

CLIMATE REFUGEES

October 2016

THE SITUATION

 **The Earth's climate is changing at a rate that has exceeded most scientific forecasts.** Some families and communities living in low-lying areas have been forced to leave their homes in search of a new beginning.

HOW'D WE GET TO THIS POINT?

The science is indisputable – climate change is real, and it is affecting people around the world. Human activities are causing glaciers to melt and sea levels to rise, putting water and food resources at risk. **Congress must deal with climate change issues in a comprehensive manner now.**

IS THIS HAPPENING IN THE U.S.?

Over the last 10 years, the **Isle de Jean Charles community in Louisiana has lost two-thirds of its residents to dislocation (LA Times).** On Washington's Olympic Peninsula, the Quinault Indian Nation relies on a 2,000-foot-long sea wall for protection until it can complete its move uphill. **In Alaska, climate change flooding and shoreline erosion already affect more than 180 villages,** 31 of which are in "imminent" danger of becoming uninhabitable.

WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

Tens of millions of people will face hunger, disease, water shortages and dangerous journeys as they seek refuge if action is not taken to avert the humanitarian impacts of climate change. The poorest and most vulnerable – including women, children, the elderly and disabled – will be hit hardest. In 2014, 19.3 million people worldwide were forced to flee floods, storms, and other severe weather events. The time for action is now.

WHAT'S CONGRESS DOING?

A Democratic forum found that while it is essential to mitigate the sources of carbon, it will not help citizens on the front lines of climate change right now. In order to alleviate the most extreme consequences of a shifting climate, equal attention must be given to helping communities adapt to a rapidly changing homeland. This means creating a legal and financial structure that can adequately respond to communities in need.

 Democrats believe to truly make a lasting climate change legacy, among other things, **the issue of climate relocation must be taken seriously.** This means creating a legal and financial structure that can adequately respond to communities in need.

 Following the second straight year that earned the troubling distinction of hottest year on record, **Republicans continue to deny climate science, destroy solutions like clean energy, and abdicate responsibility to address climate refugees.**

HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

Congress needs to tackle climate change at its root cause: pollution from burning fossil fuels. But even as it pushes for pollution limits and a conversion to clean energy, there is an urgent need to help communities adapt to a changing climate. This includes water-saving strategies, flood controls, and other solutions to climate-related risks.

THE FACTS

~13 million

Americans could become climate refugees by 2100 if the worst sea-level rise comes to pass (LiveScience)

100% of House Republicans voted against affirming climate change is real – two times, in 2015 and 2016