

Traffic Violence: Elizabeth Warren Redefines 'Car Accident'



By Alex Berezow, PhD — November 19, 2019



Credit: Public Domain/Wikipedia [1]

When people ask me if there are any health threats they need to worry about, only one actually comes to mind: Car accidents. Every year, about 40,000 Americans die in car crashes. According to the [Association for Safe International Road Travel](#) [2], the global number is 1.25 million, well over 3,000 deaths per day.

As it turns out, the biggest threats to our safety don't come from exotic things, like vaccines or GMOs, but from routine, everyday activities that we don't think twice about. You are far likelier to die of a heart attack than a terrorist attack.

Apparently, in an effort to draw attention to the issue of car safety, presidential candidate Senator Elizabeth Warren took to Twitter:



Elizabeth Warren ✓

@ewarren

Traffic violence kills thousands and injures even more Americans every year. On World Day of Remembrance for Traffic Crash Victims, I'm sending my love to the families and friends of those who have lost loved ones. It's time to [#EndTrafficViolence](#).

End traffic violence. What? The word violence implies purposeful, often malicious, intent. That word in no way describes how most people die in car crashes, which are accidents. Even drunk drivers don't intend to harm anyone; they do so through recklessness and negligence.

Senator Warren is clearly pandering here, but pandering to whom? Once again, the word violence implies a perpetrator and a victim, and so it would seem that Sen. Warren is trying to scrounge up votes from people who see themselves as victims.

Unfortunately, we have a culture that embraces and celebrates victimhood. We put victims on a pedestal. Even though hate crimes are real (and [possibly increasing](#) [3]), how can we explain the phenomenon of fake hate crimes? *Wall Street Journal* columnist Jason Riley [reported](#) [4] on a book by political scientist Prof. Wilfred Reilly called *Hate Crime Hoax*. The author examined 346 instances of hate crimes and found that fewer than 1 in 3 were legitimate.

One of the sad, unhealthy facts of American society today is that many of us want to be thought of as victims. A good way to do that is to redefine the word "violence," as Sen. Warren has done, basically to mean "anything bad." Controversial free speech? That's also a form of [violence](#) [5]. Now we're all victims, especially me, since it's my job to listen to this nonsense on a daily basis.

Don't Like a Word? Redefine It for Ideological Reasons

Violence isn't the only word that has been redefined for ideological purposes. So too has the word [abuse](#) [6], so that anyone who is unhappy in a relationship can claim to have been abused. The words [organic, chemical, pesticide, and toxin](#) [7] have all been stolen from scientists and redefined by lawyers and environmental activists. Too many progressives are opposed to actual progress (usually of the technological variety), and too many conservatives aren't in favor of conservation (usually of the environmental variety).

As a writer, I insist that words have meaning and that we ought to use them appropriately. Like everything else in 2019, I'm finding that this common sense understanding of language is increasingly controversial.

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Links

[1]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traffic_collision#/media/File:Truck_crash_on_Andrew_Street,_Compstall_1914.jpg

[2] <https://www.asirt.org/safe-travel/road-safety-facts/>

[3] <https://www.wsj.com/articles/hate-crimes-are-real-and-theyre-increasing-11562786479>

[4] <https://www.wsj.com/articles/hate-crime-hoaxes-are-more-common-than-you-think-11561503352>

[5] <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/07/02/how-social-media-trolls-turned-uc-berkeley-into-a-free-speech-circus>

[6] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2019/10/31/lundy-bancroft-anti-vaxxer-who-thinks-all-men-are-abusers-14370>

[7] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/05/24/what-organic-and-chemical-actually-mean-a-glossary-of-hijacked-terms>