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English 150 Section 33

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Now or Never: How to Save the Planet from Ourselves

Thesis: In order to reverse the effects of global warming, voters must work to elect Senators and Representatives who acknowledge its existence, are not governed by their own self-interests, and will pass legislation to fix it.

- I. The first step to solving the problem of climate change is to get the majority of legislators to accept that there is a problem.
  - A. The evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of global warming,
    1. The planet's average surface temperature has risen about 2 degrees Fahrenheit since the late nineteenth century.
    2. The oceans are also warming up.
    3. The ice sheets are shrinking.
    4. The sea level rose about eight inches in the last century.
    5. Finally, glaciers are retreating almost everywhere in the world.
  - B. And yet, many legislators seem to be of the opinion that global warming is a myth (or at least greatly exaggerated).
  - C. This line of thinking is dangerous, because if climate change is not solved soon, it could negatively affect future generations.

- II. Climate change deniers in Congress are also dangerous because they tend to have ulterior motives, and their influence might actively make the situation worse.
  - A. It is unclear whether they actually believe this, or if they are simply in the pockets of big oil companies.
  - B. Neoliberalism is also a possible motivation.
  - C. Whatever the case, if this continues, all of the progress made on the problem could be undone.
    - 1. The climate change deniers will block any efforts to pass environmental legislation.
  - D. On the other hand, if the majority of Congress members are climate change believers, this will help the fight against climate change.
    - 1. Environmental regulations will not be in danger of being blocked by climate change deniers, since they would be the majority in this case.
    - 2. As such, Congress will be able to pass more legislation that will:
      - a) Reduce carbon emissions.
      - b) Fix the ozone layer.
- III. If humanity is to have any hope of solving global warming, the voting public needs to elect legislators who will take the problem seriously and work to reverse its effects.
  - A. It is especially important to focus this plan on Congress, because they are the ones who pass legislation.
  - B. Therefore, during the 2018 mid-term elections, climate change believers should be voted in to replace climate change deniers.

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### Now or Never: How to Save the Planet from Ourselves

They say that the first step to solving a problem is to acknowledge that a problem exists. Global warming has been a huge problem for a while now, and all scientific evidence points to its existence, so logically, the country should be doing whatever it takes to fix it, right? Well, there is one problem: there are some people in our government who refuse to acknowledge it. They claim that global warming is an elaborate hoax, or they claim that there is not enough evidence to support its existence. As long as there are people like that in the legislative branch, no steps will be taken to solve the issue. In fact, there is a high chance that such people will actively make the problem worse. However, if the majority of legislators believe in global warming, steps can be taken to combat its effects on our planet, and the American public might be able to save the environment from themselves. In order to reverse the effects of global warming, voters must elect Senators and Representatives who acknowledge its existence, are not governed by their own self-interests, and will pass legislation to fix it.

The first step to solving the problem of climate change is to get the majority of legislators to accept that there is a problem. It cannot be denied that global warming is real. NASA goes into great detail about it on its website, citing several points to back up its claims. To begin with, the global temperature is clearly rising. “The planet’s average surface temperature has risen about 2.0 degrees Fahrenheit (1.1. Degrees Celsius) since the late 19th century,” writes NASA on its

official website, “a change driven largely by increased carbon dioxide and other human-made emissions into the atmosphere.” In addition to that, the oceans are warming due to absorbing a lot of the heat, which is also causing the ice sheets to shrink and glaciers to retreat. The global sea level rose almost 8 inches in the last century, the record-high temperatures have been growing higher, and the acidity in our oceans has increased almost 30 percent (NASA). With such a tremendous wealth of evidence, the obvious conclusion is that climate change is a real problem. Despite this, there are many government officials who still do not believe in global warming, insisting that the whole concept is a hoax. Others claim that it has not yet been substantially proven, despite the fact that a scientific consensus has been established (Oreskes). These are the types of people who need to be voted out of office, because their line of thinking is dangerous to the environment. If the climate change problem is not solved, the results could very well be catastrophic. As John S. Dryzek and his coauthors write in *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, “Climate change is like no other environmental problem that humanity has ever faced” (21). The book goes on to cite a review that states that “the failure of our generation would lead to consequences that would haunt humanity until the end of time.” Naomi Oreskes agrees with this point in her article “The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change,” writing that if the world fails to solve this problem, “our grandchildren will surely blame us.” In other words, if climate change is not solved within the next several decades, it will almost certainly have a negative impact on future generations.

Climate change deniers in Congress are also dangerous because they tend to have ulterior motives, and their influence might actively make the situation worse. It is unclear whether they actually believe their claims, but there are several possible motivations for their behavior. As

Dryzek writes, their goal can be seen as part of an effort to defend the modern Western societal order, which is powered by fossil fuels (144). After all, big oil companies do not want to acknowledge a problem that might result in them losing business, and climate change deniers backed by big oil do not want to lose their support. Alternately, this could also be a symptom of neoliberalism, which is described in Robert J. Antonio and Robert J. Brulle's article for *The Sociological Quarterly*. "Neoliberals sought to weaken the substantial network of environmental regulations and oversight agencies, created in the 1970s, and to blunt the environmental movement's effort to strengthen this system and make it more comprehensive," they write. "Thus, anti-environmentalism has been, from the start, a keystone of neoliberal antiregulatory politics." It is possible that those neoliberal ideas from the 1970s have carried over to the modern world, mostly in the form of conservative white men. Whatever the case, if climate change deniers rule Congress, their ulterior motives will lead them to block and repeal any attempts at climate change legislation. If this continues, all of the progress made on the problem, such as the Paris Agreement and regulations on big oil companies, could be undone. However, if the majority of Congress members are climate change believers, environmental regulations will not be in danger of being blocked by climate change deniers. As such, Congress will be able to pass legislation that will reduce carbon emissions, fix the ozone layer, reduce temperatures, and improve the environment. Voting for climate change believers will benefit everyone, while voting for climate change deniers will only benefit oil companies and greedy politicians.

If humanity is to have any hope of solving the problem of global warming, the voting public of the United States needs to elect legislators who will take the problem seriously and work to reverse its effects. After all, as Antonio and Brulle write, the biggest danger in regards to

climate change is to failing to find strategies to cope with it (195-202). It is especially important to focus this plan on Congress, because they are the ones who pass legislation. Yes, it is also important to have a president and a Supreme Court who believe in climate change, but those in the legislative branch will pass laws and regulations that will have a great effect on the fight against climate change. It is also important that this gets done as soon as possible, because climate change is proceeding at an unprecedented rate (NASA). Therefore, if this country continues engaging in a debate to answer an already answered question, it might become too late to find an adequate solution. For this reason, the 2018 midterm elections are the best place to start voting for people who will work to end climate change. One-third of the seats in the Senate and all of the seats in the House of Representatives will be up for grabs, so that would be a perfect time to vote out the climate change deniers and vote in a fresh crop of climate change believers. Undecided voters must evaluate the candidates' stances on climate change, consider who will work to fix the environment, and vote accordingly. Once all of Congress that believes in climate change, they can stop arguing about its existence and start working towards a solution.

Denying that climate change exists is the societal equivalent of sticking one's fingers in one's ears and screaming a string of gibberish in order to block out reality. The truth is, climate change is a real, serious problem, and if it remains unchecked, it has the potential to impact future generations in a negative light. Those in Congress who refuse to believe in climate change are an obstacle to finding its solution. As such, in order to stop the spread of climate change and therefore save the world, voters must choose Senators and Representatives who will work to fulfill that goal, instead of trying to hinder it. If action is taken soon, the environment can be preserved, and future generations will have a safe place to live in.

## Works Cited

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