Political Partisanship Is a Scourge on Public Health

By Alex Berezow, PhD — July 1, 2020

We must dismantle the perfect storm of incivility, anti-intellectualism, and tribalism -- worsened by the sewer pipe of social media -- that has gripped our country. In its place, we must foster a culture of intellectualism, skepticism, and empathy. But that lofty goal seems unreachable in the current milieu.

One of the most depressing features of American life in 2020 is the fact that everything has become politicized.

Literal nothing is safe from this poison. From sporting events to wearing masks, nearly every facet of life has become polluted with politically motivated virtue signaling. Even recently deceased war heroes and philanthropists were targeted with vitriol.

In this environment, it shouldn't be a surprise that public health has been infected with the same mental virus. My colleague, Dr. Chuck Dinerstein, wrote about a new study that showed that politicians on Twitter could be identified as Republican or Democrat with 70% reliability by an algorithm that analyzed the text of tweets. For instance, Republicans tended to use the words "China" and "coronavirus," while Democrats tended to use words like "public," "health," and "crisis." It's almost as if each side was given a script to use. (They probably were.)

This phenomenon isn't new. It's just worse and a lot more obvious now than before. The allegedly
non-partisan "March for Science" was nakedly political [3], as is a group called 314 Action [4], whose goal is to elect scientists into public office, but only if they’re Democrats.

The battle over the regulation of vaping devices [5], which are known to help smokers quit cigarettes, broke down largely along partisan political lines as well. The same is true for nuclear power and environmental issues. Historically, it was also true for vaccines and GMOs, but the partisan divide on those topics has become muddied in recent years.

While this problem is very noticeable in America, it’s hardly unique to our country. At the moment, Poland is undergoing a very contentious presidential campaign. The governing party just blamed the opposition presidential candidate and current mayor of Warsaw for flooding in that city [6] -- because obviously he can control the rain.

**Political Partisans Unite... Against Public Health**

So is less partisanship the answer? One would think so but not necessarily.

Quite possibly the only thing worse than the politicization of public health is when partisans put their differences aside to unite against public health. That happened recently when the progressive Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. teamed up with the conservative Michelle Malkin to oppose mandatory vaccine schedules. They also oppose a mandatory coronavirus vaccine, which doesn't even exist yet.
If you are in Colorado tomorrow SUNDAY June 7 or have friends/family here willing to stand up and fight the public health industrial complex, there is a rally tomorrow on the Denver state Capitol east steps beginning at 10am. I will speak and testify at a hearing on a bill (SB 163) that would sabotage religious exemptions for families objecting to the government's mandatory vaccine schedule. This is an ominous prelude to requiring the COVID vaccine for school attendance & a key element of the contact tracing/data mining racket. RFK Jr is scheduled to fly in to testify as well; we're expecting a healthy turnout of parents and medical freedom fighters. The Colorado Senate Dems purposely scheduled the hearing on Sunday noon when families are at church...and also because they know many will be fearful of the rioters/looters who've run rampant in Denver the past two weeks. When I say #GetUpOffYourKnees and stand tall, I mean what I say. This is an important stand and a harbinger of things to come in other states.

Stop SB-163!
SAVE COLORADO

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Michelle Malkin
Sunday, June 7, 2020
10:00 AM
Capitol Building

Bring:
Megophones
Drums
Noisemakers
Water
Snacks
So less partisanship is probably necessary but insufficient to fix the political divisions over public health and other science-related policies.

What we need is to dismantle the perfect storm of incivility, anti-intellectualism, and tribalism [7] -- worsened by the sewer pipe of social media -- that has gripped our country. In its place, we must foster a culture of intellectualism, skepticism, and empathy, but that lofty goal seems unreachable in the current milieu.

---

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: https://www.acsh.org/news/2020/07/01/political-partisanship-scourge-public-health-14880

Links