

**Remarks at The National Press Club of Australia
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Thanks, Chris and thanks for the invitation to speak at the Press Club today.

We're in the midst of 2 weeks of travel in your magical land.

We've been in Sydney where we enjoyed the beauty and the fun of the beach at Manly, the Circular Quay precinct, productive meetings and an opportunity to speak at the Sydney Business School.

We've been here in Canberra, meeting with Energy and Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg and the Coalition's Environment Backbench Committee, and with faith leaders.

We've hiked with the kings of the forest in Tasmania, eucalyptus regnans, while learning about their journey towards protection.

We've been thrilled by Melbourne, the blend of old and new architecture, compelling dialogues with Matthew Guy, Bruce Atkinson and other members of the Victorian Parliament. But we missed Kinky Boots, so I hope you'll invite us back for that.

We're here again in Canberra for this important opportunity to speak with you here at the National Press Club, and for that I thank you very much. Mary Anne, my best friend and wife of 35 years, joins me in thanking you for your hospitality as well.

From here, we'll be off to Townsville, the home of our dear friend Dr. Scott Heron who's been traveling with us for all of these days that The Australia Institute has filled with such wonderful things.

It's right that we should conclude our trip in Queensland for that is where my journey came to purpose in this calling to act on climate change.

If I may, I'll tell you about that calling, I'll offer some reflections on what we've seen and heard in our 2-weeks of travel here, and I'll describe ways that we might just bring the world together.

The Calling

In a miracle, I was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1992, having never run for office before. I was a conservative Republican representing a deeply conservative district in South Carolina. I didn't know anything about climate change except that Al Gore was for it—and that was enough for me. I said it was nonsense; Al Gore's imagination. I admit it was an ignorant approach, but I represented perhaps the reddest district in the reddest state in the United States.

I served for six years in the House, unsuccessfully challenged the 32-year incumbent U.S. Senator Fritz Hollings and returned to the practice of commercial real estate law in Greenville South Carolina.

In 2004 I was running again for the House. My son came to me—he was voting for the first time having just turned 18—and he said to me, “Dad, I’ll vote for you, but you’re going to clean up your act on the environment.”

It was the first of a three-step metamorphosis for me.

The second step was seeing the evidence in the ice core drillings in a 2006 trip to Antarctica. We’ll go into that if you want to.

The third step was a spiritual awakening occasioned by interactions with the aforementioned Scott Heron, a climate scientist who works with American NOAA. Snorkeling with Scott, I could tell that we shared a worldview because I could see that he was worshiping God as he showed me the wonders of the Reef. Afterwards, we had time to talk and he told me about conservation changes he was making in his life in order to love God and love people. Scott rides his bike to work, he does without air conditioning in Townsville as much as possible, he takes the stairs not the lift. I wanted to be like him, loving God and loving people. So I went home and introduced the Raise Wages, Cut Carbon Act of 2009. Note to self: do not introduce carbon tax in midst of Global Financial Crisis in the reddest district in the reddest state in America; it won’t go well for you. And it didn’t go well. I was challenged in a Republican primary in 2010 and lost in a run off. After 12 years in Congress I got 29% of the vote; the other guy got 71% of the vote. It didn’t help that only 18% of registered voters showed up to vote, meaning that 13% of the people fired me. Oh to have compulsory voting like you have here in Australia!

At that point some foundations came along and asked if I would engage with conservatives on climate change. That’s what I’ve been doing ever since with a team of 6 people at republicEn.org. We’re conservatives reaching conservatives on climate change.

We’re growing an ecoRight as a balance to the Environmental Left. We speak a different language.

Rather than asking people if they “believe” in climate change, we ask, “Can free enterprise solve climate change?”

With that profile, wasn’t it good of The Australia Institute to bring this right-winger American here to Australia! Thank you Ben Oquist, Dan Cass, Ebony Bennett, Tom Burmester and the whole team at The Australia Institute for making this happen.

What we've heard on our travels here

We’ve heard the unease that I hear in my own land. It’s the unease of maintaining standard of living in a developed nation, facing competitive pressure from the developing world. Like you, our oceans no longer protect us—not from terrorists, not from the huddled masses longing to breath free, not from the need of Solomon’s wisdom in distinguishing between those two, and certainly not from downward wage pressure brought to laborers in our lands from those willing to work for less elsewhere.

I’ve heard the uneasy resignation to things as they are in a resource-rich country, even while

those extractions, burned elsewhere, bring silent death nearer to home in the waters just off your eastern coast as much as if they had been burned here.

I saw in a pastor's eyes an awareness of his congregants' dependence on those extractive industries, a look that I saw many years ago in the eyes of my law school classmate whose Christian family grew tobacco on a Virginia farm too small to grow much else profitably. For my friend's family in Virginia, redemption came in the form of the tobacco settlement and the related buyout of tobacco allotments. Coal awaits a means of redemption and perhaps it could come through carbon capture and sequestration. In the meantime, guilt without redemption brings paralysis.

In the brand-new offices of Gilbert + Tobin overlooking Sydney Harbor, Danny Gilbert told me of growing his firm from he and Mr. Tobin to over 350 lawyers. His entrepreneurial spirit caused me to speak that night of John D. Rockefeller. If John D. were alive today, he might now be investing and inventing in solar, wind and storage rather than in oil. Visionaries, we know, are into the new and the next. They see a path from the cloudy shores of "is" to the sunny climbs of "ought."

I heard from a mandarin-growing grandma a desire for politicians to see a way from here to there. When I asked her "What are they afraid of--the big money in politics? The media that drives the activists in their parties? The party bosses?" She offered a much keener insight. She said the problem is having barely distinguishable policy platforms combined with pridefulness--the pridefulness of not being able to come humbly alongside another to say, "Right, mate, you've got a good idea there. Can we work together on it?"

No, she said. We insist on owning our own way and defining the other party as the other. From there we draw up battle lines and fight over barely-distinguishable policies. Politics becomes something of a sporting match and politicians perform as gladiators.

The intense fighting over indistinguishable policies reminds me of what's said about politics in the academy, you know—that the reason those disputes are so intense is that the consequences are so small.

I heard from a young staffer about the cynicism that the branding of the "other" creates in young people like her. Her experience sounded so contrary to another guy who had told me of his baby boom parents' commitment to education and to a belief in technological progress. Not so this young staffer. She told me that her generation doubts the ability of the political process to deliver solutions. They see the political process as a tangle of words and egos, going nowhere. But the young staffer told me of her father's words of caution. He grew up in post-war Germany, keenly aware that words can turn into ovens and that institutions and social conventions are more fragile than we think.

OK so not everything I've heard has been heavy with meaning. Some of what I've heard has just been fun. Here in Canberra I was introduced to Warren Entsch as "the most colorful MP." I've got to believe it true, having been treated to stories from him of crocodile farming, helicopters dropping teams of two onto floating reed nests to gather eggs whilst keeping the mother crocodile at bay with a wooden paddle, country music being played loudly in the nurseries to

mask alarming sounds that might cause the hatchlings to stampede and die. I've got to tell you, it just the kind of tale this American will take back from his Aussie adventure! And it will be a thrilling tale in America!

Oh that climate change had boots.

Back to the serious words of that young staffer's German father: oh that climate change had boots. Oh that it goose-stepped through a Red Square somewhere. Oh that climate change launched Sputnik satellites, capable of causing my country to own the vision of a young president intent on winning a non-weaponizing race to the moon.

But climate change doesn't wear boots, it doesn't goose-step and it doesn't launch satellites.

It comes imperceptibly. It's not a wave on the sea; it's the rise of the tide. Oddly, even as the tide rises, its markings are seen as markings of tribal identity more than scientific observations. Accepting the markings, can mean ostracism from a conservative tribe.

That's what we're out to change at republicEn.org. With the help of young conservatives who are with us, we're out to convince their parents and grandparents that action on climate is completely consistent with bedrock conservative values. It's all about accountability. It's all about fixing the economics. We'd do that through the upstream application of a revenue-neutral, border-adjustable carbon tax.

We're making progress, we're growing this conservative tribe, and we've got a way to go just yet.

In the meantime, yes, it's dangerous to lead. And yes, politicians typically follow; they rarely lead. But, you know, we ask soldiers to die on literal hills in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. Couldn't we expect a few politicians to be willing to die on figurative hills in Congress or Parliament? Pity those poor souls who come to the end of a long career, look themselves in the mirror and say, "I stood for nothing; I accomplished nothing; I just went with the flow." If you're in parliament or in Congress, and you're not willing to risk your seat, you really shouldn't be there. After all, it's one thing to lose an election; it's quite another to lose one's soul.

In my first six years, I took too few risks. I followed. When I went back for the second six years, we called it Inglis 2.0, the new and improved version.

Once in Inglis 2.0 I was at the sinks in the House Gym in Washington. A fellow Republican, a committee chairman, said to me, "I don't like you hanging with the enemy." Mystified, I racked my brain for how I might have offended. Then I remembered. The night before I had had dinner with my friend Dan Lipinski, a Democrat in Congress from Illinois. (In Inglis 1.0, I had no Democrat friends.) The chairman had walked past the night before as Dan and I stood at the street corner behind the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, apparently enjoying one another's company too much. "You mean Dan?" I asked the chairman in disbelief. Admonishment came with a slow nod of assent.

How does it happen that our countrymen become our enemies? How can a house divided stand? When climate action needs concerted action, who will go first? Who will lead? I've got some faces in mind—dynamic leaders here who seem ready to break out of the scrum.

The reality is that we're all in this together. We're doing an experiment on our common home, and we're getting measurable results. We're all sitting in the same Petri dish, having what amounts to a food fight with fist-fulls of medium.

We need to be done with that.

We need to be about the ministry of reconciliation that the Apostle Paul speaks of in Second Corinthians 5.

We need to be repairers of the breach of Isaiah 58.

We need to be the peacemakers of Matthew 5 who Jesus called the children of God.

We're not talking about mashing out in the middle of the road—the place where road kill happens. We're talking about going into the competition of ideas with our principles intact, delivering our party's deliverables in the political process and getting this urgent task done.

Dan Kahan of Yale University says that progressives are communitarian egalitarians—they believe in community and they deliver a focus on fairness. Conservatives, he says, are hierarchical individualists. They need to have an answer to the question “What did you do in the war, Daddy?” Conservatives believe in meritocracies, and they deliver solutions that actually work in this fallen world. The truth is that my country—and perhaps your country—needs and wants both; needs and wants communitarian egalitarians; needs and wants hierarchical individualists. It's somewhat akin to a child with two parents. One says, “Johnny, we love you and accept you just the way you are.” And the other says, “Johnny, we need you to do better in maths.”

The risk for all of us is that the food fight continues. I've studiously avoided giving advice to Australians on how to run your country. You know, “Here's the rational way to handle this.” Heaven knows that my own country could use a bit of rationality at the moment.

Donald Trump said that climate change was a Chinese hoax and conspiracy, but he could not possibly believe that. He was channeling the fears of fearful people—people worried about downward wage pressure, people worried about surrendering prosperity without effect with job leakage to higher-emitting places, people trying to define themselves amidst identity-stripping globalization and job-stripping automation.

There's some chance that President Trump may respond to his daughter Ivanka's interest in climate change. There's a chance that he may listen to his Secretary of State Rex Tillerson who as recently as October 19, 2016, was advocating for a revenue-neutral carbon tax in his role as CEO of Exxon Mobil.

I realize that this shift for Donald Trump may sound improbable. But if it seems unlikely, how

likely is it that a crocodile farmer would become a champion of marriage equality? How likely was it that Richard Nixon would open up China? How likely was it that Bill Clinton would sign the welfare reform bill that we conservatives sent to him after vetoing it twice?

Reality will force Donald Trump to shift, to amend the chants at his rallies. Coal miners' jobs aren't coming back. President Trump may repeal President Obama's Clean Power Plan, but he will find it harder to repeal the price of natural gas in America.

My hope is that the bush fire set by the Tea Party will burn itself out in the Oval Office—and perhaps it had to make it all the way there in order to burn itself out. As it does, we will discover that pitchforks and torches are not good building tools.

If America decides to act, there are ramifications for Australia. Again, I don't presume to give advice on how to run your country. Rather, I'd simply point to both a policy risk and a technology risk for fossil fuels here and around the world.

The policy risk is that America imposes a price on carbon dioxide and collects that tax on entry of goods into the United States. That border adjustment would be challenged by China in the World Trade Organization, but we think it would be upheld based on precedents in the chemical industry. If upheld, China would have the same price on carbon dioxide within 24 hours (because they have an amazing way of reaching consensus). Then the whole world would follow suit, and coal would then be in a very different position.

The technology risk is that solar efficiencies improve, that wind becomes more and more effectively managed on the grid and that battery storage becomes more and more affordable. Those processes are underway, and they pose challenges for fossil fuels.

The good news is that climate change isn't just about doom and gloom. For innovative people, it's promise and opportunity. Incumbent fuels will give way to challenger fuels. Horses gave way to cars. Bag phones gave way to smart phones.

Let me close with this. I had the opportunity to be in Iraq five times and Afghanistan four times, seeing the most impressive people in the world. Not the Iraqis. Not the Afghans. But the Coalition partners serving there. Americans, Aussies, Brits and others, serving together.

On my first trip to Iraq, General Stalder, the American Marine general who led the Second Battle of Fallujah, gave us a briefing on that incredible operation. He came to his favorite slide in the presentation—a photo that you've probably seen of two American soldiers behind a concrete wall. One has his helmet on a stick, lifting it above the concrete wall. The other is lying prone with his rifle trained through a hole in the bottom of the wall. From the photo it's clear what's happening. As the one lifts his helmet above the wall, the enemy reveals its position by firing at the decoy, whereupon the other American soldier takes them out.

General Stalder put his laser pointer on the stack of sticks up against the wall and said, "I can assure you members of Congress that it's a sophisticated but affordable weapons system."

And then he said something very serious, "That's the kind of creativity you get from people who

grew up in freedom.”

Well, Aussies have grown up in freedom. Americans have grown up in freedom. And we are peoples generally impatient for the future—a good attribute in this case because delay is not our friend. The longer we delay the fewer options we have and that is a loss of freedom. Together we can lead the world to a free enterprise solution to climate change. Yes, industries will be lost, but industries will be created. The future will be ours as we light up the world with more energy, more mobility and more freedom. That’s our calling. That’s what I’ve seen and heard here in your beautiful country. That’s what we can accomplish together even if climate change doesn’t have boots on it.