

BACK TO SCHOOL: PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVISM SUCCESS

[NB: Check the byline. /~Rayne]

Remember this? It's still a pretty snappy little tune which handily teaches the barest essentials of the legislative process. My kids watched frequently when they were in K-2 grades so they could understand discussions at home about bills and legislation.

Unfortunately, it's not enough to know that an idea begins the legislative process and it ends (some of the time) as a law. The stuff that happens in between these points is more complex than depicted in this cute little animated film. But young kids can understand far more.

I hope that whomever is coaching kids to lobby members of Congress explains more than what's in this School House Rock video; the children who met with Senator Feinstein didn't appear prepared. As a parent I think those kids had been manipulated as weapons against an ally.

I don't care what your position is on Feinstein's reaction or the kids' presentation. Both sides were set up for failure.

I care that the effort ended up dividing the party most likely to take action on the Green New Deal.

I care that the effort was wasted and should have been directed at the true bottlenecks to dealing with climate change and the environment.

The truth – which most of you know already if you're a regular reader or politically awake – is that the GOP majority in the Senate is the obstruction.

The truth is that the GOP as a whole has an

abominable track record on environmental protection, from green energy to toxic waste and now on climate change.

Republican president Richard Nixon may be responsible for the Environmental Protection Agency's inception, but for the last couple decades the GOP abandoned any claim to conserving the environment, preferring instead to suck up to fossil fuel producers. They've actively undermined the EPA, going so far as to submit a bill to end it, albeit unsuccessfully (and for this act, Matt Gaetz FL-1 should already have been removed by voters – what the heck is wrong with you Floridians?).

Could Democratic Senators improve their efforts? Certainly; there are a few whose record is below 70% on the League of Conservation Voters' scoreboard for all environmental legislation, like Joe Manchin (WV) at 45%. With her 90% overall score, Dianne Feinstein is not among them.

But the Republicans clearly have plenty of room for improvement; only one GOP senator scores above 21% on all environmental issues including climate change. The worst GOP senators are:

Strange, Luther (AL)
Perdue, David (GA)
Ernst, Joni (IA)
Kennedy, John (LA)
Sasse, Ben (NE)

All five of these senators had lifetime scores of a staggering 0% according to the League of Conservation Voters. Chances are slim they will change their voting habits much since they appear firmly against any and all pro-environment legislation.

However the following Class II GOP senators are vulnerable on the environment and climate change issues because they are up for re-election in 2020:

Senator		State	2017 Score	Lifetime Score
Ernst	Joni	IA	0.00%	0.00%
Perdue	David	GA	0.00%	0.00%
Sasse	Ben	NE	0.00%	0.00%
Cotton	Tom	AR	0.00%	2.00%
Daines	Steve	MT	0.00%	2.00%
Rounds	Mike	SD	0.00%	2.00%
Cornyn	John	TX	0.00%	5.00%
Enzi	Mike	WY	0.00%	5.00%
Inhofe	James	OK	0.00%	5.00%
Cassidy	Bill	LA	0.00%	7.00%
McConnell	Mitch	KY	0.00%	7.00%
Risch	Jim	ID	0.00%	7.00%
Sullivan	Dan	AK	0.00%	7.00%
Tillis	Thom	NC	0.00%	7.00%
Gardner	Cory	CO	0.00%	10.00%
Graham	Lindsey	SC	5.00%	12.00%
Capito	Shelley Moore	WV	0.00%	17.00%
Collins	Susan	ME	32.00%	63.00%
Hyde-Smith	Cindy	MS		
McSally	Martha	AZ		
Roberts	Pat	KS	0.00%	9.00%
Alexander	Lamar	TN	5.00%	21.00%

Note three of the absolute worst GOP senators on the environment and climate change are up for re-election. All of these Class II senators should be hammered for their performance to date, primary candidates who promise to vote with an eye to the environment should be encouraged to run against them, and their Democratic opponents aided (assuming they will promise to vote along party lines on the environment).

And yes, children should absolutely show up at their door steps and demand to know why these senators are selling out their futures, condemning children like them. Kids can easily understand that elected officials' jobs are on the line in less than two years; they can tell these senators what they think of the job they've done so far and demand better.

The last four senators in the table above are special cases. Two are retiring, both Roberts (KS) and Alexander (TN); they have an opportunity to vote between now and the end of their term to favor the environment and to deter climate change. They should be pressed to do so. Their seats are open for the 2020 race and only candidates promising to vote for the environment should be supported.

McSally and Hyde-Smith don't have scores at LCV yet. If they vote in line with their party, they need to go. Their Democratic opponents should be supported.

One last point: any entity filing paperwork to avoid paying taxes on revenues should be accountable to the public. That goes for environmental and climate change activism organizations filing as 501c3, 501c4, and PACs. They should have privacy policies and terms of service clearly posted on their websites if they are collecting email addresses and taking donations.

And if these activist groups are shepherding children anywhere, they had better have their organizational structure and team members listed on their site.

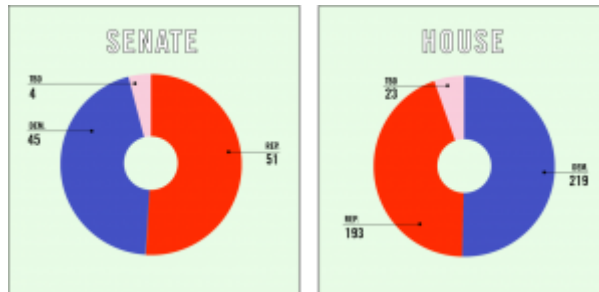
I certainly wouldn't let any group I couldn't identify fully use my children for their aims – especially if they aren't doing a good job educating children on effective activism. I'd rather my family contacted its members of Congress directly and bypass any nonprofit organization which isn't more transparent.

Congressional switchboard: (202) 224-3121

This is an open thread.

UPDATE – 12:15 P.M. ET –

Because apparently there are adults who need a goddamn picture to understand the problem:



The blue and pink parts of the Senate pie are willing to vote for climate change legislation. They have been friendly to the environment.

The red part of the Senate pie isn't willing to vote for climate change, but it controls whether any legislation passes.

If you have a goddamn emergency needing legislation passed, there is NO WAY TO PASS IT unless you win over some of the red part of the Senate pie. By win over I mean persuade them now to vote on legislation, or vote them out and replace them with a climate-friendly candidate in 2020.

Further more, passing climate change legislation means not losing any of the blue or pink part of the pie.

A five-year old can understand this. So can a 16-year-old who will be 18 and eligible to vote in November 2020.

(Image source: Teen Vogue which is a damned fine media outlet.)