

# Rep. Perry's legacy on climate change?

*In the history books, Obama is going to look pretty good for his climate change choices.*

Letter writer Porter Hedge is angry with Rep. Scott Perry because Perry chooses to deny that climate change is a critical military, security, health, economic and environmental problem, and Perry took money from fossil fuel interests. Hedge calls for Perry to return the money and demands a Justice Department investigation.

But Perry won't return money, this demand will make some voters angry, then they'll refuse to hear legitimate reasons to be dissatisfied with Perry, and Justice investigations take years to conduct and prosecute, whereas climate change needs prompt, appropriate congressional action.

It's difficult to talk to people in power who intentionally choose to ignore scientists, military experts, journalists, asthma specialists, pediatricians, Republicans who are former EPA directors, major American business leaders, the U.S. food industry leaders, and indeed any Republican colleague who doesn't pass a litmus test. Conservative Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham has to insist that his call for climate action doesn't make him a Democrat! Former Representative, ultra-conservative Republican Bob Inglis says that acknowledging climate change became "political heresy," a "Democratic idea," and Republicans are required to "reject everything that Barack Obama would say." This is the illogical anti-status quo that Perry endorses.

When people in power choose to use slippery, undefinable terms like "freedom caucus" and "fight the status quo," and they reject critical concerns because Obama wants to address them, you cannot use their language and their arguments to have a rational conversation with them. It's all subterfuge, shadow-boxing and propaganda.

Instead, you must speak direct, clear truth to people in power: fossil fuel companies like Exxon knew climate scientists were reaching a consensus on fundamental aspects of climate change in the 1970s, the consensus had direct implications for their businesses, so they began a propaganda war against the American public to create the perception of reasonable doubt when there was no longer reasonable doubt about the fundamentals (their propaganda methods have been compared

to Soviet-style deceptions). Soviet communist manipulation of the public isn't tolerable in our democracy.

Exxon shouldn't have funded propaganda machinery. They shouldn't still be funding members of Congress who deny climate change is caused by humans and requires immediate action. Since they published website statements years ago calling revenue-neutral carbon taxes the best climate policy, they should have also lobbied Congress and educated the public years ago about the need for such carbon tax legislation. They should have raised a ruckus about needing a carbon tax to give them the freedom to become modern producers of all types of energy. Without a carbon tax, energy pricing favors fossil fuels and motivates continued focus on fossil fuels. Even Exxon needed to be freed of the unfairness built into our energy pricing system.

Instead of an honest ruckus, Exxon waged a propaganda war against Americans and perpetuated our society's continuing enslavement to fossil fuels.

Perry will continue to reject climate change because he's scared of looking like Obama. He needs Exxon to say on TV and in congressional hearings that the status quo of "free carbon pollution" deprives Americans of freedom of choice about energy options, security considerations and health factors. Only honesty from Exxon will loosen the chains of propaganda that Exxon used to bind Americans and Perry. Will Exxon say it while they're staring at prosecution and liabilities?

Don't forget that Perry was endowed by the divine creator with free will. In the history books Perry's daughters will study in high school, Obama is going to look pretty good for his climate change choices. Perry must choose now if he's going to look like a small-time player in a propaganda campaign, or if he'll look good like Inglis, Graham and the 11 House Republicans waiting for Perry to sign their climate resolution.

*Judy Weiss is a member of Citizens' Climate Lobby Boston chapter.*

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