



# Anti-Science Climate Denier Caucus

114th Congress

After the warmest year in recorded history, a shocking number of congressional Republicans—more than 56 percent—continue to deny or question the science behind human-caused climate change.<sup>1</sup>

As it returns to the nation's capital, the new Republican-controlled Congress has made it clear that it has no intention of prioritizing action on climate change. In fact, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and the new head of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK), have vowed to stop the Environmental Protection Agency's, or EPA's, attempt to curb carbon pollution and slow the devastating effects of climate change.<sup>6</sup>

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## North Carolina

In the Republican primary debate for North Carolina's U.S. Senate seat last year, the moderator asked all four candidates, including the eventual winner, **Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC)**, "Is climate change a fact?" The question prompted laughter from the audience, as well as several snickers from the candidates. All four answered with a simple "no."<sup>7</sup> Below are additional members of the North Carolina caucus who also doubt the science behind climate change:

**Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC-05):** According to the Huffington Post, "Foxx referenced books by climate-change skeptics and lamented that some environmentalists 'think that we, human beings, have more impact on the climate and the world than God does.'"<sup>8</sup>

**Rep. Richard Hudson (R-NC-08):** Hudson answered "no" when asked by a Vote Smart questionnaire if he believes human activity is contributing to climate change.<sup>9</sup>

**Rep. Walter B. Jones (R-NC-03):** According to a post on *Esquire's* Just Now Ago blog, "Jones argues that 'there is substantial disagreement regarding the extent' of global warming, and that 'The bottom line is that the scientific community does not speak with one voice on this issue.'"<sup>10</sup>



## Here are the facts:

**Ninety-seven percent of climate scientists** agree that current human activity is contributing to the warming atmosphere and causing the global climate to change.<sup>2</sup>

**One hundred sixty-nine Republicans** in the 114th Congress are on record questioning or denying the science behind climate change.<sup>3</sup>

**Fifty-three percent**—or 131 members—**of the House Republican caucus** question or deny the science behind climate change.<sup>4</sup>

**Seventy percent**—or 38 members—**of the Senate Republican caucus** question or deny the science behind climate change.<sup>5</sup>

**Rep. Robert Pittenger (R-NC-09):** According to *The Charlotte Observer*, “Pittenger doesn’t mind standing his ground, even when it’s lonely. For example, he’s the most prominent skeptic on a legislative commission on climate change. Like a sort of anti-Al Gore, he shows a PowerPoint full of statistics about halocarbons and nitrous oxide, and quotes from scientists who, like him, have tried to debunk the science behind global warming. ‘There are people up there relaxed about the system on both sides of the aisle,’ he said. ‘My job is not to go out there and just ‘kumbaya.’”<sup>11</sup>

**Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC-07):** Rep. Rouzer said, “Well, you know, I don’t necessarily listen to any one person. And I can’t, you know, tick off a whole list of scientists that are pro-sea level rise and a whole list of scientists that aren’t. I’m just coming at it from a common sense standpoint. The earth has been warming and cooling since day one. And you know, the effect on sea level change, what do we know about it?”<sup>12</sup>

**Rep. Mark Walker (R-NC-06):** Rep. Walker said, “We can be green without being extreme. Much of the ‘so-called’ science of climate change is contested though it’s made a few politicians quite wealthy. I believe that God provided the earth to us and we have a responsibility to conserve and respect the environment.”<sup>13</sup>

**Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC):** Sen. Burr said, “I have no clue [how much of climate change is attributable to human activity], and I don’t think that science can prove it ... I certainly haven’t seen anything that’s conclusive, and anything that’s claimed to be conclusive has proven to be somewhat sketchy.”<sup>14</sup>

In addition to Congress, North Carolina’s governor also questions the science behind climate change. **Gov. Pat McCrory (R)** was asked in 2008 if he believed climate change science and said that, “There are some things that are out of our control” and that “it’s in God’s hands.”<sup>15</sup> Since then, he has admitted the climate is changing but still shows some doubt on how much is human caused: “You know, I feel there has always been climate change. The debate is really how much of it is manmade and how much will it cost to have any impact on climate change.”<sup>16</sup>

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## Endnotes

- 1 Justin Gillis, "2014 Was the Warmest Year Ever Recorded on Earth," *The New York Times*, January 16, 2015, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/17/science/earth/2014-was-hottest-year-on-record-surpassing-2010.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=first-column-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>; Tiffany Germain, Kristen Ellingboe, and Kiley Kroh, "The Anti-Science Climate Denier Caucus: 114th Congress Edition," *ClimateProgress*, January 8, 2015, available at <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/01/08/3608427/climate-denier-caucus-114th-congress/>.
- 2 Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, "Consensus: 97% of climate scientists agree," available at <http://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/> (last accessed January 2015).
- 3 Germain, Ellingboe, and Kroh, "The Anti-Science Climate Denier Caucus."
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Timothy Cama, "Senate GOP steeling for battle against EPA," *The Hill*, November 9, 2014, available at <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/e2-wire/223398-senate-gop-steeling-for-battle-against-the-epa> Timothy Cama, "Senator maps strategy against EPA rules," *The Hill*, January 7, 2015, available at <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/228826-senator-maps-gop-strategy-against-epa-rules>.
- 7 Andrew Kaczynski, "Entire North Carolina GOP Senate Primary Field Says Climate Change Is Not A Fact," *BuzzFeed*, April 22, 2014, available at <http://www.buzzfeed.com/andrewkaczynski/entire-north-carolina-republican-primary-field-says-climate#yVVK8wV1d>.
- 8 Chris Hamby, "Checking The Facts On Politicians' Claims About Climate Change, EPA," *Huffington Post*, April 7, 2011, available at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/07/climate-change-facts-myths\\_n\\_846255.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/07/climate-change-facts-myths_n_846255.html).
- 9 Vote Smart, "Richard Hudson's Issue Positions (Political Courage Test)," available at <http://votesmart.org/candidate/political-courage-test/136448/richard-hudson/> (last accessed January 2015).
- 10 Bruce Watson, "Why Climate Deniers Will Soon Be Underwater," *Esquire Just Now Ago* blog, August 14, 2014, available at <http://www.esquire.com/blogs/news/why-climate-deniers-will-soon-be-underwater>.
- 11 *The Charlotte Observer*, "Pittenger tenacious with ideas; He stands his ground, some say to a fault," April 1, 2008.
- 12 Frontline, "Transcript: Climate of Doubt," available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/environment/climate-of-doubt/transcript-31/> (last accessed January 2015).
- 13 Mark Walker U.S. Congress, "Where I Stand," available at <http://walker4nc.com/content/page/issues> (last accessed January 2015).
- 14 *National Journal*, "Congressional Republicans and Their Differing Views on Climate Change — PICTURES," *National Journal*, December 2, 2011, available at <http://www.nationaljournal.com/pictures-video/congressional-republicans-and-their-differing-views-on-climate-change-pictures-20111202>.
- 15 NCDemocrats, "Pat McCrory believes global warming is 'in God's hands,'" YouTube, October 26, 2008, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VB5dkqAYPOY>.
- 16 Julian Hattem, "NC gov.: 'Clean up environment' for consensus on climate," *The Hill*, February 16, 2014, available at <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/198520-nc-gov-clean-up-environment-for-climate-consensus>.