

## Data or Dogma: Senate Hearing on Human Impact on Climate Change

HEARING OF U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF TED CRUZ

**In the context of the Paris Climate Conference COP21 the Subcommittee on Space, Science and Competitiveness of the U.S. Senate held a hearing on the matter. On December 8 2015 Senator Ted Cruz chaired a hearing with the title "Data or Dogma? Promoting Open Inquiry in the Debate over the Magnitude of Human Impact on Earth's Climate". The Republican Majority invited four witnesses to testify about the existence of climate change and its impact. The witnesses were Dr. John Christy from the University of Alabama, Dr. Judith Curry from the Georgia Institute of Technology, Dr William Happer, a physics professor from Princeton University and Mr. Mark Steyn a book author and blogger. The witness brought in by the Democratic Minority was Admiral Dr. David Titley from Pennsylvania State University.**

In his opening remarks Republican party presidential hopeful Senator Ted Cruz emphasized that the hearing titled "Data or Dogma? Promoting Open Inquiry in the Debate over the Magnitude of Human Impact on Earth's Climate" will be based on what he called "actual science". In short "Public policy should follow science and evidence and data." And not be influenced by political and partisan positions. In this context, Cruz asserted that facts and data on Global Warming are of the essence. His position on global warming was furthermore reinforced by the graph he displayed which showed no evidence of significant temperature increase over the past 18 years. He also stated that the volume of ice in the Antarctic is growing rather than decreasing. Cruz showed pic-

tures of the Antarctic in order to support his claims. Furthermore Chairman Cruz added that these positions are being seen as inconvenient to the narrative of Global Warming alarmists.

Senator Cruz then passed the word on to Senator Gary Peters (D-Michigan), who gave an update on the current scientific facts regarding climate change. He then asserted that since science on climate change is still ambiguous and policy decisions should be protected from political influence and remain independent. Further he said we have a lot more to learn about climate change, and the actions that need to be taken should not only benefit the environment but also the economy. In fact the environmental economy holds many job opportunities and needs obtain more funding. China in comparison has made the right investments in the environmental economy while the U.S. still lacks significant investments.

Senator Bill Nelson (D-Florida) is a ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and provided brief remarks. Senator Nelson emphasized the effects of climate change in his home State Florida. According to him the city of Miami is currently ground zero for climate change in America. The rising sea levels have caused, on a regular basis over the past decade, damaging floods in the city which led to rising costs. These saltwater floods have become a threat to the fresh water supply in Florida and therefore need to be seen as a threat to national security as they affect the safety of Americans living in Florida. Dr. Christy from the University of Alabama was the first witness. Dr. Christy reminded the committee, that science is only capable of showing what has happened and not what will happen. Predications based on science are therefore not entirely trustworthy. In regards to the changing climate, Christy pointed out, that regulations

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on environmental standards would not keep the climate from changing, as climate change is a natural phenomenon and not caused by humans. Further he emphasized that Germany and China are contributing far more to global warming than the U.S. since both are building new coal energy plants.

Dr. Curry was the second to testify. She criticized other scientists for not being transparent about their work, and claimed her trust in the scientific community had been diminishing. Today's warnings about a changing climate are based on an uncertain theory which has not questioned the rise of temperatures since the 1800s. The question she is asking is whether climate change was man-made and whether it actually poses a threat to mankind. She also pointed out, that so far scientists have been focusing on the human impact on climate, this in itself is misleading. climate change is a natural phenomenon on which humans have no influence. She went on to label the current scientific community, who recognizes the human impact on climate change, as "just another lobby group".

The third witness Dr. Happer from Princeton University started his testimony by saying CO2 was in fact beneficial for the world. According to him the current CO2 levels are too low and the O2 levels too high. Further he added, the current models used to project global warming are wrong and simply do not work. He insisted on the positive aspects of global warming, which he referred to as global greening. global greening, in his view, has allowed people to use regions that previously were infertile. Since producers of CO2 are beneficial to economic development in different parts of the world, this industry sector should be recipients of government programs and funding.

The last speaker invited by Senator Cruz was Mark Steyn, a Canadian national, author, commentator and blogger. Steyn followed the rhetoric of the previous speakers, claiming that the science on climate change is unresolved. In his testimony Steyn insisted on the competitiveness of intellectual ideas and asked for a fair and transparent debate on climate change. The public has failed to produce such a debate. Evidence can be seen in the attributions of the Nobel Prize, given to only "pro climate change activists". Further, in his opinion, the enforcement of environmental standards has become anti-democratic and the science on climate change a state-ideology. Moreover climate change should not be subject to de-

bate since evidence in favor of it is still too weak.

The minority brought in the last witness, Admiral Titley (retired). Titley was the only witness who acknowledged the human impact on global warming. His studies confirmed rising temperatures and sea levels. When asked by chairman Cruz whether his claims could be supported in the graph Cruz used in the beginning of the hearing, Titley confirmed the observation while pointing out the very high scale on which they were measured and that such a scale could not be applied for observation over longer periods of time. In fact Titley confirmed temperatures had been rising during the past centuries. Temperatures may be stable at the moment but on a dangerously high level, he added. According to Titley, while we may not know everything about the impact of climate change, we know enough in order to act on it. Although all theories may not be correct, the phenomenon itself needs to be studied. Further regarding the strongly debated carbon tax, the United States has already paid a form of carbon tax with the costs of natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina or Cindy, ice melting in Alaska or floods in Florida. It is therefore even more important that the United States shows leadership in protecting the world from climate change.

The remarks by the Senators on both sides of the Isle recognized the importance of the debate on climate change while some Republicans, such as Senator Danes of Montana, affirmed the importance of protecting the environment; albeit not at the cost of economic interests. The U.S. is currently gaining 40% of its electricity from coal, and many families depend on it. However, the U.S. only produces 10% of worldwide coal electricity emissions and should hence not necessarily change its approach towards it. Christy and Curry agreed with the statement of Senator Danes, stating energy should remain affordable, and for the time being more research should be made on clean energy as it has proven to be inefficient so far. Other Senators, mostly Democrats, called upon the audience to act on climate change, as it is a scientifically proven fact and supported by 97% of all scientists. Senator Schatz (D-Hawaii) pointed out the broad agreement about climate change in NATO, the Department of Defense and other military institutions. Senator Markey (D-Massachusetts) went on to say the climate needs to be protected and global warming contained, similarly as communism

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had been contained during the Cold War. Other witnesses' positions, such as Mark Steyns, remained unchangeable. Steyn even went as far as saying Muslim refugees from affected regions such as the Maldives, should be resettled to the Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek, "an environment in which they would feel comfortable in".

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