

Hello, my name is Aaron Dunbar. I'm a climate change activist from Lowell, Ohio, and a leadership team member with Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action.

I'm also an autistic person, and I've taken a lot of inspiration from watching the global rise to prominence of the autistic Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. Witnessing Greta's activism has gotten me thinking a lot about my identity on the spectrum. One interesting aspect of autistic personalities is that a lot of us tend to have a preoccupation with justice. We're often highly moral people and cannot stand the sight of injustice.

I remember once as a kid, before I even received my Asperger's diagnosis, being told I exhibit what's known as "hypermorality." To this day, I can still look back on all the little things I've done in life that might've come across as mean or hurtful to others, and no matter how trivial these incidents actually were, I often still experience the same prickle of guilt washing over me.

It's from this perspective, then, that I find myself routinely baffled by the endless moral depravity of those in power and in decision-making positions, incentivized by nothing but obscene amounts of dirty money to take murderous actions that are completely and utterly indefensible.

We know, for instance, that ExxonMobil was aware of anthropogenic climate change, at least as early as the 1970's. The coal industry knew in the 1960's. And just recently, it was revealed that automobile companies like Ford and GM knew back as far as 50 years ago.

Information like this is practically unfathomable to me. I literally do not know if I could survive trying to deceive the public in this manner, knowing that my actions would be responsible for the deaths and displacement of hundreds of millions of people, making vast swaths of the world uninhabitable for generations to come.

How, I wonder, can these monsters live with themselves?

I get this same feeling when I think about legislation like HB 6, and the fact that anyone who considers themselves any kind of worthwhile human being can support such a travesty of a bill. With the dubious distinction of being called the “worst energy bill of the 21st century,” I doubt whether I need to go into details that I’m sure have already been covered in other testimonies. The bribery, the corruption (most likely “the largest bribery, money laundering scheme ever perpetrated against the people of the state of Ohio,”) the bailouts for big polluters, and the attacks on clean energy at a time when the world’s best climate scientists tell us that we have fewer than ten years to prevent runaway, catastrophic global warming.

I’m not naive enough to think it’s anything but a fool’s errand to try and appeal to politicians’ moral character, especially on an issue like climate change. But I honestly cannot comprehend the brazenness, the sociopathic disregard for human life that it must take to continue selling out the health and safety of constituents, and indeed the very survival of this planet and those who live on it for the sake of greed.

It’s time to repeal HB 6, and well past time to hold those responsible for this and other crimes against humanity accountable for their actions.