

Opinion

LETTER: Hope fades on addressing climate change

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As I read Carlos Curbelo and Ryan Costello's Jan. 27 guest column on climate change and the Republican Party, I felt a spark of hope that we might finally address this issue in a bipartisan manner. For decades the desire protect our environment has been treated as liberal woo by conservative politicians, who encouraged half the population to ignore and mock climate science.

Meanwhile, climate change grinds on, and each year that we do nothing is a step toward irreversible damage. The National Climatic Data Center reports that 120,000 weather records were broken in the U.S. in 2019, including records on heat, precipitation, flooding, and wildfires. And that's just us. It doesn't count the millions of acres burning in Australia, melting glaciers, or the rising sea level that is forcing Indonesia to move its capitol city.

Scientists know that climate change will cause unpredictable, unintuitive, and chaotic results. For example, three feet of snow on the first day of Fall is now the new normal in the western states. The irony is that science's inability to predict that climate change will cause specific weather events has made it easy for conservatives to dismiss the whole business as fake news.

Realistically, Carlos Curbelo and Ryan Costello's call for change in the Republican party will be ignored. After all, 2019 was also the year President Trump imposed tariffs on solar panels which, according to Solar Energy Industries Association, cost 62,000 American clean-energy jobs. His term has been marked by rollbacks of any efforts to reduce carbon emissions in favor of industrial polluters. His party will not stray from his leadership just to pick up a few millennial or Floridian voters.

As an active member of the Democratic Party, it gives me no joy that Republicans remain on the wrong side of this political issue. Unchecked global climate change will result in millions of refugees fleeing droughts and floods — upheavals that will inevitably lead to wars and a shocking

loss of life. Far from being happy that we have a useful 'wedge issue,' I find it beyond tragic that climate change is a political issue at all.

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