

## **Is it Okay for Democrats to Politicize Hurricane Ian?**

Anonymous

Department of English, Anoka Ramsey Community College

ENGL 1121: College Writing and Critical Reading

Prof. Chris McCarthy

October 12, 2022

## **Is it Okay for Democrats to Politicize Hurricane Ian?**

Imagine you're sitting in your house living your life in Florida, then you hear about another hurricane happening soon. Why again? Is everyone I know going to be okay? Can I get away from it? Is it going to destroy my house? How can we make this happen less often or be less severe? In an article from Fox News, Thomas Catenacci (2022) writes about how he believes that it is wrong for Democrats to politicize what's happening in Florida with hurricane Ian. Catenacci (2022) also brings up the point that experts can't link that climate change caused a specific natural disaster, and that major hurricanes in recent years have not been on the rise. I disagree with Catenacci (2022) because climate change is a factor that is affecting hurricanes and one of the Democratic party's main goals is to reduce climate change, that although climate change can't be linked as the cause of a single natural disaster, it is a factor that affects the severity of those disasters, and that there have been more hurricanes happening in recent year.

Catenacci's (2022) titles to his news story is "Democrats blaming Hurricane Ian on climate change trying to 'politicize the pain and suffering' of Floridians, experts say". I don't believe that they are trying to politicize the pain and suffering; however, they are trying to spread awareness that climate change does influence hurricanes and we need to start voting to lower carbon emissions. One of the Democrats' main goals in Democrats.org (2020) is "Combating the climate crisis and pursuing environmental justice.", because this is one of the main goals for Democrats it makes sense that they would politicize the hurricane. This is proved further by a climate and energy package that is meant to help cut climate change pollution in half by 2030. Nadja Popovich and Brad Plumer (2022) state that "If signed into law, the bill's hefty tax incentives for low-carbon technologies could enable the country to cut its net greenhouse gas emissions by roughly 40 percent below 2005 levels by the end of this decade.". A FAQ from The

National Conservatory (2021) says that while there is no scientific consensus on a deadline to decrease carbon emissions, we must do it before there are severe impacts to the planet. So, While I may understand that Catenacci (2022) could be upset that the Democratic leadership is using a tragedy such as hurricane Ian to bolster their votes, I can't agree that it is wrong of the Democrats to attempt to spread awareness of the effects of climate change to try and get voters to vote to help change our carbon emissions. The only way to make these changes is through politics, otherwise we may be unable to reverse the impacts of climate change.

Catenacci (2022) quotes from Steve Milloy, a senior legal fellow at the Energy and Environmental Legal Institute, saying "There's nothing to back up what they're saying is," and "There were about 16 major hurricanes between 1916 and 1965 but only six since 1965. So, clearly major hurricanes happen with lower levels of carbon dioxide. That doesn't add up for them.". So, I looked at statistics from Colorado State University (2021) and not only was the information wrong, but, if you look at the number of major hurricanes from 1995 to 2021, there is a clear increase in the number of major hurricanes that happened in the north Atlantic Ocean. This shows that Catenacci (2022) was either cherry picking from what Milloy said and there is information that makes the quote make sense, or Milloy was cherry picking data and gave Catenacci (2022) incorrect information. I will give Catenacci (2022) that there isn't enough scientific proof that hurricanes are increasing due to climate change due to an overview of Global Warming and Hurricanes authored by a senior scientist at NOAA/GFDL Tom Knutson (2022) that "it is premature to conclude with high confidence that human-caused increases in greenhouse gases have caused a change in past Atlantic basin hurricane activity that is outside the range of natural variability.", but also states that "...Climate warming will cause Atlantic

hurricanes in the coming century to have higher rainfall rates than present-day hurricanes, and that they will be more intense.”.

Another point that Knutson (2022) makes that Catenacci (2022) didn’t add to his story was that hurricanes are projected to increase in severity leading to more destruction. If you look at how severe hurricanes have been in recent years, due to climate change these storms are likely to get even worse. The senior climate scientist Illisa Ocko and climate scientist Tianyi Sun (2022) of the Environmental Defense Fund state that due to the warmer oceans it increases the wind power and makes the rainfall increase which causes worse flooding. Ocko and sun (2022) also state that the rising sea levels caused storm surges which have caused both hurricane Katrina and hurricane Sandy to do more damage than what they would have been if not for the rising sea levels. Ocko and Sun (2022) say “Researchers suggest that the most damaging U.S. hurricanes are three times more frequent than 100 years ago” which would mean that hurricanes have been getting more and more severe, and this can be linked to climate change. These same points are made by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (2022). This makes it clearer that even though we can’t link hurricane activity increases scientifically, we can link that the severity of recent hurricane activities have been influenced by human carbon emissions and that we should be trying to take steps to lower our emissions.

So, I believe that Democrats were trying to inform people that climate change is an issue and that it is important to vote to make our climate change crisis better. Catenacci (2022) misses that point and only pays attention to how democrats were wrong to use people’s pain and suffering; Catenacci (2022) tries to back his claim with valid criticisms but doesn’t consider the other reasons human caused climate change can affect hurricanes. I hope we can make a world where we don’t have to worry about so much with hurricanes and or other natural disasters that

are affected by climate change and make those natural disasters less damaging, but we need to as a society come together and figure out realistic ways to curb our climate crisis. So, next time you're out voting please take into consideration how we can help our environment and bring a better tomorrow.

## Reference

Catenacci, T. (2022, September 30). Democrats Blaming Climate Change for Hurricane Ian at Odds with Science, Experts Say. *Fox News*. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/democrats-blaming-climate-change-hurricane-ian-odds-science-experts-say>

Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. (2022, September 22). Hurricanes and climate change. *Center for Climate and Energy Solutions*. <https://www.c2es.org/content/hurricanes-and-climate-change/>

Colorado State University. (2021). North Atlantic Ocean Statistics compared with climatology. *Colorado State University*.

<http://tropical.atmos.colostate.edu/Realtime/index.php?arch&loc=northatlantic>

Democrats.org. (2020, August 29). Party Platform. <https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/party-platform/>

Knutson, T. (2022, October 3). Global warming and Hurricanes. *GFDL*.  
<https://www.gfdl.noaa.gov/global-warming-and-hurricanes/>

Ocko, I., & Sun, T. (2022) How climate change makes hurricanes more destructive. *Environmental Defense Fund*. <https://www.edf.org/climate/how-climate-change-makes-hurricanes-more-destructive#:~:text=Warmer%20oceans%20fuel%20storms&text=Evaporation%20intensifies%20as%20temperatures%20rise,when%20the%20storms%20hit%20land>

Popovich, N., & Plumer, B. (2022, August 2). How the New Climate Bill Would Reduce Emissions. *New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/08/02/climate/manchin-deal-emissions-cuts.html>

The Nature Conservancy. Climate change: Frequently asked questions. The Nature Conservancy. (2021, October 8). <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/tackle-climate-change/climate-change-stories/climate-change-frequently-asked-questions/#:~:text=Every%20watt%20that%20we%20can,emissions%20no%20later%20than%202050.>