

Why This Scientist Won't be Attending the 'Science March'



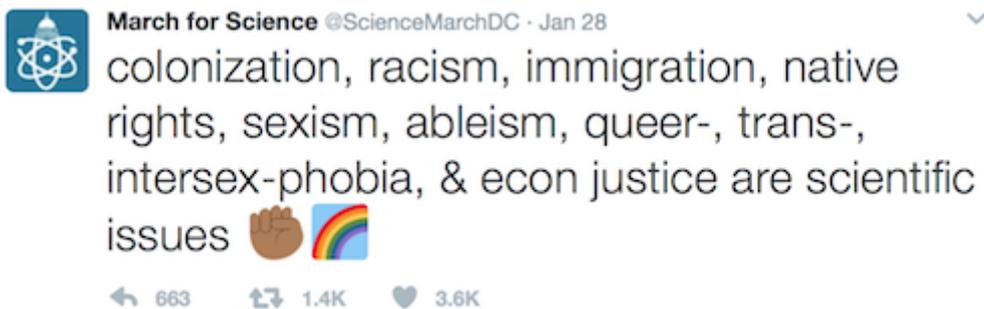
By Alex Berezow, PhD — February 2, 2017



Credit: March for Science [1]

A much-discussed "Science March," which germinated on the social news site Reddit and then experienced a meteoric rise on all social media in the past two weeks, now has an official date: April 22nd. While a march to support science sounds like a good idea, given the agenda, this scientist will not be attending.

I [wrote previously](#) [2] of my concern that the Science March would be hijacked by the kind of political partisanship it should instead be concerned about – and that has indeed come true. This fear was based on not-so-subtle hints provided by its Twitter feed, such as embracing "intersectionality" (a concept taught in classes on feminism) as a core principle. To its credit, the march's Twitter account has stopped dropping hints; now, it's openly stating what its agenda actually is:



If you're wondering what this has to do with science, you're certainly not alone. The answer, of course, is nothing. These issues are the primary concern of revisionist historians and social justice warriors, not empirically-minded scientists.

The group's [updated website](#) [1]* sheds no new light on its cause. The front page is full of trite platitudes, such as: "We are scientists and science enthusiasts... Our diversity is our greatest strength." This screenshot is from the diversity page:

At the March for Science, we are committed to highlighting, standing in solidarity with, and acting as allies with black, Latinx, Asian and Pacific Islander, indigenous, Muslim, non-Christian, non-religious, women, people with disabilities, poor, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, trans, non-binary, agender, and intersex scientists and science advocates. We must work to make science available to everyone and

It's curious that a website that seeks to include everybody conspicuously left men, whites, and Christians off the diversity list. Similarly, the site's mission statement is odd:

“ THE MARCH FOR SCIENCE CHAMPIONS PUBLICLY FUNDED AND PUBLICLY COMMUNICATED SCIENCE AS A PILLAR OF HUMAN FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY. WE UNITE AS A DIVERSE, NONPARTISAN GROUP TO CALL FOR SCIENCE THAT UPHOLDS THE COMMON GOOD, AND FOR POLITICAL LEADERS AND POLICYMAKERS TO ENACT EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

The march supports publicly funded science. That's good, but what about privately funded science, where the majority of basic research and the overwhelming bulk of applied research, is done? Non-academic science makes up the [vast majority of research](#) [3] in America. According to *R&D Magazine*, last year the U.S. spent \$514 billion on research and development, 64% of which (\$328 billion) came from industry. Why don't those scientists count? Despite an enigmatic commitment to "diversity," the march leaves out the majority of scientists. And the private sector is actually far more diverse in science than universities are.

Claiming to support evidence-based policies is nice, but it's ultimately hollow if it doesn't specify which policies. Surely, we could learn *something* about the real intention of the march if we knew who the organizers are. Alas, no transparency is to be found. For privacy reasons, the site won't tell us who they are:

THE TEAM

Announcements on additional organizers and committed members of the March for Science committees will be made next week. Given the political climate, several of the people who have been instrumental in planning the event are reluctant to announce their participation publicly and we are respecting their wishes as they make their final decisions.

In summary: The Science March has now selected a date. But we don't know what they're marching about, who the organizers are, or what scientific policies they support. The only consistent message of substance from the group so far is an insistence on diversity, albeit a version that doesn't include white men or scientists who don't get government funding.

Is it too soon to conclude that the organizers never really intended this march to be about science in the first place?

*Note: Accessed on February 1, 2017.

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/02/02/why-scientist-wont-be-attending-science-march-10811>

Links

[1] <https://marchforscience.com/>

[2] <http://www.acsh.org/news/2017/01/26/dont-let-partisans-hijack-science-march-10777>

[3] <http://www.acsh.org/news/2016/11/08/whoever-wins-election-day-2016-american-science-still-1-world-10415>