

***Concerns over BP's support for US political candidates with poor human rights records, who use racist rhetoric, and who oppose climate action***

To:

- Liz Rogers, Vice President Environment, Social Responsibility and HSSE Compliance, BP
- Elizabeth Wild, Social Responsibility Director, BP
- Nili Safavi, Human Rights Expert, BP
- Corporate reporting team, BP

18 August 2016

Dear Liz, Elizabeth and Nili,

Greetings from New Mexico, where I have been living since my retirement after working in London for many years as Director of Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, and before that at Amnesty International headquarters. I should emphasize that I am writing this in my personal capacity – I no longer have any connection with the Resource Centre or Amnesty, and my former colleagues are not yet aware that I am writing to you.

I want to let you know how disappointed I was to discover that BP's Political Action Committee is once again helping to fund the campaign of Republican U.S. Congressman Mike Coffman of Colorado, and is continuing to donate to Republican U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma who was re-elected to a six-year term in 2014. BP has adopted a human rights policy, and extolls its commitment to implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as well as its commitment to addressing climate change. Yet the BP Political Action Committee helps to fund the campaigns of politicians such as these who have undermined fundamental rights and the fight against climate change.

Senator Inhofe, the chair of the U.S. Senate Environment & Public Works Committee and an evangelical Christian, has stated that only God can change the climate — he said: "My point is, God's still up there. The arrogance of people to think that we, human beings, would be able to change what He is doing in the climate is to me outrageous." Inhofe criticized President Obama's participation in the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, saying that climate science ignores the role of God in determining global temperatures. He authored the 2012 book: "The Greatest Hoax: How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens Your Future".

Congressman Mike Coffman voted against the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which made it easier for women to enforce their right to equal pay for equal work. He supported bans on same-sex marriage until they were overturned by the Supreme Court. In 2012 he expressed doubt that President Obama had been born in the United States and declared: "I don't know whether Barack Obama was born in the United States of America. I don't know that. But I do know this, that in his heart, he's not an American. He's just not an American." He has voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which provides health care for many low-income people who previously had difficulty accessing medical care. He supported shutting down the federal government in 2013 in order to defund the Affordable Care Act. He said that employers should be able to

withhold contraceptive health coverage from employees if the employers disagree with it morally. He said he supported the Citizens United decision, which allows unlimited independent political expenditures by corporations. In 2013 he voted against a measure that would have raised the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$10.10 by 2015. Americans for Prosperity, the political advocacy group of the far-right Koch Brothers, is reportedly strongly supporting the Coffman campaign.

It is difficult for me and many others to respect BP as a corporation, and to accept that BP is committed to advancing human rights and addressing climate change, while this sort of funding goes on.

Over the coming days and weeks, I will be forwarding this message to each BP board member, as well as to the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations; governments; journalists; human rights, environmental and other civil society organizations; and business schools in countries across the world — focusing on those countries where BP operates.

Sincerely,

Christopher Avery  
Founder-Director (2002-2013), Business & Human Rights Resource Centre  
Former Legal Adviser and Deputy Head of Research, Amnesty International, International Secretariat