



Unexpected Tree Hugger!

...even if they didn't intend to.

The Republican War on Science has morphed into a more general war on knowledge. [As Dan has pointed out previously](#), the GOP has now declared war on social science funding, and particularly on political science.

Last night, [the Senate accepted the amendment of Senator Tom Coburn \(R - Olduvai Gorge\) forbidding the National Science Foundation from funding political science research](#). This provision, which will undoubtedly be accepted by the House, could mean the end to important data sources such as the American National Election Survey. Ignorance Is Strength, I suppose. But the Coburn Amendment does have an important exception:

The amendment allows the government to pay for political science research only if the director of the National Science Foundation certifies the research as "promoting national security or the economic interests of the United States."

Well, that's terrific for climate research! Climate change might be the greatest national security threat that the United States faces. The increases in resource scarcity, conflicts, and disasters brought about by climate change [pose a major challenge to American national security policy](#). And climate also directly impacts the economic interests of the United States: we will have to find some way to de-carbonize the economy while maintaining economic growth, and the potential for clean energy lies at the heart of American economic interests.

So to the extent that there is money for political science research, climate policy researchers figure to get a higher percentage of it than before. The NSF will no longer be able to find out anything concerning elections, or democratic institutions, or poverty, or local government, or any of those other irrelevant things. But it can fund climate policy research up to the skies (so to speak).

Thank you, Senator Coburn!