Description

The current American political climate is proving difficult for the people there. One of many significant issues is the effect of Trump's rule on science. Scientific funding and the availability of scientific information has become more limited nowadays. Each reduction in funding and visibility has the potential to affect science and public health in a different way. Trump's anniversary has highlighted several changes throughout the field of science and research, besides research funding. Let us explore some of them.

Reduction in Visibility under Trump's Administration

The ability of scientific researchers to speak publicly about their work has declined, and gag orders are becoming common. While Trump is not the first president to issue a gag order, the context in which he has issued them is unusual. Multiple government agencies have been instructed to halt communication with the public for a certain amount of time. Although most of these were rescinded, the federal Office of Special Counsel reminded employees that blanket gag orders are illegal.

The prominence of federal scientific advisory committees has also been decreased under the current administration. Over two hundred committees exist to provide guidance to government agencies. Membership to these committees has dropped, partially due to restrictions on who can participate. The Department of the Interior (DOI), Department of Energy (DOE), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other agencies have been prevented from advising officials on scientific policy.

Scientific information has been removed from many public government websites under the Trump administration. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), for example, has been instructed to remove words such as "science-based" from its pages. Without these statements, it can be difficult for the public to understand where health recommendations come from. People are less likely to follow recommendations if they don't understand them, so the removal of this information could have a detrimental effect on public health.

History of Politics and Science

Politics and science in America, separate in theory, have long been connected in practice. Emphasis on scientific principles fluctuates between presidential administrations. The use of solar panels at the

White House over the last few decades has varied depending on whether the president considers them helpful. Government policies concerning scientific matters often change within administrations as well. One of the most recent examples of this is attitude about climate change, or lack thereof.

This lack of long-term governmental consensus has caused uneven application of scientific principles to policy making. Politics often affects what lawmakers consider to be objective scientific evidence, because people naturally search for sources that confirm their own views. More than once in governmental institutions, policy makers have shown an unwillingness to alter their viewpoints beyond political ideology. This devotion to ideology is the cause behind some of the changes demonstrated in scientific policy making.

These inconsistencies in policy making have contributed to a distrust of science in the American public. Scientific findings are often considered matters of opinion. They are not the result of concerted attempts to engage in unbiased critical thinking processes. Changes in political priorities which affect scientific policy making are commonly seen as evidence that science itself has no objectivity. This attitude of science being non-objective is not new, but it has gained prominence under Trump's administration.

The Future of American Science and Research

Many scientists and scientific organizations are concerned by these policy changes affecting science and research. Individual scientists are speaking out in large numbers. The Union of Concerned Scientists, Scientific American, and the international scientific journal "Nature" have all expressed concern that restriction of scientists will stifle innovation. Some scientists have spoken out in defiance of the gag orders, and many are engaging in the political arena. Multiple scientists are also running for Congress.

Public knowledge of science has declined under the Trump administration, bolstered by the emergence of "fake news." Without the scientific information government sites previously provided, the American public has become vulnerable to sensational stories they can no longer debunk easily. The scientific information available on government websites is viewed with increasing skepticism. This skepticism has contributed to a number of health crises, including preventable disease outbreaks.

The science and research policies of Trump's administration have had a demonstrably negative effect. It is not possible at present to determine what the long term effects will be, but analysis of the past and present may provide some direction. Restrictions in scientific information have previously caused disease outbreaks, environmental disasters, and other human health hazards. Hence, these steps are also not considered to bring some very good outcomes.

How do the Trump administration's policies continue to affect science and public health? Is separation of science and politics possible in the modern era? Please share your thoughts with us in the comments section below.

Category

1. Industry News
2. Publishing News

Date Created

2018/02/06
Author
daveishan