

# How climate change became polarized

Seth Borenstein's article "Global warming polarizes" (Aug. 15) was upsetting: I read it as reports were coming in about Louisiana's extreme rainstorms which dumped roughly 2 feet of rain in 48 hours. These storms, which caused deadly floods, are linked to climate change. A warmer atmosphere holds more moisture making extreme precipitation events more likely. This is at least the 8th 500-year event in the U.S. in just over one year.

Borenstein's article simplistically failed to ask penetrating questions - why was climate change a non-polarizing topic 10 or 15 years ago? Why now? Tribalism? What created tribalism? Borenstein's few examples weren't set in a well-defined context. How can tribalism be so powerful that it prevents a political scientist like Dave Woodard, who surely studied statistics for his professional work, from understanding the statistics of climate change studies? Why could Bob Inglis listen to his son's concerns about climate change and study the subject with an open mind, but Rev. Joyner can't hear his daughter's concerns?

Borenstein didn't discuss the right wing conservative media that stripped facts from their coverage of climate change in order to serve their own financial, corporate and political interests. Republican politicians, scared of retaliation, didn't speak out against conservative media lies, but began repeating the lies. Even mainstream media began engaging in false balance. Conservative media de-truthified the news so much that Republican politicians kept moving further from fact. Truth is a slippery slope - once mainstream Republican politicians deny climate change is caused by humans and needs Congressional legislation, then anyone can say anything. The tribe is aligned.

Yesterday conservative media figure Charlie Sykes told MSNBC that he can't confront lies because his tribe is

unwilling to accept any authority of truth: "Who are the referees? Where do you go to basically say, this is the truth?" Fringe conservative media (and the fake think tanks they rely on) brought the GOP to a truth vacuum (and some would implicate Ronald Reagan's termination of the Fairness Doctrine). Tribalism was created by corporate-sponsors, which got the Republicans to Trump.

The rest of us should heed Ms. Joyner: "The more people connect on a human level, the more people can overcome these tribal attitudes. We really do have a lot more in common than we think."

Let's connect on a human level by sending donations to help Louisiana flood victims, and by calling their U.S. Senators David Vitter and Bill Cassidy urging them to put life before corporate interests and sponsor legislation to price carbon emissions.

And for a little comic relief, watch Stephen Colbert's premier show on "truthiness." Did he imagine the TRUth-TRUmp connection?

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