**Candidates Reveal Climate Change as a
Leading Issue in the Run-up to 2018 Congressional Elections**

NEW YORK— Recent science policy statements by 2018 congressional candidates show that politicians may be more concerned about climate change than ever before. Leading into the 2018 U.S. congressional election, candidates from across the country have passionately responded to questions from the non-profit organization Science Debate, and proposed policy plans to combat climate change head-on, should they be elected.

Candidates who have responded thus far to the Science Debate 2018 Q&A see climate change as the top scientific, social, and economic danger to society. "Climate change is on a course to end human existence," said Richard Watkins of North Carolina's 4th District. "There is no issue more pressing than protecting the earth and the resources that keep us alive."

The urgent need for sound science policy informs Science Debate's decision to modify their standard 20-question Presidential Election Q&A (released every 4 years) so as to invite all House, Senate and Gubernatorial candidates to participate as well.

"We depend on the people in Congress to act on our behalf and represent us when it comes to these big policy issues," said Science Debate's executive director, Sheril Kirshenbaum. "Issues like climate change have a big impact on us in terms of economics, national security, and beyond – so I am very pleased to see these candidates seriously planning and discussing their proposed climate policies now."

Tom Taylor, who is running for Utah's 4th congressional District said that "Climate change is the greatest threat humanity has yet faced." Elizabeth Moro, a candidate for Pennsylvania's 7th House District said, "Throughout the world, weather disasters are causing untold destruction" and that humanity was "approaching the point of no return."

This collective concern has resulted in detailed policy proposals from many candidate respondents. Tom Taylor's plans include implementing a carbon tax in his state of Utah. Joseph Kopser of Texas 21st District details his policy plans as including a clean energy strategy and third-party financing on energy efficiency upgrades. Pennsylvanian Elizabeth Moro's plans for climate policy focused on "strengthening environmental regulations domestically and internationally, renewing our commitment to the Paris Climate Accord, and rapid expansion of clean and renewable energy."

Matthew Chapman, Science Debate's president, said the 2018 Q&A is necessary because of continuing attacks on science. "We want legislators on both sides of the aisle to arrive in office, ready to act on evidence-based science policies that have been fully explained to voters."

With the exception of Chris Richardson of the Green Party, all candidates who have responded to the Science Debate 2018 Q&A thus far are Democrats. No Republican candidates have commented yet on any of the 10 questions covering issues from scientific integrity in policymaking to cyber security to health, medicine, and the environment.

”Science is inherently related to every significant challenge of the 21st century, yet in 2017, scientific experts have been increasingly ignored, dismissed and silenced by policymakers,” wrote Kirshenbaum for *Scientific American*. “Until we insist that candidates address science and technology policy when campaigning, we cannot expect them to do so once they're in office.”

It was a shared opinion amongst candidates that action needs to be taken at the federal level in order to protect communities when it comes to matters of human caused climate instability.

“I will fight for policies and regulations to address the threat of climate change while there is still time to do so,” said Elizabeth Moro of Pennsylvania.

“I am fighting for a two-pronged approach to push back on this crisis,” said Tom Taylor, Utah's congressional candidate. He proposed implementing a tax on carbon to discourage its use as a fuel source; and using the revenue subsidize green energy solutions.

Joseph Kopser of Texas, also a U.S. veteran, said, “climate change is a proven threat multiplier… during my time in Iraq, I saw firsthand the impact of climate-forced migration and dependence on foreign oil.”

Texan Democrat Jeffrey Payne is the first Gubernatorial candidate to submit his answers to the non-profit. Science Debate offers free access to their 2018 Q&A online, and urges visitors to contact their candidates and ask them to respond to the questionnaire. Congressional candidates can also contact and submit their answers to Science Debate directly via answers@sciencedebate.com. Once candidates have responded, their answers are then accessible to the public on an interactive map at ScienceDebate.org.

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CONTACT: Sheril Kirshenbaum, Sheril@sciencedebate.org, (347)-771-8495

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