

Climate change continued

To the Editor:

Thank you for David Barnhill's detailed, patient and polite response to Isaac Orr's misleading Heartland article. It's understandable that people have a hard time accepting the seriousness and urgency of climate change. But an important life lesson that most adults acknowledge is — it doesn't help to run away from one's problems. Not from personal financial or medical problems, nor from national or global environmental troubles.

Adults also have ways to verify information. I'm sitting in my apartment in Boston. I can't go out because we're having our third blizzard in three weeks. We have seven feet of snow on the ground and expect another storm in two days. This isn't normal precipitation for Boston's climate. In addition, our local newspaper published excerpts from logs written about 150 years ago by Henry David Thoreau. He kept records of when different types of plants and trees flowered. Those same types of plants and trees now flower two or three weeks earlier than they did in Thoreau's time.

We can also ask scientists whom we know and trust how they assess the information. My husband is a mathematician with a physics background. He specializes in data analysis, probability theory and rare events. I asked him if climate scientists have enough measured data and enough understanding of what's going on to be certain. He said, "Look, the law of gravity isn't known with 100 percent certainty. We accept gravity as true because we're satisfied with 99.9999 percent, and even much lower standards. Climate science has passed the point of certainty, ethically requiring global action." There are all kinds of ways we can verify what scientists tell us. We don't have to resort to childish self-deception.

There's important legislation for Congress to enact if we want to reduce emissions while we still have time to slow climate change. Contact your local chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby to find out more. You'll derive childlike joy from learning how you can become a climate hero.

Rabbi Judy Weiss

Brookline, Ma.

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Text