

# March for Science supported consensus science, increased funding, and a liberal agenda.

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A *March for Science* was held on April 22, 2017, in Washington, D.C. The organizers claimed the March “is a celebration of our passion for science and a call to support and safeguard the scientific community.” This sounds innocuous enough, but was this descent on the Capitol a good idea?

First of all, the March for Science was a *political* event. The fact that it was in Washington on Earth Day should tell you that. A look at the March’s agenda shows that it was primarily a promotion event for consensus science, increased funding for research, and liberal viewpoints on such issues as materialism and environmentalism.

A primary sponsor of the March was Earth Day Network, the promoter of an activist environmental movement designed to build a “sustainable environment, address climate change, and protect the Earth for future generations.” Another sponsor was the American Geophysical Union, which takes pride in “its role in developing solutions for the sustainability of the planet.” Now responsible stewardship is a good thing, but the environmentalists’ global agenda takes it to a whole new level.

Another sponsor was Nextgen Climate America, whose website claims that climate change poses “current and future harms” and is “primarily caused by heat-trapping pollution from the combustion of fossil fuels....” In truth, the debate on the extent and long-term effects of climate change is ongoing, and it is uncertain whether human actions have significantly contributed to global warming. Nextgen also promotes “renewable energy sources like wind and solar,” saying that these are needed “to prevent climate disaster.” The truth is that fossil fuels will remain our primary source of energy for years to come, and the Earth has reserves to last hundreds of years. When we eventually move to alternate sources, *nuclear* energy will be the major contributor – not wind and solar.

The National Center for Science Education, another sponsor, says that evolution “is not scientifically controversial” and “should not be treated as controversial within a science class.” Another sponsor, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), agrees that “there is no significant controversy within the scientific community about the validity of the theory of evolution.” These claims seem at odds with the principle that science inquiry should be open-minded and objective. Also, explanations in science can and do change based on new evidence.

AAAS defines science as “a process of seeking natural explanations for natural phenomena.” This is a clear statement of methodological naturalism (MN), a doctrine that excludes

teleological (purposeful design) explanations in science. The use of MN is particularly damaging in historical origins science, since teleological inferences are quite logical in studies of the origin and development of the universe and of life.

The March for Science website states that “recent policy changes have caused heightened worry among scientists.” This was clearly aimed at perceived policy changes within the new Trump administration – for example, the President’s skepticism about global warming, the appointment of an EPA critic to lead that agency, shifting budget priorities, and a hiring freeze on federal employees.

My concern is that many scientists/technologists may have been lured into supporting the March for Science, thinking it is a fine way to gain public and government support. Few people in technical fields pay much attention to political issues like global environmentalism and science education policy.

Is the March for Science misguided? My answer would be “yes.” The organizers claim this was just an output of support for science, but a divisive political agenda lurked in the background.