



The Congressional Anti-Parks Caucus in Power

By Jenny Rowland and Kyle Cornish

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In February 2017, just days into the Trump administration, then-Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) introduced a bill to sell off 3.3 million acres of national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other national public lands in the West.¹ The blowback from the public was swift: Angry phone calls and a protest of nearly 1,000 sportsmen and women; outdoor-business owners; and public lands supporters forced Chaffetz to reverse course.² Within a week of introducing the bill, which would have sold off an area the size of Connecticut to private interests, Chaffetz posted a picture on Instagram, reassuring his constituents that he loves public lands and that the bill “dies tomorrow.”³

Chaffetz’s miscalculation demonstrates that the election of President Donald Trump did not reflect a shift in how Americans feel about their public lands. They remain fiercely proud of their outdoor heritage and fiercely protective of passing on these lands, waters, and wildlife to future generations.

Tellingly, public opinion research conducted immediately following the election found that 91 percent of voters across the political spectrum—including 87 percent of Trump voters—felt that it is important for the federal government to protect and maintain national parks, public lands, and natural places.⁴

The actions of President Trump and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke have not reflected these values. From unilaterally removing protections for millions of acres of important habitats across the West to granting extractive industries control as to where, how, and when they develop public lands, the Trump administration is launching attacks on national parks and public lands on a scope and scale never seen before in this country.

The most visible of these attacks is the Trump administration’s review of national monuments. The administration is poised to take unprecedented and illegal action to gut protections for sites that honor the nation’s cultural, historical, and outdoor heritage.⁵ This is in spite of the fact that for more than 100 years, presidents from both sides of the aisle have used their authority under the Antiquities Act to protect important and at-risk cultural sites and landscapes, such as the Grand Canyon, Bears Ears, and Stonewall national

monuments.⁶ The administration's review has been met by strong opposition from the public. Nearly 3 million comments have poured into the Interior Department—an estimated 98 percent of which are in support of national monuments.⁷

Unfortunately, the administration's attacks appear to have emboldened some members of Congress, whose long-term goals involve selling out parks and public lands to the highest bidder at the expense of the American people. With the cover and support of an aggressively anti-conservation administration, these newly energized politicians are working hard to advance their unpopular agenda. From endorsing bills that open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling to sponsoring legislation that blocks a president's authority to protect public lands, this faction of Congress is ignoring public opinion in order to push extreme and detrimental policies.

This issue brief traces the congressional attacks against parks and public lands to a group of 19 members of Congress, which the Center of American Progress has dubbed the "2017 congressional anti-parks caucus." (see text box)

This brief builds on a 2016 CAP report that defined this far-right caucus, which has done serious damage to America's bipartisan history of protecting public lands.⁸ Unsurprisingly, members of Congress named in the report—and now some of their former staff—have been tapped for key positions in the Trump administration. Former Montana Rep. Ryan Zinke (R), who is now charged with overseeing the vast majority of America's public lands and waters as interior secretary, was a supporting member of the 2016 anti-parks caucus. And at least five powerful political slots at the White House and the Interior Department have been filled by former staffers to the Utah congressional delegation, who make up more than 20 percent of the members on this list and have been the source of many of the attacks against national monuments.⁹

This brief also examines how the members pushing this anti-parks agenda are situated in the far-right of the Republican Party and are pushing a model of extremism and anti-federalism that does not reflect the views of the public nor, often, those of their constituents. Protecting parks, monuments, and public lands is still a bipartisan issue, and these attacks are extreme.

Defining the anti-parks caucus

This brief uses the following criteria—based on statements, appearances, and the legislative record during the 2017 congressional session—to determine membership in the anti-parks caucus:

- Sponsorship or introduction of anti-parks legislation, including efforts to weaken or dismantle the Antiquities Act or to seize and sell public lands; use of the Congressional Review Act to overturn rules that protect taxpayers and public health; attempts to exclude the public from engaging in decision-making on land management; attacks on protections of specific public lands, including the Arctic Refuge; and other attempts to limit publicly available land for recreation or habitat conservation
- The number of anti-parks bills that the member co-sponsored
- Written or verbal statements that support anti-parks legislation or values, including statements to the press, official letters, floor statements, and tweets
- Attendance at the April signing of Trump’s executive order on national monuments

Members of the anti-parks caucus have either introduced bad Antiquities Act or land seizure legislation and sponsored or co-sponsored at least three other anti-parks bills, or they have co-sponsored upward of seven anti-parks bills in addition to making at least one anti-parks statement. Attacks on national monuments and the seizure of public lands could have serious long-term consequences, affecting access to and protection of public lands for future generations. Therefore, support of these efforts carries extra weight in this brief’s determination.

Members of the caucus

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT)

As chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Rep. Bishop drives the agenda on parks, public lands, and natural resource issues for the U.S. House of Representatives. His committee has taken up a number of bills that threaten bedrock conservation laws such as the Antiquities Act and the Endangered Species Act; that aim to transfer public lands out of public ownership; and that sell out public lands to the oil and gas industry.

TABLE 1

Members of the anti-parks caucus and an inventory of their attacks against America's parks and public lands

Member of U.S. Congress	State and district	Introduced Antiquities Act legislation	Introduced land seizure legislation	Introduced other anti-parks legislation	Number of co-sponsored anti-parks bills	Anti-parks statement	Attendance at monuments executive order signing
Rep. Mark Amodei	NV-2	✓			4	✓	
Rep. Rob Bishop	UT-1	✓	✓	✓	3	✓	✓
Rep. Liz Cheney	WY-at large		✓	✓	5	✓	
Rep. Kevin Cramer	ND-at large				9	✓	
Sen. Mike Crapo	ID	✓			3	✓	
Sen. Jeff Flake	AZ		✓		3	✓	
Rep. Louie Gohmert	TX-1			✓	5	✓	
Rep. Paul Gosar	AZ-4		✓	✓	11	✓	
Sen. Orrin Hatch	UT				8	✓	✓
Sen. Dean Heller	NV	✓			3	✓	
Sen. Jim Inhofe	OK		✓		4	✓	
Rep. Raul Labrador	ID-1	✓			4	✓	
Rep. Doug LaMalfa	CA-1				8	✓	
Sen. Mike Lee	UT	✓	✓	✓	6	✓	✓
Sen. Lisa Murkowski	AK	✓		✓	3	✓	✓
Rep. Steve Pearce	NM-2				7	✓	
Rep. Pete Sessions	TX-32				9	✓	
Rep. Chris Stewart	UT-2				7	✓	✓
Rep. Don Young	AK-at large	✓		✓	5	✓	

Sources: Author's analysis of legislation and statements from members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate official websites and the Library of Congress' Congress.gov database. For more information on these sources, see endnotes.

At the beginning of the year, Bishop authored a piece of the House rules package that valued all public lands at \$0.¹⁰ The provision, which passed the House in January, made it easier for the government to sell or give away public lands at the expense of the American taxpayer.¹¹ Bishop also recently introduced a bill aimed at selling out public lands and oceans for oil and gas development. The bill includes both a land seizure provision and language that would prevent the designation of future marine national monuments across the country.¹²

Notably, Bishop has been a driving force behind the Trump administration's attacks on national monuments. He was one of the first members of Congress to ask the administration to get rid of Bears Ears National Monument, and he has been a longtime enemy of the Antiquities Act.¹³ In a recent interview with C-SPAN, he stated, "You know that I don't like the Antiquities Act and, I've said before, I'd be happy if it just disappeared."¹⁴ Bishop has sponsored legislation for one of the most egregious attacks against the

Antiquities Act: the National Monument Creation and Protection Act.¹⁵ This misleadingly named bill would place arbitrary size limits on national monuments and create other hurdles that would make new monument designations nearly impossible. The legislation also includes explicit provisions that would allow future presidents to get rid of national monuments.¹⁶

Bishop's support of anti-parks measures runs the gamut. Just this year, he has co-sponsored bills to eliminate rules that protect streams near coal mining operations, that encourage the capture of wasted methane, and that give local communities a voice in land management decisions.¹⁷ He has also vocally supported opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.¹⁸

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)

Sen. Murkowski is the chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and sets the direction for many of the topics of debate in this sphere. She has voiced strong support for President Trump's executive order on national monuments and even attended the signing ceremony.¹⁹ She also introduced the misleadingly named Improved National Monument Designation Process Act, legislation that would require any new national monument designations to receive approval from both congressional and state legislatures.²⁰ If passed, the bill would severely limit the ability to protect new national monuments.

In addition to her attacks on monuments, Murkowski has continually worked to open up Alaska's protected lands for oil development. Most recently, the senator has led the charge to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling, tacking on a bill to the budget reconciliation process, which allows measures to pass with a lower threshold of votes.²¹ Previously, she sponsored legislation that would have allowed for development on the refuge's fragile coastal plain and for a road to be built directly through Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.²² She has also co-sponsored three other anti-parks bills.

Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV)

In addition to signing on to a letter in support of Zinke's monuments review, Rep. Amodei joined Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV) to introduce the Nevada Land Sovereignty Act, which would require congressional approval for any new national monument in Nevada.²³ Given that Congress is slow to get even must-pass legislation through, this would make protecting new monuments in the state nearly impossible. During the current session, Amodei has already co-sponsored two land seizure bills as well as two other anti-parks bills.²⁴

Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY)

When President Trump signed the executive order on monuments, Rep. Cheney released a statement calling the Antiquities Act “a vehicle to seize land.”²⁵ So far, this session, Cheney has sponsored three anti-parks bills, including one that would make it more difficult for communities to be involved in Bureau of Land Management planning decisions and another that would lift the moratorium placed on federal coal leasing.²⁶ She has co-sponsored five additional anti-parks bills, including two pieces of land seizure legislation.²⁷

Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-ND)

Rep. Cramer has been prolific in his support of anti-parks legislation, co-sponsoring nine anti-parks bills during this session alone. These bills range from land seizure to rollbacks of common-sense public lands protections put in place by the Obama administration; one of these rollbacks would reinstate a loophole allowing coal companies to dodge royalty payments owed to U.S. taxpayers.²⁸ Cramer has also signed on to a letter in support of eliminating certain national monuments and attended the signing of a secretarial order to roll back a number of protections, including one that set safety standards for oil and gas drilling inside national parks.²⁹

Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)

In addition to signing the congressional letter in support of President Trump’s executive order on national monuments, Sen. Crapo introduced S. 132, a bill that would put extreme restrictions on the designation of new national monuments.³⁰ He has also co-sponsored a similar Antiquities Act bill, a land seizure bill, and a bill to reverse a rule protecting water from nearby coal mining operations.³¹

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ)

During the current session, Sen. Flake has sponsored two land seizure bills. The first would blatantly sell off an undisclosed number of national public lands in Mohave County.³² The other would allow states, counties, and private companies to lay claim to thousands of miles of highways and other so-called rights of way within public lands, thereby fragmenting the landscape for wildlife and recreationists.³³ Furthermore, Flake has co-sponsored three other anti-parks bills and has signed on to a congressional letter in support of the monuments review.

Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX)

Rep. Gohmert introduced the land seizure bill H.R. 928, which would give states sole authority over regulating and permitting oil and gas development in their states, even on national public lands.³⁴ In his endorsement of the ONSHORE Act, Gohmert expressed

a similar sentiment, stressing the need for “getting these decisions back to state and local levels.” He continued, “nowhere do you have more participation than the local level.”³⁵ However, these provisions would not encourage more participation. Instead, they would virtually ensure that drilling would become the dominant use of public lands, silencing the voices of those who use the lands for hunting, fishing, grazing, or outdoor recreation. Gohmert has co-sponsored five additional anti-parks bills this session.

Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ)

Rep. Gosar has introduced a bill that would sell off federal lands as well as legislation that would make it easier to drill in national parks.³⁶ Furthermore, Gosar has co-sponsored nearly every anti-parks bill he could get his hands on—totaling 11, so far, this session.³⁷ The bills cover most attacks against parks and public lands; they include land seizure bills as well as bills that would strip the Antiquities Act and overturn common-sense energy and public health measures.

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT)

When he decided to completely gut protections for Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments, President Trump reportedly told Sen. Hatch, “I’m approving the Bears Ears recommendation for you, Orrin.”³⁸ Hatch even received the pen Trump used to sign the executive order on monuments and was personally congratulated by the president for pushing so hard on this issue.³⁹

Hatch has been one of the biggest adversaries of national monuments in Congress and is particularly resistant to the Native American-led designation of Bears Ears as a national monument. Addressing the administration’s monument review, Hatch remarked, “The Indians, they don’t fully understand that a lot of the things that they currently take for granted on those lands, they won’t be able to do if it’s made clearly into monument or a wilderness.”⁴⁰ In addition to being highly insensitive, Hatch’s statement is also factually inaccurate. It is explicitly written in the Bears Ears monument proclamation that traditional tribal uses should continue as they had.⁴¹

Additionally, Hatch has co-sponsored eight pieces of anti-parks legislation, including attempts to eliminate monuments, weaken protections of endangered species, and sell off public lands.⁴²

Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV)

In addition to co-sponsoring three anti-parks bills, Sen. Heller joined Rep. Amodei to introduce the Nevada Land Sovereignty Act, which would require congressional approval for any newly designated or expanded national monuments in Nevada.⁴³ Given the sluggish pace of congressional action, the bill would make it nearly impossible to protect new national monuments in the state.

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK)

Sen. Inhofe—who is perhaps best known for being a climate science denier—introduced two land seizure bills, S. 334 and S. 335.⁴⁴ The bills would give states the authority both to recklessly pursue energy development on public lands by waiving environmental laws such as the Endangered Species Act and to transfer control over permitting, leasing, and regulation. Furthermore, in January alone, Inhofe co-sponsored four anti-parks bills that worked to undermine the Antiquities Act and threaten other national conservation efforts.⁴⁵

Rep. Raul Labrador (R-ID)

Rep. Labrador sponsored H.R. 2284, which would put extreme restrictions on the creation of national monuments and would require state and congressional approval for all new designations.⁴⁶ In a similar vein, Labrador took to Facebook to applaud President Trump’s decision to review and potentially eliminate more than two dozen national monuments; he even included several links that referred to national monuments as “Massive Land Grabs.”⁴⁷ Labrador has co-sponsored four other anti-parks bills in the past year.⁴⁸

Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA)

This year, Rep. LaMalfa has already co-sponsored eight anti-parks bills.⁴⁹ Three of these are directed at dismantling the Antiquities Act. In a statement, he said that he “fully support[s] the review of these monument designations.”⁵⁰ In addition to vehemently supporting the president’s review, LaMalfa has specifically targeted his district’s Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument—a pristine area in the Pacific Northwest set aside for the preservation of biodiversity.⁵¹

Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT)

Along with the six anti-parks bills he has co-sponsored this year, Sen. Lee has introduced legislation that would prevent species with ranges so small they can only be found in one state from being protected under the Endangered Species Act.⁵² Lee also sponsored four different anti-parks amendments to the fiscal year 2018 budget; these amendments would block use of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, sell off public lands, and further impede the establishment of new national monuments.⁵³

President Trump personally called Lee—along with a handful of other legislators—to confirm that he would indeed gut protections for Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments.⁵⁴

Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM)

On November 9, Rep. Pearce signed on to a letter to President Trump applauding the administration's monument review and requesting "the shrinking or rescission of a majority of the monuments under review." In the letter, the members call the national monuments under review "affronts to our very mode of governance."⁵⁵ Rep. Pearce has an extensive track record of co-sponsoring anti-parks legislation, having signed on to seven bills this year.⁵⁶

Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX)

Rep. Sessions has co-sponsored nine pieces of anti-parks legislation, so far, this year.⁵⁷ Some of the most egregious of these include H.R. 3333, a federal land sell-off bill; S. 33, a bill requiring gubernatorial review of national monument designations; and H.R. 2936, a bill that would make it easier to clear-cut forests by waiving substantive environmental review measures.⁵⁸ Another bill that he co-sponsored sought to overturn a rule preventing hunters from using unfair baiting practices on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands in Alaska.⁵⁹ At the time, he called the rule, which prevents bear cubs from being shot in their dens, "oppressive," maintaining that "it is crucial that we overturn this restrictive rule."⁶⁰

Rep. Chris Stewart (R-UT)

Rep. Stewart is a staunch opponent of the Antiquities Act and a fervent supporter of shrinking the size of Bears Ears National Monument. He referred to President Trump's monument review as a "long overdue examination of Antiquities Act abuses."⁶¹ Stewart attended the signing of the executive order calling for a review of designations under the Antiquities Act and has co-sponsored seven anti-parks bills this year.⁶²

Rep. Don Young (R-AK)

Rep. Young has sponsored six anti-parks bills and co-sponsored five others this year.⁶³ In response to Secretary Zinke's national monuments review, Young said, "For too long, we've seen the crippling impacts associated with the monument designation process ... The days of Presidents unilaterally closing off thousands of acres of land or water must change."⁶⁴ Young's statement ignores the fact that national monuments are some of the best places for outdoor recreation and can be significant sources of revenue. For example, the Grand Canyon, which was originally protected as a national monument, brought in \$648.2 million to surrounding communities last year.⁶⁵ Young also sponsored two bills that would nearly eliminate the president's ability to create national monuments that protect ocean waters and marine areas.⁶⁶

Congressional supporting cast

While these 19 members are the leaders of the anti-parks movement in Congress, other federal lawmakers have also assisted in advancing this unpopular agenda. Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY), Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA), Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT), Rep. Evan Jenkins (R-WV), Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Rep. Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-American Samoa), Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK), and Rep. Scott Tipton (R-CO) have all acted as the supporting cast in these attacks against America's parks and public lands.

The anti-parks caucus is an extreme faction of the Republican Party

The positions of the anti-parks caucus members vary greatly from those of the public, fellow members of Congress, and even other congressional Republicans. For example, members such as Sen. Gardner (R-CO) and Sen. Burr (R-NC) have largely shunned extreme legislation and have occasionally worked across the aisle to support parks and public lands.

A closer examination of the characteristics and approaches of members of the anti-parks caucus can help to explain why these lawmakers are comfortable taking such widely unpopular positions. The common characteristics include an association with far-right factions of the Republican party, such as the Tea Party, Freedom Caucus, and House Liberty Caucus; a noncompetitive district; and a wider-than-average margin by which President Trump won their district or state. Every member of the anti-parks caucus—with the exception of Sen. Heller, who is perhaps the GOP member most vulnerable to a primary challenge from the right—falls into at least one of these three categories.⁶⁷

TABLE 2

All but one member of the anti-parks caucus is associated with at least one of the far-right categories listed below

Association with category is marked in red

Member of U.S. Congress	State and district	Tea party, House Freedom Caucus, or House Liberty Caucus affiliation	Non-competitive state or district*	Above average Trump vote percentage
Rep. Mark Amodei	NV-2		R+7	52.0%
Rep. Rob Bishop	UT-1	✓	R+26	49.7%
Rep. Liz Cheney	WY-at large		R+25	70.1%
Rep. Kevin Cramer	ND-at large		R+16	64.1%
Sen. Mike Crapo	ID		R+19	59.2%
Sen. Jeff Flake	AZ	✓	R+5	49.5%
Rep. Louie Gohmert	TX-1	✓	R+25	72.2%
Rep. Paul Gosar	AZ-4	✓	R+21	67.7%
Sen. Orrin Hatch	UT		R+20	45.9%
Sen. Dean Heller	NV		D+1	45.5%
Sen. Jim Inhofe	OK		R+20	65.3%
Rep. Raul Labrador	ID-1	✓	R+21	63.7%
Rep. Doug LaMalfa	CA-1		R+11	56.2%
Sen. Mike Lee	UT	✓	R+20	45.9%
Sen. Lisa Murkowski	AK		R+9	52.9%
Rep. Steve Pearce	NM-2	✓	R+6	50.1%
Rep. Pete Sessions	TX-32	✓	R+5	46.6%
Rep. Chris Stewart	UT-2		R+16	46.0%
Rep. Don Young	AK-at large		R+9	52.8%
Average		42%	R+14.7	55.6%

* Competitiveness is measured using the Cook PVI, which measures how strongly a district or state leans toward voting Democrat or Republican. For example, a rating of D+3 means the district performed three points more Democratic than the national average. A PVI score above D or R+10 was defined as non-competitive.

Sources: Republican Liberty Caucus, "Elected Officials," available at <http://rlc.org/elected-officials> (last accessed November 2017); Drew Desilver, "What is the House Freedom Caucus, and who's in it?," Pew Research Center, October 20, 2015, available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/10/20/house-freedom-caucus-what-is-it-and-whos-in-it/>; Shannon Travis, "Who is the Tea Part Caucus in the House?," CNN, July 29, 2011, available at <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/07/29/who-is-the-tea-party-caucus-in-the-house/>; Elyse Siegel, "Tea Party Caucus Takes Shape in Senate," HuffPost, May 25, 2011, available at https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/16/tea-party-caucus-takes-sh_n_809758.html; David Wasserman and Ally Flinn, "Introducing the 2017 Cook Political Report Partisan Voter Index," The Cook Political Report, April 7, 2017, available at <http://cookpolitical.com/introducing-2017-cook-political-report-partisan-voter-index>; Miles Coleman, "2016 State PVI Changes," Decision Desk HQ, December 16, 2016, available at <https://decisiondeskhq.com/news/2016-state-pvi-changes/>; Politico, "2016 Presidential Election Results," December 13, 2016, available at <https://www.politico.com/mapdata-2016/2016-election/results/map/president/>; David Nir, "Daily Kos Elections' presidential results by congressional district for the 2016 and 2012 elections," Daily Kos, November 19, 2012, available at <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2012/11/19/1163009-Daily-Kos-Elections-presidential-results-by-congressional-district-for-the-2012-2008-elections>.

Tea Party, Liberty, or Freedom caucus affiliation

The Tea Party, Liberty, and Freedom caucuses comprise the far-right conservative wing of the Republican Party. While the power of each of these factions has ebbed and flowed over the past eight or so years, evidence has shown that these members' beliefs are not shared by the majority of Republicans.⁶⁸

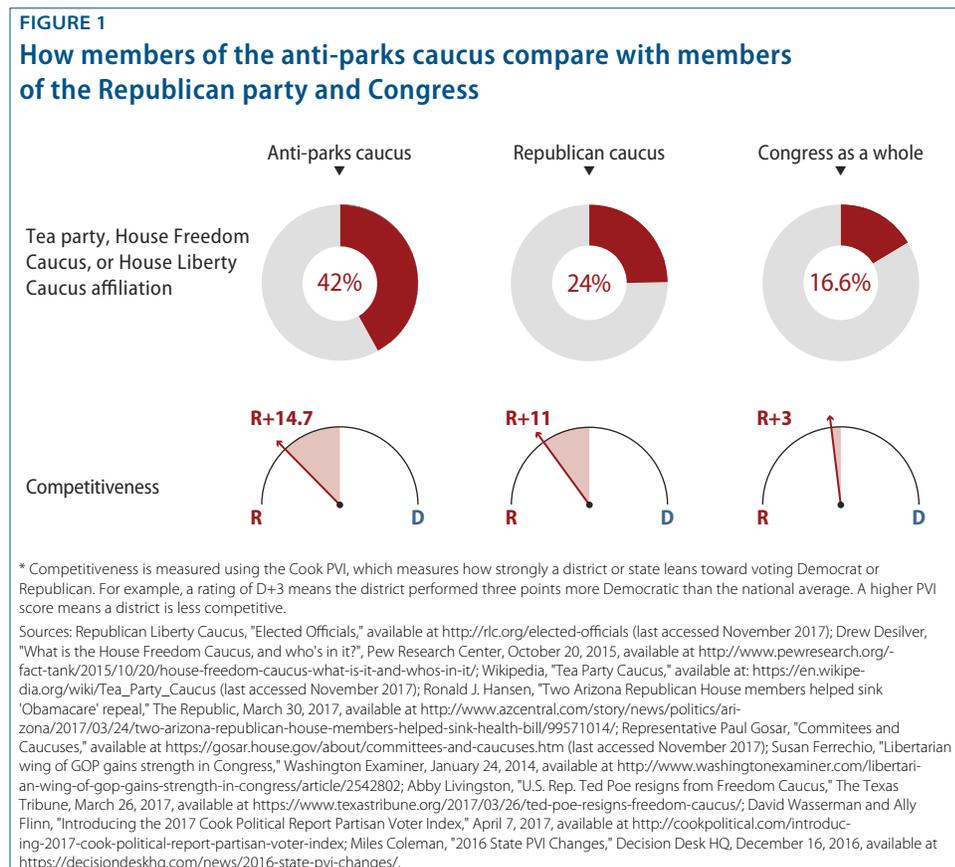
An analysis of membership in these three caucuses found that 8 of the 19 anti-parks caucus members—or 42 percent—are affiliated with one or more of these groups, while only 24 percent of the entire Republican caucus is affiliated with these groups.

Noncompetitive districts

Members of Congress who were elected in an uncompetitive district—where election outcomes are practically a forgone conclusion—are more likely to hold anti-parks views. According to Josh Huder of the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University, “with safer (more partisan concentrated) districts, there is little incentive, or reward, for members to reach across the aisle.”⁶⁹ Therefore, members from less competitive districts are often more partisan and less responsive to their constituents’ views.

District and state competitiveness are commonly measured using the Cook Partisan Voting Index (PVI), which measures how strongly a district or state leans Democrat or Republican. For example, a rating of D+3 means that the district performed three points more Democratic than the national average. A higher PVI score means a district is less competitive.

According to CAP’s analysis, the average anti-parks caucus member’s state or congressional district has a rating of R+14.7, which suggests that seats are very likely to remain Republican. Only one anti-parks caucus member, Sen. Heller, represents a Democratic-leaning state—Nevada, D+1—and no other members are in a state or district rated less than R+5.



Trump voters

In the 2016 election, then-candidate Donald Trump won the Electoral College but lost the popular vote. This indicates that states and districts in which he won the popular vote are likely more right-leaning than average. This may encourage their politicians to lean into Trump-style extremism in order to court voters.

Nationally, Trump won only 46.1 percent of the popular vote.⁷⁰ But in the states and districts of anti-parks caucus members, he won nearly 56 percent of the vote. Trump received less than the national popular vote percentage in just 3 of the 18 districts and states represented.

Conclusion

With so few checks on the White House and Congress, these attacks pose existential threats to our public lands, national parks, wildlife refuges, monuments, and other natural areas. It is critical to help shed light on the unofficial yet powerful anti-parks caucus as it works with the Trump administration to push an agenda that is unpopular with the majority of Americans. These lawmakers are operating within the right-most fringe of the Republican Party and are fighting against the future of our national parks, monuments, and public lands.

Jenny Rowland is the research and advocacy manager for Public Lands at the Center for American Progress. Kyle Cornish is an intern for the Public Lands team at the Center.

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Endnotes

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