

The Scientific Integrity Act

116th Congress

Sponsors: Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) & Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI)

“Not since the Scientific Revolution has there been a more important moment to stand for the basic principles that science must be free and independent, and facts and evidence matter.”

❖ **Congressman Paul Tonko**

Science is under threat in U.S. public policy

- Federal scientists have been **prohibited from speaking about climate change**, and **climate data have been scrubbed** from many U.S. government websites
- Staff at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were **banned from using the words “evidence-based” and “science-based”** in budget documents
- The Trump Administration **falsified scientific claims** to justify restricting birth control access

Science-based policy decisions are distorted by political interests

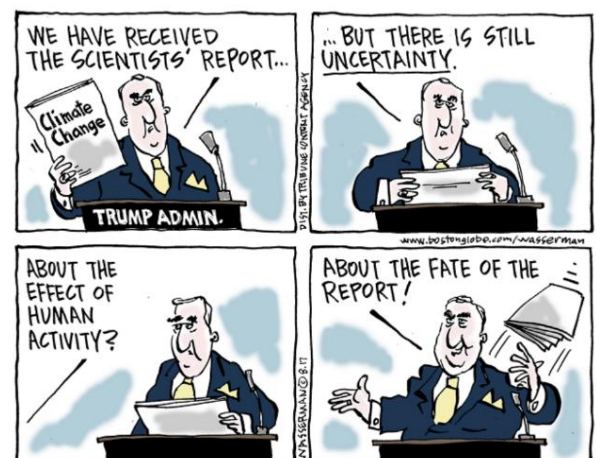
- Political appointees **blocked publishing of a report** on dangerous perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a chemical found in drinking water and polluted ground water and **suppressed another report** on the health risks of formaldehyde.
- At the urging of the chemical industry, EPA scrapped its own recommended ban on chlorpyrifos, a pesticide **proven to impair brain development in young children**
- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine were ordered to **stop research on health risks for communities living near surface coal mining sites**

Congress Needs to Act!

Federal agency **scientific integrity policies** put a high wall separating scientific findings and **political or special interests** seeking to influence them

The Scientific Integrity Act

1. Requires federal agencies that fund or direct public science to establish & maintain clear scientific integrity principles
 - 20+ federal agencies currently have some form of scientific integrity policy that would be made stronger under this bill
2. Formalizes these policies and strengthens them with the force of law. Clarifies that science should determine policy, free from inappropriate politics, ideology, or financial conflicts of interest
3. Holds public scientists to the highest standards while guaranteeing their rights and protections under the law



Credit: Dan Wasserman/Tribune Content Agency

There is no such thing as an “alternative fact”

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