

March for Science, 22 April 2017

<https://www.marchforscience.com/mission/>

.... but is this really a march for science or are folks being led down a primrose path?

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Scientists and Environmentalists for Population Stabilization, 19 April 2017

<http://www.populationstabilization.org/whoweare.html>

-- Answer: This is NOT primarily a march for science. It defines itself as an “explicitly political movement, aimed at holding [particular] leaders in science and politics accountable.”

-- The public generally already has a high regard for science; there is no reason to believe that a day after the march this will have changed in a positive direction. Nor is there reason to think the public will be better informed on any scientific issues, all the hype in the advertising for the event notwithstanding. Many scientists believe the march has considerable potential to damage the image of science. See Bibliography.

-- Here are excerpts from advice in the New York Times a couple of months ago:

A Scientists’ March on Washington Is a Bad Idea, by Robert S. Young, Professor of Coastal Geology, Western Carolina University, 31 January 2017. See:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/opinion/a-scientists-march-on-washington-is-a-bad-idea.html>

Talk is growing about a March for Science on Washington, similar to the Women’s March the day after President Trump’s inauguration. It is a terrible idea. A march by scientists, while well intentioned, will serve only to trivialize and politicize the science we care so much about, turn scientists into another group caught up in the culture wars and further drive the wedge between scientists and a certain segment of the American electorate. Scientists marching in opposition to a newly elected Republican president will only cement the divide. The solution here is not mass spectacle, but an increased effort to communicate directly with those who do not understand the degree to which the changing climate [and overpopulation !] is already affecting their lives. We need storytellers, not marchers.

-- The march and associated events might be fun, of course. Get some fresh air, some free drinks and snacks and talks, and meet some new people outside your lab or department or organization. Hang out near some science bigwigs and maybe get your photo in the paper the next day.

-- Though some of the organizers want to keep the focus strongly on the nature of science, science policy, and the importance of evidence-based societal policies in general, some organizers and many supporters have been insisting that the march and associated activities also get heavily into identity politics, civil rights, affirmative action, amnesty for illegal aliens, gender equity, intersectionality, etc. See Bibliography.

-- Here is an excerpt from one writer unhappy with the idea of a “just Science” march:

The March for Science Can’t Figure Out How to Handle Diversity, by Zuleyka Zevallos of LatinoRebels.com, 14 March 2017. See:

<http://www.latinorebels.com/2017/03/14/the-march-for-science-cant-figure-out-how-to-handle-diversity/>

The MfS organizers go to great pains to separate science from politics, and science from scientists, as if practice and policies are independent from practitioners. For example co-chair and biology postdoctoral fellow Dr Jonathan Berman [says](#): “Yes, this is a protest, but it’s not a political protest.” Another co-chair, science writer Dr Caroline Weinberg, recently [told The Chronicle](#): “This isn’t about scientists. It’s about science.” These sentiments strangely echo other [highly publicized opposition to the march](#), and are being [replicated in some of the local marches](#). The idea that a protest can be “not political” and that science can be separated from scientists are both political ideas. These notions privilege the status quo in science, by centring the politics, identities and values of White scientists, especially White cisgender, able-bodied men, who are less affected by changes to the aforementioned social policies.

- The march thus will be highly partisan and ideological, even though the organizers, via guidelines on the march website, are trying to prevent any overt expression of that fact during the march and associated talks lest it negatively impact funding of science by Congress.
- It is also a march in support of the political and economic interests of universities, corporations and the AAAS. Nothing wrong with looking out for #1 as long as we don’t get too hypocritical about it or tell lies.
- The march has become in part a well-disguised gladiatorial contest between AAAS CEO Rush Holt and President Trump. AAAS came officially on board early, following its February annual meeting in Boston. There is an official Memorandum of Understanding between AAAS and the original meeting organizers, but AAAS will not make that document public. AAAS is heavily involved now with logistics of the Washington march and the substance of associated activities.
- There are plenty of grounds to criticize Trump for some of his positions and actions relating to science funding, environmental protection, and family planning. But a major and little reported source of antipathy between Holt and Trump is their radically different positions on immigration.
- During his 16 years as a congressman, Holt consistently voted to increase already high immigration levels and a high rate of U.S. population growth, a *de facto* anti-environment voting record worse than that of most of the other 535 members of Congress. See: <https://www.numbersusa.com/content/my/congress/546/gradescoresheet>
- Since he became AAAS CEO Holt has continued to implement AAAS’s long-standing policy that substantive information on or discussion of U.S. population policies and their social, environmental and economic consequences will not be presented in any AAAS venue, not *Science* magazine, not the programs or exhibition halls of AAAS meetings, not AAAS newsletters or news alerts. See, most recently and for starters: <http://www.capsweb.org/blog/aaas-wields-censors-hammer-us-population-issues>
- ScienceDebate.org is another supposedly grassroots, open, democratic operation. Holt is a member of its Advisory Committee. In 2016 it solicited the scientific community and others for questions that they wanted presidential candidates to address in the debates. Anyone could submit questions and all persons could vote on questions submitted. A large number (13) of questions on “population” were submitted and they collectively garnered a very large number (367) of votes. Holt was the key person from AAAS who participated in selection and refining of the final set of 20 questions submitted to the candidates. With the world at 7.5 billion and

growing, these included not a single question on population policies or issues. There was a question in the final set, however, on a topic of apparent limited interest (3 questions, 49 votes) to the scientific community, the hiring of foreign scientists and engineers. When asked to explain this “disconnect”, Shawn Otto, the head of ScienceDebate.org, chose not to do so. The heavy hand of Holt and his acolytes at work or just a coincidence? See:

<http://questions.sciencedebate.org/forums/283644-2016-presidential-science-tech-health-and-envir/category/94541-population>

-- ScienceDebate.org is now the fiscal sponsor for the March for Science. That is, persons who wish to make donations to the March for Science can get a tax deduction only if the donation is made via ScienceDebate.org. What other role ScienceDebate.org is playing in the march is not public information. So far as can be discerned at the moment, science-based evaluation of U.S. family planning and immigration policies and their environmental implications will once again be off the agenda.

-- Trump, on the other hand, made reducing both illegal and legal immigration and “temporary” guest-worker visas key issues in his campaign. And then Trump won, to the horror of Holt, his corporate allies, and their unwitting shock troops on the left.

-- You would never know it from reading *Science* or any other mainstream scientific or environmental magazine or any major newspaper, but Trump’s supposedly “far right” immigration proposals to halt illegal immigration and reduce legal immigration are 100 percent consistent with the recommendations of:

- the 1972 Rockefeller Commission on Population and the American Future
- the 1995 Jordan Commission on Immigration Reform
- the 1996 Clinton Council on Sustainable Development

-- None of those commissions was dominated by Republicans, let alone folks from the “far right.”

-- No organization or individuals have been more effective in preventing scientists and the public from knowing about, or Congress from implementing, those recommendations than has AAAS, its CEO and its Board of Directors. Holt is just the most recent opponent in that organization, of diverse opinion and transparency.

-- Scientists who don’t already know all this should consider staying home and reading instead of unproductively pounding the pavement. Key reading assignments: Trump’s two key executive orders of January 25 and 27, 2017, and U.S. Senate Bill 354, introduced on February 13, 2017. See:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/executive-orders> , AND
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/354/text>

-- Together these orders and legislation, if implemented, would greatly slow the rate of U.S. population growth and rate of U.S. environmental degradation. As such, they would be the most pro-environment governmental actions since the Nixon administration gave us the Endangered Species Act and the Environmental Protection Agency in the 1970s. They are, however, being strongly opposed by the Democratic Party, the business wing of the Republican Party, all the sustainability-lite environmental organizations, and, now mostly behind-the-scenes, AAAS, ScienceDebate.org, and the March for Science.

-- In its Mission statement, the March for Science calls “on political leaders and policy makers to enact evidence based policies in the public interest.” But don’t look for any March organizers or speakers to advocate those “evidence based policies” favoring U.S. population stabilization. There’s no money in that for the universities, the corporations, the funding agencies, the building industry, the chambers of commerce.

-- The leaders of the March for Science speak only for themselves and for a narrow portion of the political spectrum, not for science and not for the scientific community as a whole. Reportedly 170 different societies and organization have signed on as official supporters of the March; but in no case did the leaders of those societies consult with their members about the wisdom of doing so. The arrogance of the elites once again.

So stay home, read, study, focus, compose, and *then* go be a “storyteller” to your congressmen, class, environmental organization, scientific society, fraternal organization, political party or any tolerant captive audience.

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A pdf of this article is available at <http://www.populationstabilization.org/pdfs/ReallyMarchForScience.pdf>