

# Communities First

## REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP FROM CAUCUSES OF COLOR



### Introduction

Communities across the country care deeply about their health and the environment, whether it be parents of children who suffer from asthma, native communities whose history and culture are deeply bound to places like Bears Ears National Monument and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, or every resident of Flint, Michigan, who will forever be affected by lead poisoning. That's why the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) has published a *National Environmental Scorecard* every Congress since 1970, to hold all members of Congress accountable for their environmental voting record.

By identifying the most important votes that affect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the lands we live and depend on, LCV's *Scorecard* meticulously shows which members

of Congress are indeed environmental champions and which members simply do the bidding of polluters. At a time when President Trump and his Cabinet unflinchingly prioritize polluters' profits over our health and safety, we need to know who in Congress will stand up to this administration and fight for the wellbeing of all our communities.

This special analysis, which is based on the key votes included in the 2017 Scorecard, does just that—it highlights the leadership of members of Congress who are active in caucuses representing people of color, including the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC); collectively these caucuses are often known as the Tri-Caucus.

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These are some of the leaders who are standing up for the places that tell our histories, reflect our cultures and define our future. These are some of the leaders we can count on.

### Overview

In a year when the weather-related impacts of climate change have left painful scars on so many of our communities—hurricanes tore through Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico, and wildfires raged throughout California and much of the West—now is not a time to exacerbate the climate crisis. Nevertheless, President

#### 2017 AVERAGE SCORES

Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus	<b>98%</b>
Congressional Black Caucus	<b>90%</b>
Congressional Hispanic Caucus	<b>91%</b>



LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS



Trump and his Cabinet quickly became the most anti-environmental administration in history, and the Republican-led Congress did very little, if anything, to hold the administration accountable for selling our future to wealthy corporate polluters.

In fact, the Republican-led Congress also pushed a polluter-friendly agenda with far-reaching implications for environmental justice and public health: they passed bills and amendments that gave huge tax breaks to billionaires and corporations, opened drilling in the pristine and sacred Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, weakened lifesaving pollution protections for the air we breathe and the water we drink, and gutted our system of regulatory safeguards.

Despite these ceaseless attacks, environmental allies stood up time and again for our air, water, wildlife and lands, and with great frequency, members of the Tri-Caucus led efforts to safeguard our environment and health. This leadership was evident both inside and outside the Capitol complex: environmental champions of color introduced environmental justice and conservation legislation, authored congressional letters, led environmental roundtables, wrote opinion pieces and spoke out in committee to protect our air, water, wildlife and lands. Unlike the anti-environment majorities controlling Congress, these champions of color challenged the polluter-friendly agenda that too often sacrifices the wellbeing of low-income communities and communities of color.

When it came time to vote, Tri-Caucus members were with the environment, with more than 30 members earning a perfect score of 100 percent. However, what really stands out are the Tri-Caucus leaders who introduced

*“The stakes for ensuring that all communities have equitable access to environmental protections and environmental justice have never been higher and the threats have never been greater. We must do more than ever to work with our allies in Congress—and mobilize the public—to fight the Trump administration and the extreme Congressional leadership who want to roll back our bedrock environmental laws.”*

pro-environment amendments, which required all of their colleagues to vote on whether to support the health and safety of our communities. In fact, two of the four pro-environment amendments that appeared in the Scorecard were introduced by members of color. Congressman Keith Ellison (MN-05) offered an amendment to H.R. 3354, the Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018, to prevent a provision that would have needlessly delayed implementation of stronger ozone—or smog—standards until 2025. These standards would help clean up the air for millions of people currently living in areas with unsafe air quality.

Congressman Raúl Grijalva (AZ-03) offered an amendment to the same spending bill, which would have restored funding to the EPA’s

Environmental Justice Program, a program the Trump administration proposed to eliminate in their FY18 Budget Request. This critical and successful program helps low-income and communities of color overcome the disproportionate impacts of exposure to hazardous pollution and environmental contamination, burdens that have been historically placed on these communities.

The environmental leadership of the Tri-Caucus members was certainly not limited to floor action—many members asserted their influence by forming task forces or leading committees and caucuses. Last May, Congressman Donald McEachin (VA-04), Congresswoman Nanette Barragán (CA-44) and Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (WA-07) launched the United for Climate and Environmental Justice Task Force, which aims to address the disproportionate environmental impact on low-income families, communities of color and other marginalized groups.

In addition, many of our Tri-Caucus champions hold leadership roles where defending our air, water, land, and wildlife are top priorities. Those include Congressman Grijalva, the top Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources; Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30), the top Democrat on the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; and Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-06), a co-chair of the House’s Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC).

And other members of color demonstrated their environmental leadership by listening to the needs of communities and authoring important legislative solutions. Senator Cory Booker (NJ) worked with New Jersey Environmental

Justice Alliance (NJEJA), Clean Water Action, Ironbound Community Corporation and several environmental justice activists to introduce The Environmental Justice Act of 2017 (S.1996). Booker drew on his experience as Newark’s mayor and visited other states, including North Carolina, Louisiana and Alabama, to inform this legislation, which would be a major step forward in helping ensure the federal government is addressing environment justice issues and protecting communities of color, low-income communities and indigenous communities from disproportionate air and water pollution. Congressman Raul Ruiz (CA-36) introduced a companion bill in the House (H.R. 4114), where he relied upon his firsthand experience as an emergency room doctor to craft this legislation. Congressman Ruben Gallego (AZ-07) continues to be a leader in the fight to protect the parks and public lands that belong to all of us. In 2017, he introduced a bill to protect the Bears Ears National Monument from an unprecedented attempt by Interior Secretary Zinke and the Trump administration to undermine this important national monument. The bill would protect the original acreage identified by the tribes as housing culturally sensitive artifacts and sacred lands.

The stakes for ensuring that all communities have equitable access to environmental protections and environmental justice have never been higher and the threats have never been greater. We must do more than ever to work with our allies in Congress—and mobilize the public—to fight the Trump administration and the extreme Congressional leadership who want to roll back our bedrock environmental laws. As the 2017 Scorecard and this special report display, many congressional members of color are leading the fight

against the most anti-environmental administration in our nation’s history. Our organizations pledge to combat the climate crisis and to fight to defend communities’ right to healthy air, clean water, and protected lands.

## Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus Scores

The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus formed in 1994 and is made up of Democrats in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House. On the 2017 *National Environmental Scorecard*, executive members earned an average score of 98 percent, and all of the members who were scored earned 91 percent or higher.



REP. TED LIEU

**“The Trump administration is taking every chance they get to roll back safeguards for America’s oceans.**

**#ProtectOurCoast”**

@REPTEDLIEU

4 JAN 2018

	DISTRICT	PARTY	2017 SCORE
Senator Kamala Harris	CA	D	100
Senator Mazie Hirono	HI	D	100
Senator Brian Schatz	HI	D	100
Senator Tammy Duckworth	IL	D	100
Rep. Doris Matsui	CA-06	D	100
Rep. Ami Bera	CA-07	D	100
Rep. Barbara Lee	CA-13	D	100
Rep. Ro Khanna*	CA-17	D	97
Rep. Judy Chu	CA-27	D	100
Rep. Ted Lieu*	CA-33	D	91
Rep. Jimmy Gomez	CA-34	D	95
Rep. Mark Takano	CA-41	D	100
Rep. Stephanie Murphy	FL-07	D	91
Rep. Colleen Hanabusa	HI-01	D	97
Rep. Tulsi Gabbard	HI-02	D	91
Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi	IL-08	D	100
Rep. Grace Meng	NY-06	D	100
Rep. Al Green	TX-09	D	100
Rep. Bobby Scott	VA-03	D	100
Rep. Pramila Jayapal*	WA-07	D	97

**Representative Lieu** missed roll call vote 319 due to a family matter and roll call votes 352 and 368 due to Air Force Reserve Duty.

**Representative Jayapal** entered a statement into the Congressional Record noting how she would have voted on roll call vote 643, which would have been scored as pro-environment.

**Representative Khanna** entered a statement into the Congressional Record noting how he would have voted on roll call vote 352, which would have been scored as pro-environment.

## Congressional Black Caucus Scores

The Congressional Black Caucus formed in 1971 and is made up of Democrats in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House and one Republican in the U.S. House. On the 2017 *National Environmental Scorecard*, members earned an average score of 90 percent, and 34 members earned scores higher than 90 percent.



REP. E. B. JOHNSON

*“The effects of climate change have cost billions per year. We need global alliances like the #ParisAgreement to fight climate change and enhance climate resiliency.”*

@REPEBJ  
12 DEC 2017



	DISTRICT	PARTY	2017 SCORE
Senator Kamala Harris	CA	D	100
Senator Cory Booker	NJ	D	100
Rep. Terri Sewell	AL-07	D	91
Rep. Barbara Lee	CA-13	D	100
Rep. Karen Bass	CA-37	D	97
Rep. Maxine Waters	CA-43	D	94
Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester	DE-AL	D	97
Rep. Al Lawson*	FL-05	D	69
Rep. Val Demings	FL-10	D	97
Rep. Alcee Hastings	FL-20	D	94
Rep. Frederica Wilson*	FL-24	D	86
Rep. Sanford Bishop	GA-02	D	69
Rep. Hank Johnson	GA-04	D	97
Rep. John Lewis	GA-05	D	100
Rep. David Scott	GA-13	D	89
Rep. Bobby Rush	IL-01	D	69
Rep. Robin Kelly	IL-02	D	100
Rep. Danny Davis	IL-07	D	94
Rep. André Carson	IN-07	D	91
Rep. Cedric Richmond	LA-02	D	86
Rep. Anthony Brown	MD-04	D	100
Rep. Elijah Cummings	MD-07	D	63
Rep. John Conyers*	MI-13	D	94
Rep. Brenda Lawrence	MI-14	D	100
Rep. Keith Ellison	MN-05	D	100
Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay	MO-01	D	94



 SEN. CORY BOOKER

*“Our #publiclands belong to ALL of us. We must work together to protect them for future generations to enjoy.”*

@CORYBOOKER  
10 JULY 2017

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver*	MO-05	D	89
Rep. Bennie Thompson	MS-02	D	94
Rep. G.K. Butterfield	NC-01	D	91
Rep. Alma Adams	NC-12	D	100
Rep. Donald Payne, Jr.	NJ-10	D	97
Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman	NJ-12	D	89
Rep. Gregory Meeks	NY-05	D	89
Rep. Hakeem Jeffries*	NY-08	D	97
Rep. Yvette Clarke	NY-09	D	97
Rep. Joyce Beatty	OH-03	D	100
Rep. Marcia Fudge	OH-11	D	100
Rep. Dwight Evans	PA-02	D	94
Rep. James Clyburn	SC-06	D	83
Rep. Al Green	TX-09	D	100
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee	TX-18	D	94
Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson*	TX-30	D	94
Rep. Marc Veasey	TX-33	D	91
Rep. Mia Love	UT-04	R	3
Rep. Bobby Scott	VA-03	D	100
Rep. A. Donald McEachin*	VA-04	D	89
Rep. Gwen Moore	WI-04	D	100

**Representative Lawson** missed multiple votes in September while the state was preparing for and dealing with the devastating impacts of Hurricane Irma.

**Representative Wilson** entered a statement into the Congressional Record noting how she would have voted on roll call vote 83, which would have been scored as pro-environment.

**Representative Conyers** resigned on December 5, 2017.

**Representative Cleaver** entered statements into the Congressional Record noting how he would have voted on roll call votes 45, 352, 368, and 528, which would have been scored as pro-environment.

**Representative Jeffries** entered a statement into the Congressional Record noting how he would have voted on roll call vote 588, which would have been scored as pro-environment.

**Representative Johnson** entered a statement into the Congressional Record noting how she would have voted on roll call vote 620, which would have been scored as pro-environment.

**Representative McEachin** missed a number of votes due to a medical procedure.

## Congressional Hispanic Caucus Scores

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus formed in 1976 and is made up of Democrats in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House. On the 2017 *National Environmental Scorecard*, members earned an average score of 91 percent, and twenty-two members earned scores higher than 90 percent.



REP. NANETTE D. BARRAGÁN

*“Air pollution continues to be a huge challenge, particularly in communities of color. Clean air & water is a human right. #Environmental Justice”*

@REPBARRAGAN  
8 FEB 2018

**Representative Gallego** entered a statement into the Congressional Record noting how he would have voted on roll call votes 8 and 23, which would have been scored as pro-environment.

**Senator Menendez** entered statements into the Congressional Record noting how he would have voted on roll call votes 259 and 268, which would have been scored as pro-environment.

**Representative Cárdenas** missed a number of votes due to a family matter and the California Primary Election.

**Representative Costa** missed a number of votes due to recovery from a medical procedure.

**Representative Gomez** was sworn in on July 11, 2017.

**Representative Napolitano** entered statements into the Congressional Record noting how she would have voted on every scored vote she missed, which all would have been scored as pro-environment.

**Representative Roybal-Allard** entered statements into the Congressional Record noting how she would have voted on roll call votes 528 and 620, which would have been scored as pro-environment.



PHOTO: MATT ROTH FOR LCV

	DISTRICT	PARTY	2017 SCORE
Senator Catherine Cortez Masto	NV	D	89
Senator Robert Menendez	NJ	D	89
Rep. Raúl Grijalva	AZ-03	D	100
Rep. Ruben Gallego*	AZ-07	D	91
Rep. Jim Costa*	CA-16	D	31
Rep. Salud Carbajal	CA-24	D	100
Rep. Tony Cárdenas*	CA-29	D	97
Rep. Pete Aguilar	CA-31	D	100
Rep. Grace Napolitano*	CA-32	D	77
Rep. Jimmy Gomez*	CA-34	D	95
Rep. Norma Torres	CA-35	D	97
Rep. Raul Ruiz	CA-36	D	100
Rep. Linda Sánchez	CA-38	D	100
Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard*	CA-40	D	94
Rep. Nanette Barragán	CA-44	D	97
Rep. J. Luis Correa	CA-46	D	91
Rep. Juan Vargas	CA-51	D	100
Rep. Darren Soto	FL-09	D	100
Rep. Luis Gutiérrez	IL-04	D	97
Rep. Albio Sires	NJ-08	D	97
Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham	NM-01	D	100
Rep. Ben Ray Luján	NM-03	D	100
Rep. Ruben Kihuen	NV-04	D	97
Rep. Nydia Velázquez	NY-07	D	100
Rep. Adriano Espaillat	NY-13	D	97
Rep. Jose Serrano	NY-15	D	97
Rep. Vicente Gonzalez	TX-15	D	71
Rep. Joaquin Castro	TX-20	D	100
Rep. Henry Cuellar	TX-28	D	34
Rep. Filemon Vela	TX-34	D	80