

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Press Conference Announcing the Safe Climate Caucus
February 15, 2013

Today we announce the formation of the Safe Climate Caucus. The Safe Climate Caucus so far is composed of 22 members of the House who have made a commitment that every day one of us will go to the House Floor to talk about the urgent need to address climate change.

In his inaugural address, President Obama talked about our moral responsibility not to betray our children and future generations in dealing with this issue.

On Tuesday in his State of the Union address, he called on Congress to pursue a bipartisan and market-based solution to climate change.

Unfortunately, the Republican majority in the House refuses to acknowledge that there is climate change occurring, as amazing as that is. In the last two years, the Republican-led House of Representatives voted 53 times to block legislation or any action on climate change. In my Committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has primary jurisdiction over the legislation in this area, the Republican leadership will not even call hearings to listen to experts, to hear from the scientists who have done great work to try to understand this problem.

The Safe Climate Caucus is banding together to end the conspiracy of silence in the House of Representatives about the dangers of climate change. At least one of us will speak on the floor of the House every day we are in session about the historic challenge we face and the need for congressional action.

We recognize that the Republicans control what hearings are held and what bills are considered. But we won't sit quietly while those who run the House deny the science and ignore the greatest challenges we face.

We have the right to speak on the Floor directly to the American people, and we intend to exercise that right every day to draw attention to the threat of climate change.

I am proud of the diversity in this caucus. The Safe Climate Caucus has senior ranking members like Ed Markey, Chris Van Hollen, and Jim Moran and also new members like Jared Huffman and Tulsi Gabbard. We have members from all regions of the country – Massachusetts

and Vermont, Maryland and Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee, Missouri and Minnesota, New Mexico and Arizona, and California and Oregon.

What unites us is our understanding that climate change is the moral issue of our time. We believe we have an obligation to use our voices to raise awareness of the dangers we are creating for our children and grandchildren if we do not act now.

I am the most senior member of our caucus, and now I am going to recognize the most junior member, Jared Huffman. Representative Huffman was just elected to Congress in November. Prior to his arrival in Washington, he served in the California Assembly and before that was a Senior Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

He brings to our efforts the enthusiasm of a new member and the experience of a long-time expert in environmental conservation. He is going to make a great contribution to the Safe Climate Caucus and to Congress.

Then we will proceed in an unusual way for these kinds of presentations: we're going to alternate between senior and junior members, until every member has had a chance to speak. Because we are a large group, I ask every member to speak for just one minute, and then we'll begin to answer questions from the press.