

# Political change

Monday, May 18, 2015

Professor Gran's op-ed described politicians ignoring climate change facts. He might have included some political science facts teaching readers how to induce politicians to change their positions.

Professor Jon Krosnick (Stanford) reports: 80 percent of Americans agree the federal government should limit business and utility emissions. Krosnick never sees 80 percent agreement on issues. He found that no states have a majority skeptical about climate change. Yet politicians still believe their constituents deny the facts. Why? Maybe because climate isn't ranked as their top concern; constituents aren't passionate about climate.

Krosnick notes that political change happens well before a majority becomes passionate: during the Vietnam war, only 20 percent were passionate about the war. Krosnick also finds: of the people who are passionate about climate change, 90 percent think human-caused climate change is real, is serious and requires government action. Krosnick says on most issues, passionate opinions are split more evenly.

Here are some lessons: if you want legislation to cut emissions, be more passionate. For the next 18 months, write some letters to the editor, talk to relatives about why you're passionate about climate, attend one political rally in New Hampshire to ask candidates what climate legislation they've supported, and on Sept. 20, 2015, attend a climate march in Washington. Imagine. 400,000 marchers last September in New York City energized a people's movement: it was 10 times bigger than the previous climate march. What if you make this year's march substantially bigger than last year's march? Congress would see passionate political will. They would enact bipartisan climate legislation. Take your kids; they'll remember the march their whole lives.

Citizens' Climate Lobby conducts Congressional seminars on carbon pricing legislation before standing room only bipartisan audiences. They're learning the economic, environmental, health and job benefits of cutting emissions. Now they need to hear public passion.

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