

CCR 75 Adrian Rafizadeh--Young Conservative Pursuing Climate Solutions

Raw Transcript

welcome to citizens climate radio in this show we highlight people's

0:05

stories we celebrate your successes and together we share strategies for talking about climate change i'm your host

0:12

peterson toscano welcome to episode 75 of citizens climate radio a project of

0:20

citizens climate education this episode is airing on friday august 26 2022

0:27

today's show is 30 minutes filled with resources to help you with your climate

0:32

work in the art house you will hear about life on another planet

0:37

a book for children that honestly and artfully helps them consider their roles

0:43

in our rapidly changing world we have a good news report to share with you oh and a really great news story

0:50

regarding u.s climate policy i will also tell you how you can share your ideas suggestions and input about

0:58

our show we're actively looking for feedback from listeners hear about easy

1:03

and fun ways to get involved but first i want to introduce you to a

1:08

young american conservative one who insists on having a seat at the climate

1:14

table with most conservative climate advocates my story is not that unique i think all

1:21

of us at some point started off not really believing in the science or thinking that it was

1:27

some kind of liberal issue and not really something for conservatives to touch or believe in that's Adrian Rafizadeh, a recent high school graduate from california i really believe that

1:38

people who start to scaffold and look deeper and look beyond what the maybe conservative mainstream

1:45

is that they're able to find what the common sense is and that the science is actually real

1:51

i again i started out not really believing in in the science i took pride and i loved being like contrarian who

1:58

would say oh well actually climate change is not what they're making it out to be etc early on in like in high

2:04

school as i began to learn more about climate science as i
2:09
began to have more conversations on climate science i really started to see that the facts are
pretty undeniable you
2:15
really cannot deny the climate is changing and that humans are responsible when it came to
u.s climate policy
2:21
adrian strongly opposed the first major attempt by democrats
2:26
the green new deal was introduced in 2019 it was spearheaded by the
2:32
progressive u.s member of congress alexandria ocasio-cortez or aoc
2:38
i think that the green new deal was a huge misstep in the climate movement what the green
new deal did
2:45
was confirmed fears of conservatives that climate change is an excuse for
2:50
bringing more socialism to the us in a sense that's what the green new deal was it said we
need to have the
2:57
biggest mass mobilization since world war ii of government resources to do x y
3:02
and z when i first saw the greening deal i guess i was entertained by it because of just how
ridiculous it sounded to me as
3:08
a fiscal conservative small government kind of person and then again it kind of reinforced the
idea that climate change
3:15
is just a liberal idea even so the green new deal on the table got a lot of conservatives thinking
3:22
talking and writing about climate change in fact in seeking to debunk the green
3:28
new deal adrian suddenly saw the issue of climate change very differently for
3:33
one of my classes i had to write a paper and i chose to write about the green new deal just
because i wanted to totally
3:39
make fun of it and bash it and write about how terrible it was when i got to all the
environmental
3:45
goals and saying that we need to reduce our carbon emissions by x percent by 2050 et cetera
you really couldn't deny
3:51
that that's just simply true we do need to reduce our emissions considerably to be able to
avoid a climate catastrophe
3:58
and that's what i found as i was researching and i really didn't want to come to that conclusion
but i found that
4:04
you know what aoc and the leftists are saying is actually
4:09

true when it comes to our objective here which is to reduce carbon emissions but again there was
4:15
that gap in my brain which was well if they have the correct objective but not the
4:20
not an expedient means to get there then how do we get there that said adrian on a quest to
find a
4:28
way to address climate change that also fits into his worldview and politics
4:34
adrian politically leans right and he is a member of the republican party
4:39
i asked about the labels he uses to define his politics
4:44
one that i would like is classical liberal which essentially means that you are concerned on
fiscal issues and more
4:52
liberal and social issues open-minded republican is also a good word lots of labels that i've
used at
4:57
different times term republican i think comes with a lot of baggage with it there are certain
5:03
ideals of republicanism that i don't quite jibe with but i think 7 out of 10 issues i align with the
party so that's
5:10
why i'm a member so yeah growing up in california with immigrant
5:16
parents helped shape adrian's world view my parents chose this country because of
5:22
all it has to offer and all the opportunity and we've been treated very well by by this country
and we're very proud to be
5:29
americans um they chose it for certain reasons you know this place is the
5:34
epicenter of freedom and opportunity and it's just the greatest country in the world and i really
hate to see it maligned so often by its own citizens
5:42
my parents are both born in iran they moved here in the 80s following the
5:47
revolution in iran and it was really the only choice they had if you didn't comply with their
political and
5:53
religious standards then you basically had to leave there was nothing you could do there they
came in the 80s they went
5:59
to college here they built themselves a successful career and family i like to
6:05
refer to them as the american dream because i think that they are i get a lot of inspiration from
them and
6:11
in their journey as a fiscal conservative concerned about
6:17
the causes and impacts of climate change adrian rejects the progressive democrats
6:22

approach to address these problems the issue is then what do conservatives

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do about it a lot of conservatives have no idea what a conservative solution even is

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because no one is really proposing that conservative solution that people know about

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and it really wasn't until i found a citizen's climate lobby booth at a conservative political event and i got

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to interact and speak with conservative climate activists that i was able to understand really what i could do as a

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conservative in the climate space and i was extremely excited to see finally there was a solution that

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appealed to my values that used capitalism that shrunk the size of government all that was really

7:03

intriguing to me and my core advocacy has always been that we need to be increasing our outreach to conservatives

7:09

to show them again that there are solutions that they can get behind we just need to get out there

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and tell people about it it was through citizens climate lobby or ccl that adrian became excited about carbon fee

7:22

and dividend i was quite lucky and privileged in my introduction to ccl when i was being

7:28

welcomed into my chapter they were all so excited to have a and someone who was conservative to join also i was able to

7:35

get connected really quickly with the conservative caucus in ccl really my first interactions with ccl

7:42

were all either talking to real conservatives or everyone was very happy to have me on board

7:48

a lot of times that's not the case a lot of times conservatives would join

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ccl and just feel like they're alienated like they're not welcome or that they're

7:59

just overwhelmed by a lot of the liberal conversations happening at chapter meetings or some of the conservative

8:06

slander that happens i can see how for someone new joining who's right of center you know a lot of those comments

8:12

can make it feel like they're not in the right place or that they're doing the wrong thing by being an environmentalist

8:17

so i think that it's really really important that ccler's to our left of center make it a welcoming environment

8:23

for conservatives because for a conservative to get into climate advocacy they're stepping out of their

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comfort zone and you have to be able to accommodate that and make it so they feel comfortable or else they're just

8:35

going to leave adrian sees young republicans as an important political force in addressing

8:41

climate change among younger republicans so republicans under 40 is this really key demographic for

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climate outreach pulling from frank luntz found that 75 percent of

8:54

republicans under 40 support a carbon fee and dividend which is really major

8:59

meanwhile with older republicans it's there is still a considerable support but nowhere near 75

9:06

that 75 number is something that we're really trying to laser in on and focus on within the

9:13

conservative caucus because there's so much potential there i was a conservative fellow for the better part

9:20

of a year what i would do is go and speak to conservatives on college campuses or young republican clubs in my

9:28

area etc you know what i found was quite encouraging is that a lot of these young conservatives were basically like me

9:35

they believed in the science but they didn't know what to do with that belief in the science

9:40

we have to have a seat at the table we have to have a seat at the climate conversation and give our point of view

9:47

we have to be able to say that conservatives want to have their own plan or else if you're not at the table

9:52

you're on the menu essentially right conservative politicians are looking in the long term they want to know in 20 30

9:59

years what will be our viability in elections the ones who are driving that is younger

10:05

voters so if they want to be able to retain and recruit younger republican voters

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they need to show them that they are receptive to what these young people care about

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young people care about climate Adrian Rafizadeh is an incoming student

10:23

at the wharton school of the university of pennsylvania you can learn more about conservatives

10:29

engaged in climate work by visiting cclusa.org

10:34

slash conservatives that's cclusa.org

10:39

conservatives coming up you will learn about an

10:45

excellent book for young people who are looking for ways they can be part of the climate movement

10:51

you will hear about a powerful conversation around the topic what do we tell the children and about a new

10:58

climate curriculum for middle school students plus really great news worth

11:03

celebrating stay tuned conservative and concerned about climate change you're not alone my name is

11:11

chelsea henderson and i host republic republican.org's ecoright speaks

11:16

bringing you weekly guest interviews and stories john kasich christine todd whitman congresswoman nancy mace

11:23

meteorologist marshall shepard each week we have a conversation with an eco-right leader bringing you information opinions

11:30

personal stories and much much more download listen subscribe and join us

11:36

each week on the eco-right speaks

11:42

[Music] now it is time for the art house we have somehow have a misguided idea of what we

11:50

should be telling children i think we're protecting them if we don't give them the truth i felt like we needed to give the

11:57

children the truth not necessarily to frighten them although i don't think being frightened is altogether a bad

12:03

thing i felt like we needed to have a magazine which was giving children the truth they were scared they were they

12:08

were uncertain they were insecure and give them a way to to empower them to do something

12:16

because you know children they have such a lot of energy and they'll they're ready to apply it

12:21

that's randy hacker i write empowering books and articles for children about

12:27

the environment that's my passion i've been doing it for about 30 years back in 1989 in response to the Exxon

12:35

valdez oil spill randy decided to publish a magazine for children she

12:41

called it p3 a reference to the earth as the third planet from the sun

12:47

many years elapsed and then i started whole planet books because i felt like i wasn't getting i i

12:54

wasn't fulfilling what i considered my my mission in life

13:00

my calling and home planet books i began and now and the first book we published of

13:05

course was life on a different planet which was for teens and tweens giving
13:11
them ideas and actions that they could take ways new
13:17
ways to think about how to live on our wounded planet without wounding it
13:24
further life on a different planet a climate crisis handbook is an absolute delight
13:31
randy captures the urgency of our need to act along with the strong feelings young people are
feeling about the
13:38
ecological crisis she also provides concrete steps for action
13:44
the antidote to feeling despair is to feel that you can do something about it or feel that you can
take an action
13:51
and when people say things like oh individual actions don't count we have to get the
corporations and the
13:56
governments on board i think okay there's not it's not that that's not true but
14:01
individual actions do count because not just because they make you feel like you've
contributed to
14:09
ameliorating a situation but also because if enough individuals act then you've got a movement
and so just giving
14:16
them something that they feel empowered gives them power that's the
14:22
other thing kids are feel powerless and they also i think in these days are feeling betrayed
because they're getting
14:27
one message in writing but they're getting a whole other message in the environment
14:33
the book opens with words in large bold letters that spell out welcome to the
14:39
end of the world turn the page to see that someone edited the sign to say welcome to the
beginning
14:47
of the new world i hope that the kids who read that understand that the end of the world is
14:52
not always a terrible thing that the end of the world is the beginning of something else
15:01
i was going to call the book welcome to the end of the world and then i got a lot of objection
about that so life on a different planet i think is a better
15:08
title i want you to give the kids hope
15:13
that okay here's the end of one world but it's the establishment of a new and can be the
establishment of a new and a
15:18
better world what makes the writing come alive though is the artwork drawings that are playful
15:26

and also illustrate concepts randy wants her readers to understand when we did our magazine
p3 i hired an

15:34

art director who was the art director on this book also her name is carolyn brown she's
incredibly talented and at that

15:41

time which was 1989 1990 we were i told her we had to compete with television

15:47

and so it had to be there had to be little bites of things we didn't call them

15:52

bites at those in that in those days but still it had to be something that was so engaging where
kids could go from one

15:58

thing to another even on the same page that they didn't weren't faced with a a long long

16:04

page full of texts that they weren't going to read and i followed the same kind of

16:09

same kind of process in this book and now of course we have to compete with the internet so
it had to

16:14

even be shorter little snippets and ron barrett who is the artist perhaps you've heard of him but
did you

16:21

ever read cloudy with a chance of meatballs that was him he's a very well established and just
such a wonderful

16:29

dear dear man and such a talented illustrator we used him for several illustrations in the
magazine that's how

16:36

i got to know him and then when i did this book i called him and asked him if he would be
willing

16:41

to illustrate it for like you know for the good of the world and not charging me his usual fee
because if he's of

16:46

course quite successful and because of our long-standing relationship and because he is just a
16:52

good human being he agreed to do this and so i we worked with him to make i

16:58

don't know we must have done about 30 spot illustrations that we dropped in here and then of
course uh we created

17:05

logos and little insignious stamp like things that you could look uh things

17:11

that you could like know and through supremacy and your brain in your head and people and
little kids and children not little

17:17

children shouting through megaphones things that we could use like almost like logos

17:23

throughout the book that i hoped would establish a unity i enjoy writing humor because i i love

17:30

humor myself it was a joy to work with ron because he also he's got a wonderful

17:36

sense of humor and you can see the whimsy that he puts into his drawings this art is brilliant but then so is the

17:43

text randy speaks directly to her young readers acknowledges their strong

17:48

feelings and then gives them a way forward [Music]

17:57

you're angry you have every right to be previous generations have failed you and

18:02

continue to fail you by not acting at once to ensure a viable future for our only home planet why didn't they act

18:09

when there was more time didn't they care a lot of them did and do care about

18:14

earth and your future but a lot of them did and do care more about money they

18:19

came they care more about economics than they do about ecosystems there's a flaw in this reasoning of

18:25

course if you haven't got a healthy planet where on earth are you going to spend the money so yeah

18:32

you should be good and angry go ahead and stomp and scream into a pillow and grind your teeth and get together with

18:38

your friends and vent and tell your parents and grandparents how you feel

18:44

and then get over it there's no time for anger there's work to do and it's up to you you are inheriting a badly damaged

18:51

planet get angry get over it get to work if you think it's not fair that it's up

18:57

to you you're right but as scar famously points out in disney's lion king life's

19:02

not fair is it [Music]

19:11

it is an excellent resource and i encourage you to check it out

19:16

life on a different planet a climate crisis handbook the home planet books is the publisher homehomeplanetbooks.com

19:25

and it's also available on amazon and barnes and noble you can also purchase

19:30

it on indie books visit randy hacker's website to learn more about life on a different planet and other books she has

19:37

produced that website again is homeplanetbooks.com [Music]

19:45

and while we're talking about young people their education and what to say to them i have two other resources to

19:50

share with you in our june episode we featured good news about a new climate curriculum designed especially for

19:57

middle school classrooms this resource is now available to the public citizens climate
education presents climate
20:05
classroom this is a flexible multi-disciplinary middle school curriculum it's designed to give
20:11
students a toolkit of advocacy skills for climate solutions the 14 lessons are
20:17
grouped into three modules impacts of climate change climate solutions and
20:22
taking action it can be used online or in person with small and large group activities
20:29
the content instruction aligns with national standards in english language arts ela social studies
and next
20:36
generation science standards to see an outline of the modules and lessons access free
resources and learn
20:43
how you can get this curriculum into your local middle school visit cclusa.org
20:51
curriculum that's cclusa.org
20:56
curriculum and if you want to hear a moving conversation for parents by parents
21:03
check out the climate changed podcast one of the recent episodes is entitled
21:08
what do we tell the children ben joshua davis chats with pacific islander poet craig santos
perez about
21:16
parenting in a climate changed world how do i parent in this moment where our
21:21
kids still are living in this very tight kind of bubble created by us as parents
21:26
and i think craig talks about that really wonderfully when i ask him so how do you talk about
the climate crisis with your daughters and he admits i
21:33
don't i i know coral bleaching is happening right now i know the oceans are acidifying you
know our islands are
21:40
are more vulnerable because of the loss of our reefs but i didn't want to tell her that you know i
didn't want
21:47
to break that innocence just yet you know sometimes our parental silence you
21:52
know protects our kids gives them shelter at least for a little while longer until they do have to
confront
21:59
the harsh realities you know poetry has always been that space for me to to wrestle with with
my emotions
22:07
to reshape my anxieties and concerns into
22:12
a piece of art to to be creative amidst all this destruction around us
22:20
now it is time for our good news story well stories today we have a good news

22:25

story and a great news story our good news story comes from nate abercrombie

22:31

conservative outreach coordinator for citizens climate lobby thanks for having me on peterson the

22:36

conservative outreach department we are really excited by a few uh developing projects we are restarting the

22:42

conservative state team program where we will be organizing volunteers at a state level to engage in conservative outreach

22:49

be that lobbying candidates trying to recruit new people or publishing media through a conservative perspective

22:55

the two teams to launch most recently are texas and montana we already have a few existing teams in states such as

23:01

utah and california but we're really excited to bring others on board if this is something you're interested in having

23:07

a team in your state then please reach out to me and i'd love to help you make that happen we are also in ccl constantly checking

23:14

ourselves to keep true to our self-imposed but very important bipartisanship mandate

23:20

and in this vein i'm extremely happy to have just given a presentation to ccl's

23:25

congressional liaisons on how to best communicate with republicans and conservatives in lobbying meetings tips

23:32

on how to earn their trust how to tell effective stories and how to talk about climate policy in a way that relates to

23:38

republicans lastly i'd like to also say that we're very excited by a new project that's

23:45

been happening in utah where we are doing advertisements to try to recruit new conservatives who are interested in

23:51

environmentalism but aren't a part of ccl through online ads we've been really impressed with the results right now and

23:57

are hoping to get a lot of new volunteers through this so thanks for asking about this peterson and back to

24:02

you thank you nate for keeping us posted about successes and connecting with your fellow conservatives about climate

24:09

if you are conservative and want to learn more about ccl's conservative programs or if you want to better

24:15

understand how to connect with conservatives visit cclusa.org

24:21

conservatives that's cclusa.org conservatives you can then fill out a

24:28

contact form so you can connect directly with nate but wait there is more we have

24:34

really great news out of the usa

24:41

dana nucelli a research coordinator at citizens climate lobby tells us about a

24:46

very big piece of legislation you may have heard of the inflation reduction

24:51

act or ira passed in both houses of congress president joe biden signed it

24:57

into law earlier this month dana tells us why this bill is so good for the climate he also talks about possible

25:04

next steps we are very excited about the passage of the inflation reduction act which is the

25:10

first major climate bill ever passed by congress most importantly modeling suggests that it will close more than

25:16

half of the remaining emissions gap to meet america's paris pledge of cutting climate pollution 50 below 2005 levels

25:22

by 2030 before the inflation reduction act we were on track to cut emissions by just 27 by 2030 but now the bill puts us on a

25:30

path towards 40 cuts by 2030. we at ccl are especially excited that the bill includes a methane fee

25:37

it's the first time that the federal government has put a fee on a climate pollutants it's a bit complicated but

25:43

the methane price will only be applied to oil and gas facilities and infrastructure that are not in compliance with epa methane regulations

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which the epa is currently in the process of strengthening but the fee will play an important role in giving

25:56

oil and gas companies the financial incentive to comply with epa regulations and fix their methane leaks

26:02

the bill also includes about 40 billion dollars in tax credits and rebates for americans to electrify and weatherize

26:08

their homes for example rebates will be available to pay for up to 30 percent of home solar

26:13

panels and battery storage eight thousand dollars for electric heat pump space heaters and seventeen hundred

26:18

dollars for heat pump water heaters eight hundred forty dollars for electric and induction stoves sixteen hundred

26:24

dollars to improve home insulation and windows twenty five hundred dollars for home wiring upgrades and up to seventy five

26:30

hundred dollars for new evs and four thousand dollars for ucvs as a bonus these upgrades would not only

26:36

reduce emissions but also lower americans energy bills by hundreds of dollars per year

26:42

of course no single bill can solve the climate crisis on its own and the inflation reduction act would still leave us 10 short of america's 2030

26:50

paris commitments and even after that we still have a long way to go to reach our net zero emissions commitment by 2050 so

26:56

there's still a lot more work to be done and while the bill's methane feast it's a precedent for pricing climate

27:01

pollutants ccl will continue advocating to extend that precedent to carbon pricing but overall we're very excited that the

27:08

inflation reduction act is a big step in the right direction back over to you petersen [Music]

27:16

thanks dana you can read wonderfully in-depth analysis over at nerd corner

27:22

just visit cclusa.org nerd dash corner that's cclusa.org

27:31

nerd dash corner if you have good news you want to share

27:37

on our show email me radio citizensclimate.org that's radio

27:42

citizensclimate.org thank you for joining me for episode 75

27:48

of citizens climate radio next month we hear from climate action figures who will help us remain strong

27:56

and steady in our climate work we also premiere our newest feature the

28:01

resiliency corner i value your suggestions feedback and

28:07

ideas for this show and now we have two different ways listeners can easily

28:12

contribute to the conversations about citizens climate radio and future shows

28:17

this month we have formed the citizens climate radio advisory board the board will meet quarterly to discuss

28:24

past and future episodes they will also help shape the sound of the show while

28:29

also giving suggestions about possible topics and guests if you are interested in serving a one

28:37

year term on the advisory board or you want to know more about it email me radio citizens climate.org

28:44

that's radio citizensclimate.org and we also have a new listener survey

28:51

you can fill out it gives listeners an easy way to provide feedback about a particular episode

28:57

you will find a link in our show notes about the survey i'll also post it on our twitter and facebook accounts or

29:03

just email me and i'll send you the link radio citizensclimate.org

29:08

citizens climate radio is written and produced by me peterson toscano other technical support from ricky bradley

29:16

brett cease and kesten bozonovic social media assistants from ashley hunt more toronto plenary winchester kitty

29:22

zarkresky and steve valk moral support from madeleine parra the music on today's show comes from

29:29

epidemicsound.com visit citizensclimatelobby.org to see our show

29:35

notes and find links to our guest click on the blog drop down menu and select

29:40

climate change podcast that website again is citizensclimatelobby.org

29:46

citizens climate radio is a project of citizens climate education

29:52

[Music]