

A Conversation with Amy Goodman and Kenneth Kimmell

<https://www.climateone.org/audio/conversation-amy-goodman-and-kenneth-kimmell>

Recorded on October 20, 2017



Announcer: This is Climate One, changing the conversation about energy, economy and the environment.

On today's program, we'll talk with Democracy Now!'s Amy Goodman. She was arrested in 2016 while covering the Dakota Access Pipeline protests at Standing Rock. But, she says, it's not about her.

Amy Goodman: *I didn't take this arrest warrant personally. It was a message sent to all journalists: do not come to North Dakota. Which is exactly why we had to be there.*

Announcer: And we're joined by Kenneth Kimmel, of the Union of Concerned Scientists. He says that despite non-stop disaster headlines, the media still isn't doing enough to connect the dots between weather and climate change.

Kenneth Kimmel: *People are still not really getting that it's affecting them right now. Not 20 years, not 50 years, right now. They're gonna pay for all of this. We're all gonna pay for all of this. And the media really needs to do a much better job of explaining that.*

Announcer: Science, activism and the media. Up next on Climate One.

Announcer: Should the media be talking more about climate change?

Welcome to Climate One - changing the conversation about America's energy, economy and environment. Climate One conversations - with oil companies and environmentalists, Republicans and Democrats - are recorded before a live audience and hosted by Greg Dalton.

As the host and Executive Producer of Democracy Now! Amy Goodman has built a career on covering the grassroots activism and general muckraking that can catalyze change. Goodman is not afraid to take on powerful industries when bringing a story to the public - even one that mainstream media won't touch.

Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists, brings the same tenacity to his work.

Under Kimmell, UCS has led the charge in exposing the relationship between oil companies, climate change and climate denial, and is working to make those issues a priority in congress.

On today's program, Goodman and Kimmell discuss the intersection between science and the media, and the ways that activist journalism can push mainstream news outlets into broadening their coverage of climate change.

Here's your host, Greg Dalton.

[Applause]

Greg Dalton: Welcome to you both. Amy Goodman, let's begin. Tell us the story of the day of the dogs when you're in Standing Rock.

Amy Goodman: That was September 3, 2016. It was at the height of the presidential election in this country. A time when the critical issues of the day should have been raised every day with the presidential candidates. It was about the standoff at Standing Rock, which began April 1, 2016. The unofficial historian of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, opened her property along the Cannonball River in North Dakota to the resistance, the resistance to the \$3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline. Native Americans call that the "black snake" that would snake its way taking fracked oil from the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota through South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, then hook up with the pipeline to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Standing Rock Sioux were deeply concerned about the fact the pipeline would go under the Missouri River, the longest river in North America and imperil the water supply of 17 million people downstream. And they said no. They actually weren't alone in saying no. People of Bismarck, the capital, they said no and their views were respected. The people of Mandan with the courthouse and the jail that's jailed so many hundreds of Native Americans over their protest, they said no and their views were respected. But the Native Americans who just wanted to be treated like any North Dakotan, their views were not respected. And so they began to protest. They didn't call themselves protesters. They call themselves, water protectors. Soon, scores of people came then hundreds of people came. Then thousands of people came to North Dakota from Latin America, the United States, the First Nations from Canada. It was the largest unification of Native American tribes that we've seen in this country in decades. It was astounding.

Greg Dalton: Many of them veterans.

Amy Goodman: Veterans also joined. Almost no coverage. So that was April 1st, May, June, July, the presidential election is going along the primaries and then the general election.

We go Labor Day weekend. We went to cover the protest and they were amazing. I mean, you have first a water ceremony in the middle-of-the-road and glasses of water the native elders would hold. And as they would walk down these rural back roads, they would be met by a fully militarized sheriff's department. I mean they had MRAPs, they had tanks, they had automatic weapons. And these Native Americans had a glass of water. And they would say this is for you as well as for us, for your children we're doing this as well as for our children. We know those scenes of militarized police from Ferguson, right when Michael Brown was killed by a white police officer in 2014 and left his body left to bake in the hot August sun for hours. The whole community rose up and they were met by the same kind of militarized series of police departments from throughout St. Louis.

This is recycling in America today. You take the weapons from Afghanistan and Iraq, and you give

them to the police departments of the United States. And there are number of high-level police officials who are also deeply concerned about this. So this is what the Native Americans faced, but they kept on protesting. And on that weekend, Labor Day weekend, they didn't expect that Dakota Access Pipeline is owned by Energy Transfer Partners that they would be excavating because it's a holiday weekend and a judge was going to be ruling the following week. And so a group of people went to their, what they call their sacred burial ground to plant tribal flags. And when they got there they saw the bulldozers excavating at full tilt and they were furious. The judge had asked for a map to prove that these were their sacred grounds. They've made the map, given it to the judge, the judge gave it to Energy Transfer Partners, you know, judges give it to the other side. And the Native Americans felt they had leapfrogged over the company the areas where they were and actually used the map to target this area to excavate so that the facts on the ground would change before the judge's decision. It would be a moot point.

So they were furious. They went up on the property. Older women, girls, boys, teenagers, men, people with horses and they stood in front of the bulldozers. It was terrifying. These are massive machines that churn the earth. This time though the bulldozers pulled back. One, two, three, four, five, six of them moving back. The people moving forward, the people at the resistance camps; now there were many resistance camps were hearing about what's happening. They were coming forward and the bulldozers were coming back until the Dakota Access Pipeline guards unleashed dogs on the Native Americans. Dogs, we were filming this whole thing. Dogs, we're filming people with their arms bitten. They were bloodied, they were maced, they were beaten, but ultimately the company pulled back that day. I mean, the Native Americans had prevailed at a painfully high price, but that day the bulldozers pulled back.

We immediately posted this video online that night. There were 14 million views online within 24, 48 hours. That shows, gives the lie to the corporate executives who run the network who say, I mean climate change, people are just not interested. Clearly people are interested. The next week we went back to New York on Thursday night. The governor called out the National Guard. It didn't look good for the tribe. The next day, the judge would be ruling on Friday. I didn't know this but the authorities also quietly issued an arrest warrant for me. So on Friday, the judge ruled total routing of the tribe. It wasn't a good decision for the tribe it was about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. But President Obama had been in Asia that week and he was in Laos, this historic trip he made, first sitting president to go there. And he held a democracy forum for young people from all over Asia to learn about democracy. And one of the last questions, a young woman from Malaysia raised her hand, she said, "President Obama, what about the Dakota Access Pipeline?" She dared to ask a question no American journalist said that publicly of the president. Dakota Access Pipeline please. And he actually eloquently addressed the issue of oppression of Native Americans and then didn't have to, but because he could have end this discussion, but did say "As to the DAPL, the Dakota Access Pipeline, I have to get back to my team."

So he came back to United States and reportedly saw the video of the dogs. We filmed a dog with its nose and mouth, dripping with blood. We interviewed Winona LaDuke, right, who is with the White Earth Reservation in Northern Minnesota who had pitched her tepee at the Red Warrior Camp. And she said to the governor "You are not George Wallace. This is not 1965, Alabama. We are through." President Obama reportedly saw the video of the dogs. It was not lost on the first African-American president the significance of this. So the judge rules against the tribe. Justice Department against the tribe, but not 15 minutes later an unprecedented three agency letter from Justice, Interior Department and the Army Corps of Engineers said we're gonna hold off, we're going to slow down we're gonna see if there was a proper environmental impact statement, if the Native Americans were consulted properly.

So I mean the Native American suffering from whiplash. First, the worst decision and oh my gosh, this could mean we are prevailing. We by the way that night we're in Canada. We've done the broadcast on Friday morning, didn't know about the arrest warrant. The next day I was at University of Toronto speaking, along with Matt Taibbi of Rolling Stone and others, and I get a text on my phone that says you're under arrest. I'm in Canada I have to go over the border if I'm gonna get home. So I just looked up and I basically said could someone call me a cab? And I raced to the airport, got home, but I really felt it was critical then. I didn't take this arrest warrant personally. It was a message sent to all journalists: do not come to North Dakota, which is exactly why we had to be there. And I wanted to ensure that young journalists would not be afraid to go to cover this historic gathering around the fate of the planet, around sustaining our planet and it was critical for young journalists not to fear that they would be arrested if they went to cover this.

So we went back, flew into Bismarck. And as we landed, we're just calling the bluff of the authorities. And as we landed they announced the prosecutors announced they were quashing the arrest warrant and dropping the charges, but I would be charged with more serious charges. Riot. Well, like I'm a one-woman riot. And I said to my lawyer. "What does this mean?" They said in three days you'll be arraigned at 1:30 on the following Monday which gave us two and a half more days to cover the protest. We broadcast that next Monday morning, Democracy Now, the show must go on and we were in Bismarck. So we went to Mandan in front of the courthouse and the jail that was our backdrop where I'd have to turn myself in, the courthouse and the jail and the 10 Commandments in between. And we interviewed the chairman at the time of the Standing Rock Sioux, Dave Archambault, I said, "Have you ever been arrested?" He said "Yes." I said, "What happened?" "Misdemeanor for civil disobedience, for protesting the pipelines?" So I said "What happened?" He said, "I was strip-searched. I was put in an orange jumpsuit and I was jailed." I mean the chairman of the tribe that's like President Trump is the 45th president of the United States. I asked the pediatrician on the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, Dr. Sarah Jumping Eagle, have you ever been arrested. She was one of the first because she cared about the health of the kids. She was strip-searched she was put in an orange jumpsuit and she was jailed. I mean the humiliation, how much can a people take. And then after the show, it was coming near at 1:30 and I got word from North Dakota public radio that the judge in the case usually it's a rubberstamp to sign off on the charges so that I would be arraigned had refused to sign off on the charges.

And also a number of Native Americans who were going to court that day had their felonies and their misdemeanors dropped. And that just goes to show when the media shines the light in the right direction, I mean New York Times, Los Angeles Times, BBC homepage it was on, Vogue Magazine was covering this. And it just shows what true reality TV, the kind that I would support, what a difference it can make and that's what we need when it comes to environmental reporting, what is happening on the ground.

Greg Dalton: Ken Kimmell, the Dakota Access Pipeline was rejected now it's back on again. Does stopping one piece of metal, does stopping one pipeline change the system? Say that gets --

Kenneth Kimmell: Well, not in and of itself. And first of all I do want to second Amy's larger point that a lot of these stories don't get told by the mainstream media and congratulations to you for really making this as big an issue as it was. I think that was a huge public service and all the people who stood up in that cold winter and froze opposing that pipeline have done a great service.

So clearly no one would say that stopping that one pipeline is gonna solve the problem of climate change, but I wouldn't look at that in isolation. Donald Trump and the situation we find ourselves in has paradoxically unleashed a lot of activism at all different levels. And you saw it in the March for

Science, 75,000 people in Washington, hundreds of thousands of people across the world you saw it in the Climate March. You see it in shareholder activism, which is really starting to put some pressure now where it should be directed which is the big oil companies. And most recently the five communities in California that have now filed lawsuits in state court against the big majors. So I look at all of those activities as part of an aggregate and each one of them is not enough to really change the needle but collectively perhaps they will and they're coming at just the right time because we have a federal government that has gone AWOL on the central challenge of our times, which is climate change.

And so people from all different walks of life in all different ways need to step up to the plate and exert pressure to make that change. And so I do think that protests like Standing Rock are hugely important; we need more of them. The fossil fuel industry is very well aware of how difficult it is in this environment to site infrastructure and build it because people are standing up, but it's a necessary but not sufficient condition. We need to do a lot of other things as well to really make a change.

Greg Dalton: But are fossil fuel's ascendant now? I mean they're very popular in and certainly in Washington DC, you know, pushing back the war on coal et cetera. Is that gonna make a difference or our markets moving in a different direction, Ken Kimmell?

Kenneth Kimmell: Well, you know, we have coined the Trump administration as government of, by and for the fossil fuel industry. So obviously, in that limited sense they're ascendant. But the problem they face is technology is moving very rapidly away from fossil fuels, and we all know this. The miraculous drop in cost in solar energy. The miraculous drop in cost of wind energy, energy storage, electric vehicles so a lot of people although you can't see it just yet, just over the horizon is a massive disruption of the fossil fuel industry. The Trump administration is clearly trying to swim against that tide. They have an idea which is completely false that they can bring back jobs in coal mines if they only just get rid of environmental regulations, which is absolutely not true. So they're gonna take a stab at it they also announced a scheme which I don't think they'll get through to subsidize coal plants and nuclear energy plants to sort of fight against this shift towards renewables.

I don't think any of that will be successful. So I think we're gonna win this fight, but you know four to eight years of the Trump administration could slow down the progress which is why all of this activism is so important. But the other key thing is states like California, New York and Illinois, big states with ambition, picking up some of the slack that we're left with due to the absence of federal leadership.

Greg Dalton: Amy Goodman, the Washington Post did a story earlier this year that said that Arby's employs more people than the coal industry in the United States. One company, 80,000 people; there's about 76,000 people who work in coal mining in the United States. That's just ahead of bowling alleys and nail salons. So why does the coal industry, you know, important jobs for those people often, you know, immigrants, but the point is that the coal industry seems to have an outsized capture on our public discourse. Why are we so captivated with coal miners and that industry gets a disproportionate amount of coverage in the political debate?

Amy Goodman: I mean, what we're seeing in Washington is the rise of the oiligarchy. Well, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, he's the former head of the largest oil corporation in the world, Exxon Mobil. You have the secretary of energy is the former governor of Texas, Rick Perry. He ran for president twice, was bankrolled to the tune of \$6 million by Kelcy Warren, the CEO of Energy Transfer Partners which owns the Dakota Access Pipeline. Scott Pruitt, the former Oklahoma

Attorney General sued the EPA 14 times, has tried to eviscerate it from the outside. Now as head of the EPA, is trying to do that on the inside. And perhaps if the government were AWOL we would be in better shape. They are really full speed ahead trying to deregulate this country and they use coal as a symbol.

Now the people in coal country need jobs. There is no question about that. And they need clean, healthy jobs. And I think really we are all in this together. And I wanted to go to what is happening now. I mean here we are in San Francisco you've got the wildfires just north of us. Before that, you've got the hurricanes and as Hurricane Harvey had just hit Houston, flooding it, drowning Houston. And right as Hurricane Irma was hurtling toward the United States, making landfall in the Caribbean and coming to the United States. President Trump went on September 6th to Mandan, North Dakota right near the jail where so many hundreds of Native Americans had been imprisoned, deeply concerned about the environment. Right down the road he stood in front of an oil refinery and as these hurricanes were slamming his country, he boasted about pulling the United States out of the Paris climate accord and giving the green light to the Keystone XL pipeline, which was killed years ago because of massive protest and the Dakota Access Pipeline. This was his answer. And that's the position of the Trump administration and they are moving fast. But it really is up to the media. I'm not talking about Fox when I talk about the lack of climate change coverage. I'm talking about MSNBC and CNN in addition. I mean, you see those words, severe climate -- severe weather, extreme weather flashing across the TV screens constantly, 24-hour coverage except when it comes to Puerto Rico they don't cover Puerto Rico as much but 24-hour coverage when it comes to Florida when it comes to Texas.

And by the way they should. They should just cover Puerto Rico more and of course what's happening here in California. But where is the discussion? The meteorologists talking about climate change, global warming climate chaos another two words that should be flashing, because that gives us the sense that we can do something about this. It is absolutely critical that this coverage be there.

Greg Dalton: Ken Kimmell, tell us what is the connection because a lot of scientists are wary to connect a single weather event to climate change. So tell us the link between climate and Harvey and Irma and even the fire.

Kenneth Kimmell: Sure. It's pretty well-established and there is a high degree of consensus in the scientific community that storms like Harvey and Maria and Irma are all made much more likely by climate change. So the probability of those storms happening is caused by is a climate change reality and the severity of those storms is heightened by climate change. Similarly, the fires that you're experiencing here, the fingerprints of climate change are on those fires as well. So many trees died off during the droughts, which are linked to climate change, and this record dry temperature and heat dries them out further and makes them very, very susceptible to fires. And I want to agree with Amy here, I think, just as the media did a terrible job during the presidential campaign covering climate change, and we were as frustrated as anyone about the lack of questions. We actually sent questions to the moderators to try to get them to ask a darn question about climate change, they never did. We're also frustrated though that we see all these stories, especially on TV. The print media is a little bit better. All these stories about climate, I'm sorry, about all these severe weather events and the words climate change are hardly mentioned.

Meanwhile, there are all these very capable, well-educated scientists who are ready to go on, on the record and explain the connections. The National Academy of Sciences came out with a study in 2016, indicating that the science of attribution is solid and dependable and reliable. So where's the

media in covering this and I think they really have an obligation to tell people two things. One, climate change has fingerprints on these events and two we are all paying for this right now in the billions and billions of dollars that it's going to cost to deal with all these disasters. And people need to understand that, because although the consensus is growing the number of people who accept the science, people are still not really getting that it's affecting them right now. Not 20 years, not 50 years, right now. And it's affecting them if they're victims of these events but even if they're not. They're gonna pay for all of this. We're all gonna pay for all of this. And the media really needs to do a much better job of explaining that.

Announcer: We're talking with Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Democracy Now!'s Amy Goodman. We'll continue the conversation right after this. This is Climate One.

Announcer: Welcome back to Climate One. We're talking about activist journalism, science and the media, with Amy Goodman, Host and Executive Producer of Democracy Now! And Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists. Here's Greg Dalton.

Greg Dalton: We're going to go to our lightning round. I'm gonna ask each of our guests mention a word and they're going to mention the first thing that comes into their mind unfiltered, regardless of thinking how anyone might react. So Amy Goodman, what's the first thing that comes to mind when I say Barack Obama.

Amy Goodman: A person that the current president is spending his presidency trying to completely negate.

Greg Dalton: Ken Kimmell, President Trump's science advisor.

Kenneth Kimmell: AWOL. Zero. There isn't one. And if there were one, he probably wouldn't listen to him, just as he's not listening to many of his advisers on a whole range of issues.

Greg Dalton: Ken Kimmell. Scott Pruitt.

[Laughter]

Kenneth Kimmell: In the history of the Republic may be the worst cabinet -- maybe the worst person in cabinet ever. There may be a couple of others that I'm not thinking of, but beyond any that we've seen before.

Greg Dalton: Amy Goodman. Nigeria.

Amy Goodman: Well, Jeremy Scahill, a great journalist and I went to Nigeria and we covered Chevron, based right here in California. And what they were doing in the Niger Delta. And we won an honor at the overseas press club for this documentary. And Tom Brokaw was there he was the emcee of the event and, you know, when the document, when we got the honor for the documentary the documentary is called Drilling and Killing: Chevron and Nigeria's Oil Dictatorship. He didn't quite say, you know, the names of what he didn't name Chevron and I felt it was very important to talk about. I mean I think that's what makes the difference is to talk about the specific companies involved. Talk about the whole industry. And ultimately what it means is that together we figure out at an alternative way that leads to a sustainable planet.

Greg Dalton: Last one, association for Ken Kimmell. Preface this by saying, Union of Concerned

Scientists also works on food and agriculture. Froot Loops.

Kenneth Kimmell: Not the healthiest food to give our kids.

Greg Dalton: Even though they're trying to make it more natural. True or false. Amy Goodman, the war on drugs is a failure?

Amy Goodman: True.

Greg Dalton: Also Amy Goodman. Attacking supply of bad substances, drugs, or oil or coal doesn't reduce demand? A lot of advocacy's aimed at attacking supply.

Amy Goodman: And you're talking about drugs.

Greg Dalton: Drugs, oil, anything. You know if you want to solve something bad, do you attack supply or do you go after demand?

Amy Goodman: Both.

Greg Dalton: Ken Kimmell. True or false. You believe in climate change?

Kenneth Kimmell: Trick question. I accept the solid science of climate change. I don't believe in it. I accept it.

Greg Dalton: It's not a belief. Amy Goodman. True or false. Persuading people to think the way you do often works?

Amy Goodman: I absolutely think that's true. I just had a conversation with a fierce climate denier who ran a series of radio stations around the country.

Greg Dalton: And you flipped them?

Amy Goodman: I met him on the plane. That's really wonderful when you're stuck together for six hours.

Greg Dalton: Wonderful for you or wonderful for him?

Amy Goodman: I don't know which one but we had a really interesting discussion because he home schooled his daughters. And I said, do you actually tell them that human beings have nothing to do with climate change. And I think that's where we start because I said -- people who have these two different sets of views I actually don't think they are completely divided. I said if you completely deny the signs and you're teaching your children and he said, well I wouldn't say total. I said, well, I think the difference is really you agree with the science but you're concerned about what we're going to do about it and that goes to the issue of solutions. Once we tease this apart then I think we can find much more agreement and people won't be so afraid.

Greg Dalton: That's the end of our lightning round. Let's give them a round of applause for getting through that.

[Applause]

Greg Dalton: I want to roll a piece of tape. We talked with Joan Blades, who's the founder of MoveOn.org very progressive political organization. And she talks about reaching across the aisles and something Amy was just talking about, relationships and information. So let's listen to Joan Blades.

[Start Clip]

Joan Blades: *We've seen model in the media and with leadership too often, this is very disrespectful way of engaging with each other. I read my conservative friends literature they send me and I go, oh, I see why they don't think climate change is such a big deal. If I was reading this on a regular basis, I would too.*

And I have conservative friends that, you know, care more because they care about me. So that relationship piece is just essential. I have a great deal of faith that when we discover, you know, these people with very different ideas are actually kind, caring, intelligent. And on both sides we have some misimpressions there.

[End Clip]

Greg Dalton: Joan Blades, cofounder of MoveOn.org and Living Room Conversations which brings together people across the political divide like tea party, with very liberal people. So Amy Goodman, I want to ask you about your show. Does your show try to bring people together because a lot of people think your show is divisive and villainizing and is not reaching for that same person on the plane talking with someone who disagrees?

Amy Goodman: No. I think, you know, Democracy Now started 21 years ago on nine stations, community radio stations. And now we're on over 1,400 public television and radio stations around the country and around the world. And the reason for that is that people are hungry for authentic voices. And I think this is true across the political spectrum. I think in the corporate media you have this almost false debate between people who often don't disagree. I mean I think there are two issues that are absolutely critical that we have to watch out for when it comes to the corporate media. One is climate change. They just will not raise this issue in any serious way. And I'm not talking about the occasional documentary. I'm talking about the daily discourse that sets the agenda. And the other is war which, to say the least destroys the environment.

I mean, the issue of war is so serious and is actually imminent now with the whole conflict increasing in North Korea. And again I wanted to quote someone not on Fox, but when the U.S. bombed the Syrian airfield months ago. I happened to have just come home that night turned on MSNBC and there was Brian Williams, the former NBC anchor who is now at MSNBC who said, "We see these beautiful pictures at night from the decks of these two U.S. Navy vessels in eastern Mediterranean. I am tempted to quote the great Leonard Cohen: "I'm guided by the beauty of our weapons." And they are beautiful pictures of fearsome armaments making what is for them a brief flight over to the airfield." That is absolutely shocking. I think he said the word beautiful three times in 30 seconds.

Greg Dalton: That's Brian Williams, former anchor of NBC formerly owned by General Electrics.

Amy Goodman: And this is where we have to challenge the media. Because in times of war being imminent the media tends to circle the wagons around the White House. And even now, when Donald Trump is hitting the media so hard that they actually have found a backbone they are fighting back because they're personally being named the failing New York Times, you know, fake news scene and all of that and they are rightly fighting back. When it comes to this issue, they do

this reflexive thing. The establishment really shoring up the establishment and that has to be challenged. But outside of this kind of very elite minority and I'm not talking about people of color that you see on the networks in Washington and in New York. There is the vast majority there are the people who care about war and peace, and I think they're across the political spectrum. People who care about growing inequality in the world, racial, economic, social justice, LGBTQ rights; people who care about climate change, the fate of the planet. Republican, Democrat, green independent, they are not a fringe minority, not even a silent majority but the silenced majority silenced by the corporate media, which is why we have to take the media back.

Greg Dalton: Ken Kimmell. What are you doing at Union of Concerned Scientists to reach out to Republicans, to reach across this political divide?

Kenneth Kimmell: Well, a lot of things actually and some of them are quite encouraging. I mean one observation I want to make is although the issue of climate change is horribly polarized in Washington DC. It is not as polarized at the state level. So you see Republican governors signing ambitious energy legislation state legislatures using all the tools in their toolbox so their states can become clean energy leaders. Even the state of Texas under Rick Perry invested \$7 billion to create an enormous onshore wind and energy industry in Texas. So this issue is less polarized at that level.

But here's what we're trying to focus on. We have had success in communities that we go into with independents and Republicans and what seems to work for us is to make climate impacts much more connected to the things they are seeing in their daily life and much more here and now, as opposed to faraway. So for example we put out a report this summer called Rising Seas which wasn't about the big storm events, but the slow and steady inundation that comes from tides. And anyone who wants to can plug in their ZIP Code and they can see what will happen to their neighborhood to their community in the next 20 years in the next 40 years under various different scenarios. And it's a way of personalizing that impact; the report does not lecture people on exactly what needs to get done. It's just trying to get information out. And those types of things actually work across the board.

We also focus on connecting for conservatives to institutions and icons that they care about. So we put out a report on how many of our military bases are vulnerable to sea level rise and how many of our historic monuments and places that people consider iconic for this country are at risk. So there are ways of talking about this. And if I were to summarize one tangible thing that's come of this, we do now have in Washington a 60-member bipartisan climate solutions caucus, 30 Republicans, 30 Democrats. And very recently that caucus flexed its muscle and got an amendment to a defense spending bill declaring climate change to be a national security threat. This is something that Paul Ryan and his leadership wanted stripped out and about 30 Republicans joined all the Democrats in saying no, we want to make this statement. I understand that's a symbolic vote but I think we can build on that and I think the key is this localized communication that's about the here and now and the things that people are actually experiencing as opposed to, you know, with the way we might've done climate communications 20 years ago. Which, you know, did feature polar bears and those types of things which are really important too but they don't really connect sufficiently to people's lives to be powerful.

Amy Goodman: You know I was just thinking we were in Houston in the aftermath of the hurricane. And the editor of the Houston Chronicle wrote a piece and talked about how, you know, Houston is known for some of its, you know, world class medical facilities that they are so proud of.

And he said no politician would question the science, would question the medicine that we're engaging in here; they just tout it. And he said, why do they take such a different approach when it comes to climate change, where all of our lives are now imperiled? Why aren't we just taking the same kind of sophisticated approach, respect for science. And you can have debates within science. But on the issue of climate change, you know, that's why democracynow.org goes to every UN climate summit from Copenhagen to Cancun from Doha to Durban Paris, Peru, Poland; now we're going to Bonn in a week or two.

Greg Dalton: You can make a rap song out of that.

Amy Goodman: We go there and cover these summits. You might say why waste the fuel, what gets accomplished. But it's the thousands of people who come from the frontline communities all over the planet who don't necessarily get in and sometimes they get arrested trying to get into these climate summits. Because they are facing, what, a 15-year-old boy from the Maldives looked into our camera and said, you are drowning my country. The people of Sub-Saharan Africa say, you are cooking our continent. I mean, there are plenty of debates in the rest of the world around what to do about climate change, but the rest of the world is so much more advanced when it comes to understanding that the science is settled. What isn't settled is what we could do about it.

Announcer: That's Amy Goodman, of Democracy Now! You're listening to Climate One. We'll be back with more in just a moment.

Announcer: This is Climate One, changing the conversation about America's energy, economy and environment. You can listen to all of our programs and subscribe to our podcast at our website: climate-one-dot-org.

We're talking about media coverage of climate change, the science behind it and how to keep it front and center in the public debate. Greg Dalton's guests today are Ken Kimmell of the Union of Concerned Scientists and Amy Goodman of Democracy Now!

Let's go to our audience questions.

Female Participant: This is Carol DiBenedetto. Thank you so much. In the context of what can we do in terms of the 2018 upcoming elections around the country. What can we do to get more localized information out so that people in say red states not here in California are voting in their interests and not, you know, for these things that they learn and misinformation campaigns that we saw happen in the presidential election?

Amy Goodman: I mean that's very important. Also, just decentralize media because, you know, information begins where people live and it's not just stories and other places. People get engaged when they're learning about what's happening at home. Also one other thing in terms of what people can do is run for office. We can change the complexion of politics in America and that will go to all sorts of things. It will put pressure on the issue of campaign-finance reform because most people are not that well-off be able to run for office. It's utterly painful that what we see today is you have to be either personally wealthy or be endorsed by extremely wealthy corporations and that all has to be changed. We have to bring politics back down to people in their communities and we know that at the local level with school boards and city councils. And we have to see running for national office in that same way.

But as for how you ensure decentralized media, number one, there is a media democracy movement in this country that's very important. We are seeing a level of consolidation of media that is

threatening democracy. Sinclair taking over so much of the broadcast outlets right now, forbidding certain discussions from taking place; this is extremely serious. I also think people have to challenge the media, you know, they respond to pressure into social media, tweeting, emailing, calling, texting, demanding issues like climate change be covered because it's not just the politicians that are brought to us by the fossil fuel industry. Every six or seven minutes, I don't know if it has to do with why the networks don't bring us climate change coverage, you know, brought to you by the American Petroleum Institute you see or brought to you by a weapons manufacturer. Now the network anchors I think would very clearly say, I don't get a call from them telling me not to raise these issues. And I think that's true, it's not really the way censorship works in America that you get an actual call. But prove those who are deeply concerned about the connection. You're sponsored by the fossil fuel industry so you're not raising climate change. Prove them wrong I say to the anchors. Raise the issue.

Greg Dalton: Let's go to our next question. Welcome.

Female Participant: First, thank you Amy, you're on the radio every weekday morning at 9 o'clock in our house. Regarding politics in every country in the world where there is an exit poll of an election. If the exit poll and the election differ, the election is considered highly questionable, as was the case in Kenya recently. In this country we decide that the exit poll is wrong. Are either one of your organizations looking into the corruption of our system, which I know personally go back to 2004 when Bush came up when you pushed Kerry in Athens, Ohio.

Greg Dalton: Thank you. So election integrity. Amy Goodman.

Amy Goodman: You know I think it's very important that the whole voting system in this country be looked at. But I think the most important issue is voter suppression right now. As President Trump has impaneled the so-called voter integrity commission, which is very clearly intended to actually whittle down the number of people who can vote, particularly in minority communities, particularly African-Americans, particularly Latinos disempower people. We have to look at what empowers people and this is not just an issue that Republicans have been involved with. Democrats too do not make this the one of the critical issues that we deal with, is making it easier to vote. In other countries they do everything they can to remove obstacles; make it a holiday, make it a weekend, have early voting. Here, it is the most difficult and it makes it extremely difficult not only for working people to vote, but then when they cut down the number of voting stations and communities of color these are very serious issues. And those are the kind of issues that I think we have to really focus on right now.

Greg Dalton: Next question for Amy Goodman and Ken Kimmell.

Male Participant: Hi, wonderful program. This question is a little more directed toward Ken. So I'm a scientist, actually I work in energy, health and environment. Ken brought up the climate solutions caucus. And I'm involved with the Citizens' Climate Lobby because I want to learn more about political solutions. I guess the question is how much hope is there that the caucus will expand and actually be able to do something more than just the gesture that they been able to do, which is important. And also, you know, is the media covering this? To me this is very important issue that there is this caucus and it's building up and that there is some will in Congress, but it is being covered.

Greg Dalton: Thank you. Ken Kimmell. Bipartisan they call the Noah's Ark Committee.

Kenneth Kimmell: Yes. The Noah's Ark Committee because in order for a Democrat to join, he or

she has to find a Republican to join which is a great way to set it up. I think, you know, it's expanded from 40 to 60 this year alone. So it's got some traction. I think it does have a lot of promise. I mean one thing that isn't may be well known a lot of Republicans in Congress when you talk to them privately they get the science of climate change. They're not climate deniers. The big problem is they're worried about the Koch brothers or others financing primary opponents. That's the big thing. And what they really need to be able to do, just as a single prisoner who is trying to break out of jail is going to get shot by the sentry guard, they need a lot of them to get out of jail and they need to get out collectively. And we are a 501(c)(3) organization so we don't do electoral politics. But I think it is important that we give support to those Republicans who are trying to do the right thing. Some of them are here in California some are elsewhere. And, you know, you're involved with the Citizens' Climate Lobby so you're aware of the possibility of a carbon tax and dividend proposal, which is one way to -- it's not a silver bullet on its own but it's an idea that has bipartisan appeal that can be worked on. So I think this is going to grow. I think it's partly growing as a reaction to Trump's extremism. And it's also partly growing because people in those districts armed with information about climate change are demanding that their representatives whether they're Republicans or not have something to say about climate change and not sticking their heads in the sand.

So I think it has a good future. And I do think the media has done a pretty bad job in covering this because it doesn't really fit into the, you know, hand-to-hand combat story that actually members of Congress are getting together and actually trying to cooperate on certain things. So it hasn't been well covered.

Male Participant: I just want to acknowledge the Ohlone people the indigenous people first here in San Francisco before I start. My name is Myron Dooley I'm with Digital Smoke Signals and we were documenting up there at Standing Rock alongside Amy. What we see was a repeat of history with indigenous people. This is happening all throughout the country. We've been in constant defense from the last 500 years protecting our sacred sites, protecting our water, our traditional harvesting areas.

What I started is what I don't see is an indigenous presence in here because throughout the country we know where these areas are as such as Standing Rock. My tribe is right over here where we've had to fight them put in nuclear bombs underground next to a fault line, you know. So what are the solutions to get out for indigenous media to share our own story?

Amy Goodman: Myron, yeah it's very important what you're saying and how many hundreds of Native Americans were arrested and also shoring up native media as you said. I mean you were there; you were trying to show what was happening with drones and filming. And that's why journalists I feel are so critical in the struggle and what you were trying to do was so critical in the struggle. And native media all over the country should be shored up. Because it's the people speaking for themselves that is the power the original power at shaping your own narrative.

Greg Dalton: I'd like to end by asking each of you starting with Amy Goodman. What gives you hope?

Amy Goodman: That people don't give up hope. That I mean here we are in San Francisco and you've got the wildfire. Someone came up to me last night and said, you know, a meme is going around. Love is thicker than smoke. It's people helping each other. And we have to remember we are all one community not divided by political labels. And we have to help each other and that goes to all of these global issues.

Greg Dalton: Ken Kimmell.

Kenneth Kimmell: I think what gives me hope is that there has been an enormous and effective resistance forming to what's happening in Washington. It is a coalition of a very wide group of people; I call them sort of the fact-based community. The people who do believe that evidence and science needs to play a central role.

And the way that people have exercise that power; the town halls, the citizen activism, the pressure that's been brewing has been incredibly powerful. And I think in the end that building of that movement will survive the current administration and will be a force for a progressive change.

Announcer: You've been listening to Climate One, hosted by Greg Dalton. Greg's guests were Amy Goodman, host and executive producer of Democracy Now! the national radio and TV news program, and Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a science-based nonprofit organization. Podcasts of this and other Climate One shows are available wherever you podcast, and on our website: climate-one-dot-org.

Please leave a comment we'd love to know what you think about our conversations on energy, food, water, technology and more.

Greg Dalton: Climate One is a special project of the Commonwealth Club of California. Kelli Pennington directs our audience engagement. Carlos Manuel is our producer. The audio engineer is William Blum. Anny Celsi and Devon Strolovich are the editors. I'm Greg Dalton, the executive producer and host. The Commonwealth Club CEO is Dr. Gloria Duffy.

You can discover additional podcasts, videos, speaker information and more at climate-one-dot-org. Join us next time for a conversation about America's energy, economy and environment.

Climate One is presented in association with KQED Public Radio.