan bargains and a failure to grasp that support from Republicans was not going to be forthcoming. More fundamentally, the cap and trade push, long in the making, suffered from a failure of democratic political imagination, and a misconception of how U.S. politics generates reform breakthroughs, on the rare occasions when it does. Big, society-shifting reforms are not achieved in the United States principally through insider bargains. They depend on the inspiration and extra oomph that comes from widely ramified organization and broad democratic mobilization.

Whatever happened years ago, “bipartisanship” in today’s Washington DC on environmental policymaking is not going to emerge from additional efforts at insider bargaining – not given the stark polarization of the parties, with so many Republicans now wary of compromise or tilting off the edge of the far ideological right. Nor will one more deal with corporate leaders get environmentalists very far on the legislative front – not because it is inherently wrong to deal with business leaders, but business people are not, right now, the prime arbiters in the Republican Party. Ideological advocates, carbon industry dead-enders, and populist anti-government forces are the ones who hold sway in the GOP right now, including billionaire elites and grassroots activists fiercely opposed to any and all government efforts to fight global warming.

The only way to counter such right-wing elite and popular forces is to build a broad popular movement to tackle climate change. Ways must be found to use policy ideas as tools to knit-together inside-outside links among many organizations, including some that can draw masses of ordinary citizens into the transition to a green economy. Carbon caps are still needed, but they should be formulated and fought for in new ways that empower many kinds of reformers to work together – for transparent legislation that delivers concrete benefits to millions of regular American citizens. Most of us will need to engage in this battle if it is to have any chance of success. Americans who want a new, sustainable economy cannot leave any part of the effort, including the drive for new emissions legislation, entirely in the hands of honchos striking bargains in back rooms. Citizens must mobilize and many organizations must work together in a sustained democratic movement to build a green economy.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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¹ Leigh Raymond, “The Emerging Revolution in Emissions Trading Policy,” in *Greenhouse Governance: Addressing Climate Change in America*, edited by Barry G. Rabe (Washington D.D.: Brookings Institution, 2010).

² *A Call For Action: Consensus Principles and Recommendations from the U.S. Climate Action Partnership: A Business and NGO Partnership* (Washington DC: USCAP, 2009).

³ Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine did co-sponsor with Democrat Maria Cantwell the CLEAR Act discussed at the end of this report. It was a cap and dividend proposal, different from cap and trade, and did not come to a vote in the Senate.

⁴ For a quantitative picture of the rightward lunge of House Republicans from 2010 to 2011, see Figure 5.1 in Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 169.

⁵ Dina Cappiello (Associated Press), “GOP Presidential Hopefuls Shift on Global Warming,” *Bangor Daily News*, Saturday/Sunday, May 28-29, 2011, p. A6.

⁶ Nicholas Confessore, “Ryan Has Kept Close Ties to Donors on the Right,” *New York Times*, Tuesday, August 14, 2012, p. A9.

⁷ Felicia Sonmez, “Who is ‘Americans for Prosperity’?,” *Washington Post*, August 26, 2010; and Jane Mayer, “Covert Operations: The Billionaire Brothers Who are Waging a War against Obama,” *The New Yorker*, August 30, 2010.

⁸ Leslie Kaufman, “Environmentalists Get Down to Earth,” *New York Times*, December 17, 2011.

⁹ Petra Bartosiewicz and Marissa Miley, *The Too Polite Revolution: Why the Recent Campaign to Pass Comprehensive Climate Legislation in the United States Failed* (January 2013). Their report was also

commissioned by the Rockefeller Family Fund in conjunction with the Columbia School of Journalism. It is available at the School's website and also in the Spotlight on "The Politics of America's Fight Against Global Warming" on the website of the Scholars Strategy Network.

¹⁰ Theda Skocpol and Lawrence R. Jacobs, editors, *Reaching for a New Deal: Ambitious Governance, Economic Meltdown, and Polarized Politics in Obama's First Two Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011).

¹¹ Eric Pooley, *The Climate War: True Believers, Power Brokers, and the Fight to Save the Earth* (New York: Hyperion, 2010).

¹² For overviews of this episode, see Lawrence R. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol, "Hard-Fought Legacy: Obama, Congressional Democrats, and the Struggle for Comprehensive Health Reform," pp. 53-104 in *Reaching for a New Deal*, and Jacobs and Skocpol, *Health Reform and American Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, updated edition, 2013).

¹³ Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), and a new Afterward in the updated 2013 edition.

¹⁴ At times, critics of President Obama forget elementary Constitutional principles, as when EDF's Eric Pooley declared in a recent opinion piece that in 2010 "the president chose not to move comprehensive climate legislation through a recalcitrant Senate in the wake of the Great Recession." See "Obama Will Start 2nd Term With Unfinished Climate Business," *Bloomberg News*, November 12, 2012. Pooley obviously knows that if the votes are not there in Congress, the president cannot "move" legislation, but his over-zealous phrasing is telling about the degree to which cap and trade supporters want to pin blame on Obama.

¹⁵ Layzer, "Cold Front," in *Reaching for a New Deal*, pp. 327-28.

¹⁶ *A New Era of Responsibility: Renewing America's Promise* (Washington DC: Office of Management and Budget, 2009).

¹⁷ Layzer, "Cold Front," in *Reaching for a New Deal*, p. 327. For an account of a key meeting on March 26, 2009, during which White House officials outlined their rhetorical approach stressing jobs, see Suzanne Goldberg, "Revealed: The Day Obama Chose a Strategy of Silence on Climate Change," *The Guardian*, November 1, 2012. This article, it is worth noting, claims "revelations" that really have been well understood for a long time. As suggested by the slogan I cite, Obama and USCAP proponents chose to speak positively about the new jobs climate legislation could encourage. That slogan was formalized by the Clean Energy Works campaign, which was launched in mid-2009 to build public support for cap and trade legislation in the U.S. Senate.

¹⁸ Peter Wallsten, "Chief of Staff Draws Fire From Left as Obama Falter," *Wall Street Journal*, January 26, 2010.

¹⁹ A recollection from Steve Cochran of the Environmental Defense Fund, as reported in Bartosiewicz and Miley, *Too Polite Revolution*.

²⁰ As quoted in *Climate War*, p. 396.

²¹ See “How the Scott Brown Upset Strengthened Health Reform,” chapter 5 in Jacobs and Skocpol, *Health Reform and American Politics*.

²² On that episode, see Theda Skocpol, *Boomerang: Health Care Reform and the Turn Against Government* (New York: Norton, 1997).

²³ Telephone interview with Andrew Hyman, Senior Program Officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, August 14, 2012.

²⁴ Tom Daschle, with Scott S. Greenberger and Jeanne M. Lambrew, *Critical: What We Can Do About the Health-Care Crisis* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2008).

²⁵ The basic story is told and well-documented in Christopher J. Bosso, *Environment, Inc.: From Grassroots to Beltway* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005). See also the account in Judith A. Layzer, *Open for Business: Conservatives’ Opposition to Environmental Regulation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).

²⁶ Raymond, “Emerging Revolution,” in *Greenhouse Governance*, edited by Barry G. Rabe.

²⁷ Pooley, *Climate War*, chapter 7. For a colorful portrait of Krupp at the height of his public sway, see James Verini, “The Devil’s Advocate,” *The New Republic*, September 24, 2007.

²⁸ Frederic D. Krupp, “New Environmentalism Factors in Economic Needs,” *Wall Street Journal*, Thursday, November 20, 1986.

²⁹ Leigh Raymond, “The Emerging Revolution in Emissions Trading Policy,” in *Greenhouse Governance: Addressing Climate Change in America*, edited by Barry G. Rabe (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2010), p. 105.

³⁰ Leigh Raymond, “The Emerging Revolution in Emissions Trading Policy,” in *Greenhouse Governance: Addressing Climate Change in America*, edited by Barry G. Rabe (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2010), pp.105-13.

³¹ Pooley, *Climate War*, pp.125-27.

³² Of course, the “investment” this environmentalist was speaking about was not an investment of money or campaign contributions. It was an investment of faith, trust, and time spent courting McCain’s support in Congress.

³³ Layzer, “Cold Front,” in *Reaching for a New Deal*, edited by Skocpol and Jacobs, pp. 327-28; and Pooley, *Climate War*,

³⁴ Layzer, “Cold Front,” p.328.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Robert D. Bullard and Beverly H. Wright, “The Quest for Environmental Equity: Mobilizing the African-American Community for Social Change,” in *American Environmentalism*, edited by Riley E. Dunlap and Angela G. Mertig (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1992); and Emily Enderle, editor, *Diversity and the Future of the U.S. Environmental Movement* (New Haven, CT: Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, 2007).

³⁷ Richard Kirsch, *Fighting for Our Health* (Albany, NY: Rockefeller Institute Press, 2011), pp. 56-57.

³⁸ My account is based on Kirsch, *Fighting for Our Health*, especially chapter 3; and on an excellent assessment of the campaign, Grassroots Solutions and M&R Strategic Services, *HCAN Evaluation: Executive Summary* (prepared for Atlantic Philanthropies, 2010). See also Gara LaMarche's retrospective, "The Key Role of Advocacy Funding in the U.S. Health Reform Debate" (Atlantic Philanthropies, March 11, 2010).

³⁹ The funding totals come from Grassroots Solutions and M&R Strategic Services, "HCAN Evaluation: Executive Summary," p. 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.60.

⁴¹ An early statement was Jacob S. Hacker, "Medicare Plus: Increasing Health Care Coverage by Expanding Medicare," pp. 75-100 in *Covering America: Real Remedies for the Uninsured*, edited by Elliot K. Wicks (Washington DC: Economic and Social Research Institute, 2001). For discussion of the backing Hacker's ideas got from labor and progressive organizations, see Kirsch, *Fighting*, pp. 34-39.

⁴² Kirsch, *Fighting for Our Health*, chapters 20-22.

⁴³ I say not much "conscious heed," because when Larry Jacobs and I did interviews with key players in the Senate in January 2010, they showed little awareness of what HCAN was doing and a lot of contempt for all progressives pushing the public option. In the House, however, many Representatives and their staffers were probably more aware of HCAN activities.

⁴⁴ California Environmental Associates, *Design to Win: Philanthropy's Role in the Fight Against Global Warming* (San Francisco, CA: California Environmental Associates, 2007).

⁴⁵ Bartosiewicz and Miley, *Too Polite Revolution*, pp.17-18.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.18.

⁴⁷ Layzer, "Cold Front," in *Reaching for a New Deal*, p. 325.

⁴⁸ Kirsch, *Fighting for Our Health*, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁹ Bartosiewicz and Miley, *Too Polite Revolution*, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Quote from the Mission Statement. For origins and activities, see Pooley, *Climate War*, chapter 3 and throughout; and Kate Sheppard, "Gore's Green Groups Kick into Campaign Mode to Push Climate Legislation," *Grist*, May 28, 2009.

⁵¹ Lisa Lerer, "New Climate Coalition Launches," *Politico*, September 8, 2009; Anne C. Mulkern, "New Ad Campaign Promotes Climate Legislation," *New York Times*, September 10, 2009; and Eric Weltman, "A Wasted Crisis," *In These Times*, December 1, 2010.

⁵² An observer in a key state who read an earlier draft of this report commented at this point as follows: "Speaking anecdotally, I can say that many environmentalists, if they were aware of the legislation at all, tended to regard it as so far short of what is needed that they were not moved to rally in support of it. An HCAN effort to bring activists along in support of the best politically possible legislation might have made a difference."

⁵³ Pooley, *Climate War*, p. 242.

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- ⁵⁴ For an overview of the hammering the incomes and security of most Americans have taken in a U.S. economy which, since the 1970s, has allocated the fruits of income growth almost entirely to the very top income-earners and wealth-holders, see Timothy Noah, *The Great Divergence: America's Growing Inequality Crisis and What We Can Do About It* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2012).
- ⁵⁵ Pooley, *Climate War*, p. 407.
- ⁵⁶ Rasmussen Reports, "Congress Pushes Cap and Trade, But Just 24% Know What It Is," May 11, 2009.
- ⁵⁷ Eban Goodstein, "Why are Mitt Romney and the Republicans Trying to Kill America's Wind and Solar Power Industries?," *Basic Facts* brief, Scholars Strategy Network, August 2012.
- ⁵⁸ This overview draws on Riley E. Dunlap and Angela E. Mertig, "The Evolution of the U.S. Environmental Movement from 1970 to 1990: An Overview," pp. 1-10 in *American Environmentalism*, edited by Dunlap and Mertig (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1992); Christopher J. Bosso, *Environment Inc.: From Grassroots to Beltway* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005); and Ronald G. Shaiko, *Voices and Echoes for the Environment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
- ⁵⁹ Data for this question can be found at the Gallup website.
- ⁶⁰ An excellent overview appears in Aaron M. McRight and Riley E. Dunlap, "The Politicization of Climate Change and Polarization in the American Public's Views of Global Warming, 2001-2010," *The Sociological Quarterly* 52 (2011): 155-94. But these and other scholars of polarization do not underline that GOP legislators were originally the outliers, because members of the general public, even GOP identifiers, for many years espoused views closer to those of Democratic legislators.
- ⁶¹ On changes in business group lobbying capacities and goals, see Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer – and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), especially part II.
- ⁶² Binyamin Appelbaum, "How Party of Budget Restraint Shifted to 'No New Taxes,' Ever," *New York Times*, December 22, 2012; and Sheldon D. Pollack, *Refinancing America: The Republican Antitax Agenda* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003).
- ⁶³ See the excellent discussion and documentation in Peter J. Jacques, Riley E. Dunlap, and Mark Freeman, "The Organisation of Denial: Conservative Think Tanks and Environmental Skepticism," *Environmental Politics* 17(3) (2008): 349-85.
- ⁶⁴ The role of dissident scientists in various instances of "manufacturing doubt" is recounted in Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010).
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 349, 351.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.353.
- ⁶⁷ See the interview "Robert Brulle: Inside the Climate Change 'Counter-movement'," conducted on September 30, 2012, for the PBS *Frontline* documentary "Climate of Doubt."
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp.2-3.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p.361.

⁷⁰ Lydia Saad, “Did Hollywood’s Glare Heat Up Public Concern About Global Warming?,” *Gallup News Service*, March 21, 2007.

⁷¹ James A. Stimson, *Public Opinion in America: Moods, Cycles, and Swings* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2nd edition, 1999); and James A. Stimson, *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁷² Robert J. Brulle, Jason Carmichael, and J. Craig Jenkins, “Shifting Public Opinion on Climate Change: An Empirical Assessment of Factors Influencing Concern over Climate Change in the U.S., 2002-2010,” *Climatic Change*, published online February 3, 2012.

⁷³ See, for example, James Druckman, Erik Peterson, and Rune Slothuus, “How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation” (Working Paper, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, April 1, 2012.)

⁷⁴ Frederick W. Mayer, “Stories of Climate Change,” Discussion Paper D-72, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard University, February 2012. Mayer has shared with me the raw data tabulations used in his figures, which enables me to present trends in my own figures in this report.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 6.

⁷⁶ Denialist stories could be considered favorable to the climate change argument, but they still convey to viewers the notion of conflict and controversy. The trends I present would not change if they were excluded, because Mayer shows that stories stressing the idea of a conspiracy to deny the threat of global warming were a staple only on MSNBC in its war with Fox.

⁷⁷ As well as with Tea Party supporters after that label became virtually coterminous with “conservative Republican” starting in 2009. See Ari Rabin-Havt, “The Fox Effect: Environment and Tea Party Edition,” *MediaMatters for America*, September 27, 2011.

⁷⁸ “News Audiences Increasingly Politicized,” Pew Center for the People and the Press, March 7, 2009.

⁷⁹ ABC report from Bill Blakemore on Feb 2, quoted in Mayer, “Stories,” p. 16.

⁸⁰ Mayer, “Stories,” p. 18.

⁸¹ The structure and dynamics of U.S. media today are discussed in Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, chapter 4.

⁸² Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Joseph N. Cappella, *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁸³ See the Idaho activist profiled in David Barstow, “Tea Party Lights Fuse for Rebellion on the Right,” *New York Times*, February 16, 2010.

⁸⁴ The dynamics are analyzed in Peter Dreier and Christopher R. Martin, “How ACORN Was Framed: Political Controversy and Media Agenda Setting,” *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (3) (2010): 761-92.

⁸⁵ Pooley, *Climate War*, pp. 125-27.

⁸⁶ Theda Skocpol, *Obama and America’s Political Future* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 3-4.

⁸⁷ Michael Grunwald, *The New New Deal: The Hidden Story of Change in the Obama Era* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012).

⁸⁸ My account in this section draws on the research reported in Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, updated 2013 edition with a new Afterword).

⁸⁹ A map of local Tea Parties appears in Skocpol and Williamson, *Tea Party*, Figure 3.1, p.91.

⁹⁰ The interaction of top-down and bottom-up forces in the Tea Party is analyzed in Skocpol and Williamson, *Tea Party*, chapter 4. As of 2013, these forces are still at work, even if the “Tea Party” label has lost its appeal in public opinion and the media.

⁹¹ See Eric Pooley’s account of the Town hall protests, including experiences of Virginia Democratic Representative Tom Perriello in *Climate War*, chapter 46. Pooley titles his chapter “Revenge of the Tea-Baggers,” using a derisive label for these conservative activists. I call them “Tea Partiers” or Tea Party supporters, in line with the labels they use for themselves.

⁹² As recounted in Kirsch, *Fighting for Our Health*, chapter 11.

⁹³ Skocpol and Williamson, *Tea Party*, chapter 5.

⁹⁴ Pooley, *Climate War*, pp. 415-16, offers an entertaining account of Krupp’s visit to McCain in July 2010 in a last-ditch effort to get the Senator to support Senate legislation. As Krupp told Pooley, McCain said he might change his mind, but only if Obama personally reached out to him – and Pooley, like Krupp, seems to buy this thoroughly implausible story.

⁹⁵ Ronald Brownstein, “GOP Gives Climate Science a Cold Shoulder,” *National Journal*, October 9, 2010 (updated February 16, 2011).

⁹⁶ See the measurements for the 111th and 112th House contingents displayed in Skocpol and Williamson, *Tea Party*, Figure 5.1, p.169. These measurements come from Stanford political scientist Adam Bonica and studies on his website, *Ideological Cartography*.

⁹⁷ Om Hamburger, Kathleen Hennessey, and Neela Banerjee, “Koch Brothers Now at the Heart of GOP Power,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 2011.

⁹⁸ See, for example, the accounts in Michael McAuliff and Lucia Graves, “War On the EPA: Republican Bills Would Erase Decades of Protection,” *HuffPost Politics*, October 9, 2011; Jonathan Alien and Erica Martinson, “EPA Wears the Bull’s Eye,” *Politico*, June 20, 2012; and Ben Geman, “House Republicans Scrub Climate Change Concerns from EPA Bill,” *The Hill*, September 13, 2012.

⁹⁹ Geman, “House Republicans.”

¹⁰⁰ Brad Johnson, “Supported by Tea Party Polluters, Upton Flips on Threat of Global Warming,” *ThinkProgress blog*, December 28, 2010.

¹⁰¹ Coral Davenport, “Heads in the Sand,” *National Journal*, December 2, 2011.

¹⁰² Ari Natter, “Republicans Drop Energy Efficiency From Platform,” *Bloomberg*, September 13, 2012; and Mark Drajam, “Global Warming Links Democrats, Independents, Isolating Romney,” *Bloomberg*, October

1, 2012. See also Carl Pope's opinion piece, "The Republican Rejection of a Green Future," *Bloomberg*, November 1, 2012.

¹⁰³ Capiello, "GOP Hopefuls Shift on Global Warming"; and Philip Rucker and Juliet Eilperin, "Mitt Romney Says Plan Will Achieve North American Energy Independence by 2020," *Washingtonpost.com/politics*, August 23, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Nicholas Confessore, "Ryan Has Kept Close Ties to Wealthy Donors on the Right," *New York Times*, August 13, 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Amy Harder, "Environmentalists on the Election: Greens Don't Have the Blues," *National Journal*, November 7, 2012.

¹⁰⁶ John M. Broder, "Both Romney and Obama Avoid Talk of Climate Change," *New York Times*, October 25, 2012.

¹⁰⁷ Findings on media coverage from Media Matters are summarized in Elizabeth Kolbert, "Hotter than Paul Ryan," *The New Yorker*, September 28, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Adam Bonica and Howard Rosenthal, "Forecasting Ideology in the 113th Congress (2013-14)," *Ideological Cartography* website, December 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Alex Isenstadt, "Logic of House GOP Intransigence," *Politico*, December 28, 2012.

¹¹⁰ Nate Silver, "In House of Representatives, an Arithmetic Problem," *FiveThirtyEight* blog, *New York Times*, December 21, 2012.

¹¹¹ Chris Cillizza, "Is the Tea Party Dead? Or Just Resting?," *Washington Post*, December 4, 2012, updated.

¹¹² Brownstein, "Cold Shoulder."

¹¹³ David Schnare, "Tea Party Environmentalism," *MasterResource: A Free-Market Energy Blog*, April 15, 2010. Schnare was in part quoting from a statement of the North Idaho Tea Party's Environmental Committee.

¹¹⁴ Dan Lashof, "Coulda, Shoulda, Woulda: Lessons from Senate Climate Fail," *Switchboard: Natural Resources Defense Council Staff Blog*, July 28, 2010.

¹¹⁵ In our research for the Tea Party book, Vanessa Williamson and I sat through a lecture outlining the alleged U.N. Agenda 21 conspiracy at a January 2011 meeting of the Peninsula Patriots in Gloucester, Virginia. The same professional advocacy speaker made her way to many other Virginia Tea Party meetings over coming months. For other examples, see Leslie Kaufman and Kate Zernike, "Activists Fight Green Projects, Seeing U.N. Plot," *New York Times*, February 3, 2012; and J. Galloway, "Georgia's Own 52-Minute Video on the 'Agenda 21' Conspiracy," *Political Insider* blog, November 12, 2012.

¹¹⁶ John M. Broder, "Climate Change Doubt is Tea Party Article of Faith," *New York Times*, October 20, 2010. Amazingly, the 2012 Republican Party Platform officially endorsed such paranoid fears about environmentalism as an international conspiracy. See Leslie Kaufman, "Republican Platform Opposes Agenda 21," *Green* blog, *New York Times*, August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁷ Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, *Partisan Polarization Surges in Bush, Obama Years: Trends in American Values, 1987-2012*, June 4, 2012.

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- ¹¹⁸ Eric Weltman, “A Wasted Crisis: How the Environmental Movement Missed the Moment on Climate Change,” *In These Times*, December 1, 2010.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid. “Building a movement that can play hardball” is a quote from Brent Blackwelder, former president of the Friends of Earth.
- ¹²¹ David Leonhardt, “A Climate Proposal Beyond Cap and Trade,” *New York Times*, October 12, 2010.
- ¹²² See Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger, *Break Through: Why We Can’t Leave Saving the Planet to Environmentalism* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007).
- ¹²³ Leonhardt, “Climate Proposal.”
- ¹²⁴ The full report is available at the website *ClimateShiftProject.org*.
- ¹²⁵ See “*ClimateShift* data reanalysis makes clear opponents of climate bill far outspent environmentalists,” at <http://climateprogress.org/2011,04/19/climate-shift-data-reanalysis/>
- ¹²⁶ Nisbet, *ClimateShift*, p. 83.
- ¹²⁷ Sarah Hansen, *Cultivating the Grassroots: A Winning Approach for Environment and Climate Funders* (Washington DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2012).
- ¹²⁸ See “The Political Benefits of Taking a Pro-Climate Stand in 2012” (Yale Project on Climate Change Communication, March 2012); Ben Geman, “Poll Shows Majority Support for Carbon Controls, But Partisan Split Persists,” *The Hill*, April 9, 2012; and Frank Newport, “Americans Endorse Various Energy, Environment Proposals,” Gallup, April 9, 2012 (reporting March 2012 poll).
- ¹²⁹ For several examples, see: “Time to Confront Climate Change,” *New York Times* editorial, Friday, December 28, 2012; Eric Pooley, “Obama Will Start 2nd Term With Unfinished Climate Business,” *Bloomberg*, November 12, 2012; and Chris Mahoney, “What Obama Can Do on Climate Change: Five Big Steps the President Can Take – With or Without the Help of Congress,” *MotherJones*, Monday, November 19, 2012.
- ¹³⁰ Fred D. Krupp, “New Environmentalism Factors In Economic Needs,” *Wall Street Journal*, Thursday, November 20, 1986; and Fred Krupp, “A New Climate-Change Consensus,” Tuesday, August 7, 2012, p. A 13.
- ¹³¹ Pooley, *Climate War*, p.319.
- ¹³² On EDF’s and Krupp’s continued preference for cap and trade, see the correction at the start of Mark Drajem, “Carbon Fee From Obama Seen Viable With Exxon Backing,” *Washington Post*, November 16, 2012 (posting at 12:26pm EST).
- ¹³³ Ibid; and Valerie Volcovici, “Long-Shot Carbon Tax Surfaces in Cliff Debate,” *Reuters*, November 8, 2012.
- ¹³⁴ Ben Geman, “Left-Right Climate Group Quietly Weighing Proposals for Carbon Tax,” *The Hill*, July 12, 2012.
- ¹³⁵ Ben Geman, “GOP Leaders Slam the Door on Carbon Taxes,” *The Hill*, July 16, 2012.

¹³⁶ Ben Geman, “House GOP Leaders Pledge to Oppose Climate Change ‘Tax,’” *The Hill*, November 15, 2012; William O’Keefe, “Will the Carbon Tax Make a Comeback?,” *Wall Street Journal*, Friday, December 21, 2012; and Ezra Klein, “Is This the Tax to Pass the Grover Norquist Test?,” *Bloomberg*, September 13, 2012.

¹³⁷ Geman, “House GOP Leaders Pledge to Oppose Climate Change ‘Tax’.”

¹³⁸ Joann Weiner, “Larry Summers: It’s Time to Tax Carbon and Treats,” *Washington Post*, updated November 23, 2012.

¹³⁹ “Editorial: Save the Planet. Save Social Security. Save Medicaid. Tax Carbon,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 27, 2012.

¹⁴⁰ See the eloquent presentation in Yoram Bauman and Shi-Ling Hsu, “The Most Sensible Tax of All,” *New York Times* OpEd, July 5, 2012, p. A 17. Like most proposals for a carbon tax, this one proposes a “tax swap” to mitigate the effects on low-income families by, perhaps, reducing payroll taxes that hit them relatively hard, just as higher energy costs would do. But it is worth noting that these tax trade-offs would be done through insider Congressional negotiations largely invisible to ordinary American citizens, and experience in recent years suggests that citizens are easily misled by demonizing attacks when something mysterious is going on in DC that they do not understand. Opaque policymaking tends to stoke public distrust and open the door to misinformation campaigns. Citizens often do not realize that their taxes have been cut, when it happens through insider bargains.

¹⁴¹ Brad Plumer, “Could a Carbon Tax Help the U.S. Avert the Fiscal Cliff,” *Washington Post Wonkblog*, August 27, 2012.

¹⁴² Kevin Begos (for Associated Press), “Natural Gas Use in US Cuts CO₂ Emissions to a 20-Year Low,” *Bangor Daily News*, August 17, 2012, pp. A1, A4.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ See the very helpful overview of expert findings with useful links in Brad Plumer, “Can Natural Gas Help Tackle Global Warming? A Primer,” *Washington Post Wonkblog*, August 30, 2012.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, and see also Michael Levi, “Natural Gas and Climate Change: It’s the Policy that Matters,” *Council of Foreign Relations blog on Energy, Security, and Climate*, March 19, 2012.

¹⁴⁶ A December 2012 advocacy report calls on the EPA to use Clean Air Act powers in this way. See Daniel A. Lashof, Starla Yeh, David Doniger, Sheryl Carter, and Laurie Johnson, *Closing the Power Plant Carbon Pollution Loophole* (New York: Natural Resources Defense Council, 2012).

¹⁴⁷ Felicity Barringer, “California Law Tests Company Responses to Carbon Controls,” *New York Times*, December 24, 2012.

¹⁴⁸ The Environmental Defense Fund has made considerable headway in persuading major corporations to “go green” in their procurement purchases. Grassroots student activism is discussed in Justin Gillis, “The Divestment Brigade: To Fight Climate Change, Students Aim at Portfolios,” *New York Times*, Wednesday, December 5, 2012, p.B1.

¹⁴⁹ See the excellent overview in the essays included in Riley E. Dunlap and Angela Mertig, editors, *American Environmentalism: The U.S. Environmental Movement, 1970-1990* (Washington D.C.: Taylor & Francis, 1992).

¹⁵⁰ HCAN used poll data and focus groups, to be sure. But they were used at an early stage to help hammer out the principles for building organizational networks in HCAN itself, and by the time they were used for some advertisements at the height of the health reform legislative battles, the messaging efforts were parallel to and reinforced by ongoing organizational efforts.

¹⁵¹ I analyze this blueprint-driven debacle in Theda Skocpol, *Boomerang: Clinton's Health Reform and the Turn Against Government* (New York: Norton, 1997, updated edition). See also Jacob S. Hacker, *The Road to Nowhere: The Genesis of Clinton's Plan for Health Security* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹⁵² Christa Marshall, "Cantwell-Collins Bill Generates Lobbying Frenzy," *New York Times*, February 16, 2010.

¹⁵³ For a key statement, see Peter Barnes, "Cap and Dividend, Not Trade: Making Polluters Pay," *Scientific American*, December 18, 2008.

¹⁵⁴ For more on the Alaska fund, see Karl Widerquist and Michael W. Howard, editors, *Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Karl Widerquist and Michael W. Howard, editors, *Exporting the Alaska Model: Adapting the Permanent Fund Dividend for Reform Around the World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). A short overview appears in Michael W. Howard, "How Alaska Citizens Benefit Equally from Shared Wealth," *SSN Key Findings* brief, June 2012. Howard also has another June 2012 *SSN Key Findings* brief on "Cap Carbon Emissions and Pay Dividends to Citizens – a Strategy to Unite Americans Against Global Warming." Both are available at the website of the Scholars Strategy Network <http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org>.

¹⁵⁵ See the empirical analysis in James K. Boyce and Matthew E. Riddle, "Cap and Dividend: A State-By-State Analysis" (Amherst, MA: Political Economy Research Institute, revised November 2010).

¹⁵⁶ Marshall's article "Cantwell-Collins Bill" points to several dozen green groups and companies that lobbied for the proposal, but gives a much-exaggerated impression of the breadth and depth of support in late 2009 and early 2010.

¹⁵⁷ According to the Director of the Rockefeller Family Fund, Lee Wasserman, the Fund spent about \$1 million to encourage "about a dozen state groups across the country" to work on the cap and dividend approach in January 2009. My conclusion is that this was a modest start on what would have to be a longer-term and broader effort to take advantage of a political opening in Washington DC. Compared to the USCAP effort, this cap and trade mini-effort got started years later and on a much smaller scale. Also, if it is true that this 2009 mobilization was a matter of one funding organization working with a modest number of state-level groups, then organizationally speaking it could not have developed the heft that HCAN developed in the health reform arena. State and local groups are important, but there need to be national

organizations involved too, so that there are clear bridges between national and sub-national advocates. A foundation cannot be the only national focal point.

¹⁵⁸ To be clear: the dividend checks are equal for all individual citizens. They simply matter more toward the bottom of the income distribution, because the dividend would equal a higher portion of a lower income than of a higher income.

¹⁵⁹ For the unequivocal facts summarized in a readable way, see Timothy Noah, *The Great Divergence: America's Growing Inequality Crisis and What We Can Do About It* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2012).

¹⁶⁰ For an influential study that empirically pins down the reinforcing feedback effects of Social Security, see Andrea Louise Campbell, *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003). A brief overview of the argument appears in Andrea Louise Campbell, "How Social Security Encourages Older Americans to Be Active Citizens," *SSN Key Findings* brief, January 2012 (available at <http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org>).

¹⁶¹ In a cap and dividend system, a fraction of the revenues could be dedicated to either deficit reduction or investments in clean energy. But if that fraction becomes too large, the dividend checks to citizens will shrink to the point of irrelevance.