

Testimony of Nick Huey
Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis
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My name is Nick Huey. I'm a father of two, an advertiser, a Republican, and a Mormon Christian. I'm not your typical climate change activist. The closest I've ever been to vegetarian is swapping a beef sandwich for a chicken one. And that was hard. It's not that I hate the planet. I just don't know why I'd bring a squirt gun to a forest fire. I'd rather call the fire department. That's why I'm here. We may be from different parties, but we're from the same planet. So thanks for your time, fellow Earthians.

When I went to BYU, I had a baby. Then I had another baby. It's kind of a Mormon hobby. But with each new child I held in my arms, my concern for their future grew. I wanted to protect my children, and there was no way I could do that. It had to be a planetary effort. So I started trying to figure out how to bridge the gap between the Far Left, and the Far Right so we could all work together on climate change. The answer I found wasn't a new policy. It was a new idea called the Far Middle, a radical place where the Left and Right respect and learn from each others' viewpoints, publicly.

In 2017, I wanted to prove the Far Middle could exist. They call the rivalry between BYU and the Utes "the Holy War". Like the Far Left and Far Right, we hate each other. What if we could use our bitter rivalry to show Democrats and Republicans how to get along when it comes to climate?

On the first week of Fall classes, BYU students arrived at the U with over 3,000 purple flowers to place on their car windshields. Why purple? Because the Utes' school color is red, and ours is blue. Purple is right in the middle. With each flower, we left a video inviting Utes to team up with us on climate. A simple, easy execution with unexpected results.

The day of, emails from students began pouring in. We were broadcast on Utah's biggest news channels, garnering over 200,000 impressions on our first day of operations. But we weren't done. One week later 50 volunteers hiked the side of a mountain to shine a purple Y the size of a football field inside BYU stadium during the nationally-aired rivalry football game. At this point, sustainability coordinators from other Universities began to reach out. We were featured in local talk shows and radio interviews. We got ultra-conservative Utah to start buzzing about climate change on every news channel. Why? Because we approached the problem from the Far Middle. The radical part of this campaign wasn't that we were angry and yelling. It was that we weren't.

Climate change is not the sickness. It's a symptom. It's a physical manifestation of America's deeper infirmity: polarized, partisan, pride. The problem isn't a lack of bipartisan options. It's a lack of bipartisanship itself. If we can strip away partisan pride and greed, the symptoms (e.g. climate change, lack of health care, poverty, the national deficit, etc) will go away faster than any of us could reasonably believe possible.

The Far Middle is a place of humility, reason, and respect. It's the same kind of humility that inspires a group of Democratic Senators to invite three Young Republicans to come offer their perspectives on the climate crisis. In the Far Middle, a liberal atheist and a conservative Mormon

Christian can sit down and have a real conversation about climate, health care, guns, and gays, and leave with new ideas. In the Far Middle, we treasure diversity of thought every bit as much as we treasure diversity of skin color, even when those thoughts are in direct conflict with our own.

I was asked to come here to share the way forward. Not right. Not left. Forward.

The answer is to become **radical** Far-Middle-ists. A collection of those who maintain one party affiliation, while publicly embracing the other. Create a space where it's safe to concede, to work together, to respect, and you will resonate with your constituents and the rest of America on a level you didn't know was possible.

So what can you do to create this Far Middle space when the Far Left and the Far Right dominate the headlines? The answer lies in big, safe, smart public gestures that in today's political climate, are much more disruptive than another angry tweet. If there's one ad tip I can give you, it's that when everyone zigs, you zag. Could you imagine the headlines today, if instead of passing a resolution to condemn someone's rhetoric, you introduced a resolution to apologize for your own as a gesture of goodwill? Or if a Republican and Democrat went to rally in each other's respective districts, because they saw in each other integrity and humanity? What would such simple, radical actions do to the dialogue in our country?

If you want move the needle, you need to be as radically agreeable as the Far Left and Far Right are disagreeable. I offer my services as an advertiser to anyone in this room free of charge,

regardless of party, as long as you'll use them to heal the gap that has turned our climate into a political weapon. You each have unique opportunities to bring the Far Middle back into mainstream America. I would love to work with you to figure out what those are.

If a handful of students from conservative Utah can get on every single news channel with a message about climate change, there's no reason a handful of Senators from our nation's highest level of government can't do the same on a national scale.

I imagine you all would like to see more of your Republican colleagues here. I would too. But for that to happen, someone has to publicly let go of pride in a big way. Someone has to soften. It's no longer enough to reach across the aisle in private conversations. Now is the time for radical collaboration. To let love outweigh fear. The American public will not only permit such leadership. We'll break out the fireworks. The Far Middle has been muted by two warring parties, but we are still America's majority. Give us our voice back. Only then can the Far Middle become the strong and decisive force in Washington it once was.

Create the Far Middle, and climate change will take care of itself. Thank you.