

# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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June 28, 2018

## SENT VIA FAX & U.S. MAIL

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Bldg 404  
Washington, DC 20510  
Fax: (202) 224-5922

The Honorable James Inhofe  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Building 205  
Washington, DC 20510  
Fax: (202) 228-0380

The Honorable Rand Paul  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Building 208  
Washington, DC 20510  
Fax: (202) 228-6917,

The Honorable James Lankford  
United States Senate  
Hart Senate Office Building 316  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Fax: (202) 228-1015

Re: Interference With National Science Foundation Climate Change Research

Dear Senators Cruz, Paul, Inhofe, and Lankford:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and our 33,000 members across the country to strenuously object to your recent request that the National Science Foundation (NSF) treat climate change as a “political and social debate” rather than the settled scientific fact that it is. FFRF is a national nonprofit dedicated to protecting the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and educating the public on matters relating to nontheism.

It is unfortunate that even though you have taken an oath to uphold our secular constitution, each of you has shown a willingness to govern based on your personal religious beliefs, rather than on neutral, secular facts. We are particularly concerned that your June 18 letter is a continuation of promulgating anti-science policies based on religious grounds. Your letter to the NSF is yet another example, asking that settled science be treated as a political issue because it conflicts with your religious beliefs.

Senator Inhofe once famously brought a snowball into the Senate chambers — in the middle of winter — in order to “disprove” climate change, demonstrating a fundamental misunderstanding of the differences between weather and climate. He has further cited Genesis 8:22 to justify his denial of the scientific fact of climate change, stating: “My point is, God is still up there. The arrogance of people to think that we, human beings, would be able to change what He is doing in the climate is to me outrageous.”<sup>1</sup> Senator Lankford stated in an interview that “I come from a biblical worldview in the way I address issues.”<sup>2</sup> Senator Cruz, during his campaign for president, said that “Nothing is more important in the next 18 months than that the Body of Christ rises up and that Christians stand

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan Grim, *Senator Who Cited Snowball In Climate Change Debate Cites Scripture To Back Himself Up*, HUFFINGTON POST (03-06-2015), [www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/06/jim-inhofe-genesis\\_n\\_6815270.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/06/jim-inhofe-genesis_n_6815270.html).

<sup>2</sup> Eric W. Dolan, *Oklahoma's senator-elect to use 'biblical worldview' to defeat the national debt*, (11-07-2014) [www.rawstory.com/2014/11/oklahomas-senator-elect-to-use-biblical-worldview-to-defeat-the-national-debt](http://www.rawstory.com/2014/11/oklahomas-senator-elect-to-use-biblical-worldview-to-defeat-the-national-debt).

up” and that his supporters should “strap on the full armor of God.”<sup>3</sup> Perhaps most alarmingly, Senator Paul called for a religious revival and stated that “The First Amendment says keep government out of religion. It doesn’t say keep religion out of government,”<sup>4</sup> a blatantly false statement.

Religion has no place in governmental policy-making in our secular nation. Under our godless Constitution, which separates state and church, the bible or any other “holy book” is not a legitimate justification for any action our government takes. In fact, the Supreme Court has said that if a government action lacks a secular purpose, that action is unconstitutional. *See Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971).

Today nearly one-quarter of Americans, 24%, are religiously unaffiliated, and another 7% belong to religious minorities, making nearly one-third of our population non-Christians, either practicing a minority religion or no religion at all.<sup>5</sup> Twenty-one percent of younger Americans are not only religiously unaffiliated, but identify explicitly as atheist or agnostic.<sup>6</sup> These young voters will not respond well to your attempts to stifle scientific advancement.

Regardless of whether you accept climate change, this is an issue that is better left to scientists. As the NSF is obviously well aware, human-made climate change is an objectively real fact. The NSF has also determined that Americans are undereducated on this crucial issue. Your religiously motivated attempts to confuse the issue only make this problem worse. Indeed, religious churchgoers are more likely to deny climate science,<sup>7</sup> partly because pious politicians have spread their own scientific illiteracy.

Please stick to the secular governing tasks that you were elected to perform. FFRF asks that you rescind your demands for an investigation into the grants given by the National Science Foundation, and to allow the scientific community to continue its research into this issue of global concern unimpeded. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Very truly,



Annie Laurie Gaylor  
Co-president  
Freedom From Religion Foundation

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Roberts, *Jesus Isn't Voting For Ted Cruz (Or Anyone Else)*, THE FEDERALIST (02-22-2016), [thefederalist.com/2016/02/22/jesus-isnt-voting-for-ted-cruz-or-anyone-else/](http://thefederalist.com/2016/02/22/jesus-isnt-voting-for-ted-cruz-or-anyone-else/).

<sup>4</sup> David Brody, *Only on Brody File: Video: Rand Paul at Pastors' Breakfast: Says It's Time for Revival*, CBN NEWS (03-27-2015), [www1.cbn.com/thebrodyfile/archive/2015/03/27/only-on-brody-file-video-rand-paul-says-its-time](http://www1.cbn.com/thebrodyfile/archive/2015/03/27/only-on-brody-file-video-rand-paul-says-its-time).

<sup>5</sup> Robert P. Jones & Daniel Cox, *America's Changing Religious Identity*, PUBLIC RELIGION RESEARCH INSTITUTE (Sept. 6, 2017), available at <https://www.ppri.org/research/american-religious-landscape-christian-religiously-unaffiliated/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z*, The Barna Group (Jan. 24, 2018), [www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/](http://www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/).

<sup>7</sup> Cary Funk and Becka A. Alper, *Religion and Views on Climate and Energy Issues*, PEW RESEARCH CENTER (Oct. 22, 2015), [www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/22/religion-and-views-on-climate-and-energy-issues/](http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/22/religion-and-views-on-climate-and-energy-issues/).