

An Urgent Call by Scientists to: **DEFEND SCIENCE!**

In the U.S. today science, as science, is under attack as never before.

THE SIGNS of this are everywhere. The attacks are coming at an accelerating pace, and include frequent interventions by powerful forces, in and out of the Bush Administration, who seem all too willing to deny scientific truths, disrupt scientific investigations, block scientific progress, undermine scientific education, and sacrifice the very integrity of the scientific process itself — all in the pursuit of implementing their particular political agenda.

AND TODAY this dominant political agenda is profoundly allied and intertwined with an extremist (and extremely anti-science) ideological agenda put forward by powerful fundamentalist religious forces commonly known as the Religious Right. These fundamentalists now have extensive influence and representatives in major institutions of the U.S. government, including Congress and the White House. This itself goes a long way towards explaining why science itself is under such unprecedented attack.

IT IS COMMONPLACE under the current administration for the government to deny funding, censor scientific reports, or in other ways undermine scientific research which might turn up facts they don't want to hear; to manipulate, distort, or outright suppress scientific findings they find objectionable; to attempt to reshape government scientific panels to obtain policy recommendations on issues ranging from health to the environment, based less on actual scientific findings than on the requirements of the administration's agenda.

THE SITUATION is so serious that more than 6,000 scientists have already signed the "Restoring Scientific Integrity" statement of the Union of Concerned Scientists, which denounces the Bush Administration for "abuse of science"; and *Scientific American* published an editorial under the title: "Bush-League Lysenkoism: The White House Seeks to Bend Science To Its Will."

GENUINE SCIENCE never proceeds from, or uses as its starting point, any set of subjective "beliefs," "opinions" or "faith-based edicts" handed down by religious or secular authorities and proclaimed to be beyond human questioning, testing and investigation. To bring into the scientific process assumptions, religious or otherwise, which were not arrived at by scientific methods, and which by definition cannot be tested by scientific methods, would destroy science as science.

IN CONCLUSION: We must refuse to accept a situation where scientific inquiry is blocked or its findings ruled out of order unless they conform to the goals of the government, to corporate interests and to the ideology of religious fundamentalists; where dogma enforced by governmental and religious authority takes the place of science; where the scientific approach of seeking natural explanations for natural phenomena is suppressed.

WE MUST INSIST on an atmosphere where scientists are allowed to seek the truth, even when the truth conflicts with the views and policies of those in power, and where the scientific spirit is fostered; where science education and the popularization of the scientific method are valued; where people are encouraged to pursue an understanding of how and why things are the way they are; where all that has been learned by humanity so far, all that has repeatedly been tested and found to be true, serves as the starting point for further investigation of reality.

IT IS UP TO US. IT IS TIME TO TAKE A CLEAR AND DECISIVE STAND IN DEFENSE OF SCIENCE. THIS IS OF CRUCIAL AND URGENT IMPORTANCE NOT ONLY FOR SCIENTISTS, BUT FOR PEOPLE THROUGHOUT SOCIETY, FOR HUMANITY AS A WHOLE AND FOR OUR FUTURE.

Over 1,600 signatories, including 13 Nobel laureates and over 80 members of the National Academy of Sciences, have signed the complete Defend Science Statement to date.

To take up the challenge to defend science, to read and sign the entire Defend Science Statement and see the complete list of signatories, and to support our efforts for further publication of the Statement to reach the public broadly, please go to: <http://www.defendscience.org>.

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