Dan and I have lamented the failure of the current national "debate" (if it be called that) to raise the issue of climate change, the greatest environmental threat that humanity has ever faced. But why is that? One can assign the blame to many institutions, and I have, but one might have been overlooked: the electoral college.

Both the Romney and Obama campaigns are criss-crossing swing states in an effort to extract that last little bit of commitment from uncommitted low-information voters. But what if they did not have to go to Ohio, Wisconsin, Florida, Iowa, Colorado, Virginia, and Nevada? Obama would go to California and New York and try to run up the totals there; Romney would head to his Confederate base and try to run up the score there. That could create a different dynamic.

Of course, it is far from sure that low-information swing voters in California and New York would care about climate. But it is certainly highly plausible that they would care about it a lot more than low-information swing voters in the states mentioned above. (Yes, I know: Florida voters *should* care about climate because they are the ones who will be underwater sooner. We're not playing "shoulds").

This is a testable hypothesis, I think: even deep Blue states are polled about issues, and it would be interesting to see what, say, the Field Poll says about low-information voters in California 10% to the left of median (aka the ones whom a Democratic candidate would try to scoop up to get a higher national popular vote count).

Obviously, the converse also figures to be true: a similarly-situated group of Texas voters might be even *more* hostile to doing something about climate than the median GOP position. But given how insane the Republican Party has gotten on this issue, it is hard to imagine it becoming more extreme on climate. You can't get a temperature lower than absolute zero, which appears to be the Republican Party's goal for the relevance of scientific knowledge to policy discussion.

In any event, here's Schoolhouse Rock's discussion of the matter. Not as good as some of the old classic songs, but then, the Electoral College isn't as good as the Nineteenth Amendment, either.

[youtube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyIFqf3XH24]