

Call With Rep. Kilmer

On March 21, 2019, a group of local activists spoke with Rep Kilmer via conference call in his office conference room. Notes by Mike Benefiel.

We went around the table and gave background and ask question on our specific issues. Below I have provided some notes from his responses to our questions. I have omitted the backgrounds.

Green New Deal

The resolution in the Senate: [S.Res 59](#). The resolution in the House: [H. Res 109](#).

> Shelley Jaye spoke to the Sunrise Movement and the Green New Deal and provided the following notes:

I asked Rep. Kilmer if he was familiar with the Sunrise Movement, which I was at the meeting representing. He said that he was, to which I made sure that he knew that there were five Sunrise groups (hubs) now in WA with two in his district in Tacoma and on the Olympic Peninsula.

The only truly bold piece of legislation currently in Congress is [HR 763: The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019](#). I asked whether he would consider signing on to that bill as a co-sponsor. My final question was whether he would take the No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge.

Rep. Kilmer's response began with acknowledging that Climate Change is real and humans are the major contributors to the acceleration. He knows that the changing climate is causing real issues in his district. He indicated that 4 of the 11 tribes in WA-6 are having to move to higher ground; we have experienced forest fires in the rainforest; our ocean chemistry causing shellfish harvesters to leave the area; and, that Climate Change is a "threat multiplier" globally. He commended the work of the young people that have finally forced climate change into the daily discussion on Capitol Hill.

He mentioned a number of bills in Congress that he is co-sponsoring that are specific and tangible pieces of legislation and address, among other things, aspects of climate change. Some of these include [HR978 - the Clean and Efficient Cars Act](#); [HR855 - Strengthening The Resiliency of Our Nation on the Ground Act](#); [H.R.228 - Increase Transportation Alternatives Investment Act of 2019](#). As of 3/24/19 he was not a cosponsor on any of them. It may be that the webpages are not updated yet. Holly is following up with his staff.

He took an action to provide us with a complete list.

He did agree to take an in-depth look at HR763 - The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019, because he does believe that a price on carbon is the way to go.

To my question on the [No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge](#), he said that he has worked on and supported many pieces of legislation on Campaign Finance Reform which, if followed through, would negate the need for any such pledges. He did say that he supports eliminating tax breaks for the fossil fuel

industry.

My honest take-away from the meeting was that there is a slight chance that he may sign on to the Green New Deal if we keep up the pressure; I wouldn't give up hope, but only if we can have direct conversation with him (face to face or phone). I believe that there is a good chance that he will sign on to HR763, again, if we keep up the pressure.

Single Payer Health Care

> I (Mike Benefiel) spoke to the issue of Single Payer Health Care

After background, my question was "will you support the Medicare For All Act"?

After some background from him whereas he stated that our current system is better than it was, but that providers in his district were not happy with Medicare and Medicaid because they don't get paid the full, requested rates which I took to mean that we need to keep those paying for private insurance paying more to make it up to the providers for their losses due to Medicare and Medicaid.

He said he is exploring possible alternative systems other than Medicare For All.

I am not happy with this answer. He didn't acknowledge that the current system is horrible for maybe one hundred million people. He didn't address that other countries have functioning systems that are greatly better than ours that we could duplicate. He implied, in my opinion, that there might be an acceptable alternative to single payer where the insurance companies can still participate.

He didn't answer specifically answer why he isn't supporting the Medicare For All Act that's been introduced in Congress.

> Holly Brewer's notes follow:

Nukes

There are five approaches to making nukes safer:

1/ Phase them out and make no new ones.

2/ Ask senators to cosponsor and support [S. 401](#) and Rep.s to cosponsor and support [HR. 1086](#).

These bills are the Hold the LYNE (Low Yield Nuclear Explosive) Act. Currently, Congress has authorized the production of lower level nukes to deter other countries. If they are fired, the opponent cannot tell how powerful the weapons are and they could retaliate in terrifying ways.

These missiles are called the W76-2.

3/ We could store the nuclear weapons separately from the launch pads / submarines so that if we were threatened, there would be a time delay.

4/ We could require Congressional approval before launching nukes. That is a lot of power for a president to have.

5/ First use bill – restricting a president to authorize the launch of a nuke without us first being attacked by one. In the House: [HR 669](#). In the Senate: [S. 200](#)

Rep Kilmer expressed concern about these nuke issues but didn't commit to any actions.

Solutionary Rail

Is an important part of the solution to our carbon-fueled energy dependence. It is important that our members of Congress implement it: <https://www.solutionaryrail.org/>

Rep Kilmer expressed interest and will look into this solution. He mentioned that he is supporting upgrading the nation's infrastructure.

Citizen's United

HJR 48 eliminates the Citizen's United judgement that says that corporations are the same as people. He has cosponsored HJR 48 now - yay!

Questions / want to join us next time? Email Holly holly@hollybrewer.com