

House Committee on Natural Resources
“Climate Change: The Impacts and the Need to Act,”
10:00 a.m., February 6th, 2019
1324 of the Longworth House Office Building

TESTIMONY:

Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr.
President & CEO
Hip Hop Caucus

Thank you to Chairman Grijalva and the entire Committee for having me here today.

And thank you to the other panelists for your commitment to solving climate change.

My name is Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr. I am the President and CEO of Hip Hop Caucus.

As Americans we face challenges head on. Climate change is not a Democrat issue or a Republican issue. It is a human issue, and therefore, we must look to God and our faith to guide us.

This crisis is complex. It impacts all of us and future generations, and it's those with the least resources that are and will continue to be impacted first and worst.

But we know how to solve this crisis. We must transition off of fossil fuels to a just 100 percent clean energy economy that works for all.

Many communities, cities, and states across our country are leading the way on climate solutions. I urge every member of this committee, if you have not yet, to visit places and people who have gone through climate disasters, and to visit communities, projects, and businesses that are implementing clean energy and climate solutions.

The fossil fuel industry receives billions of dollars of taxpayer subsidies. You are subsidizing an industry that is killing Americans with their pollution and climate disasters. Further, the Trump administration's attacks on basic public health and environmental safeguards mean even more death sentences, particularly for the poor. Clean air, clean water, and solving climate change are inextricably linked.

In 1960 four college students sat at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina to desegregate the south. They were courageous beyond belief in standing up for equality.

Climate Change is our lunch counter moment for the 21st century.

Today, like those brave students, young people across this country are courageously standing up not only for equality, but for our existence. Young people are organizing, marching, and coalition building, and they are calling for a Green New Deal.

And they are doing it because they know that the science on climate change is undeniable. But also because, like all of us here today, they have watched as people died in Hurricane's Harvey, Maria, Irma, Katrina, and in superstorm Sandy. They have seen the families who have lost everything to fires that have ripped across the west. They have been a part of the peaceful movements opposing fossil fuel developments led by the Lakota people at Standing Rock and the Gwich'in people in the Arctic Refuge.

The question is, what are you, as members of this committee, going to do? It is my prayer that you call-up at least as much courage as the young people standing up around the country, and that you act, you act now, and you act boldly and courageously.

We do not make it beyond 12 years from now without huge amounts of death, destruction, and suffering, if this committee, and both chambers of Congress don't urgently come together, putting the people of this country first, putting God first, and putting your political party to the side, to solve climate change.

As an officer in the U.S. Air Force Reserve Chaplain Corps, I had to ponder the unique the relationship between military and faith. What I realized is that in the military we need our faith not only to strengthen us in battle, but we need our faith to guide us to always do what is right.

We need you to use your faith to guide you to do what is right. If you are approaching climate change as a partisan, political issue, your faith is leading you astray. We, the American people, need you to have the courage to do what is right. It is your courage that can put our country and the world on the path to solving climate change.

May God be with you. Thank you and God bless.

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