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To: Marcia K. McNutt <mmcnutt@aaas.org>

From: "James E. Enstrom" <jenstrom@ucla.edu>

Subject: Important Request re AAAS & 'Secret Science Reform'

Cc: Geraldine L. Richmond <richmond@uoregon.edu>, Carlos J. Bustamante <carlosb@berkeley.edu>, Michael Gazzaniga <michael.gazzaniga@psych.ucsb.edu>, Elizabeth F. Loftus <eloftus@uci.edu>, Chris Carter <chris.carter@ucdc.edu>

June 4, 2015

Marcia K. McNutt, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief, Science
mmcnutt@aaas.org

Dear Editor-in-Chief McNutt,

On May 28, 2015, [Science retracted](#) the December 12, 2014 paper by Michael LeCour and Donald Green because, in part, the underlying data is not available to independently confirm the paper's findings. Science requires [Data and Materials Availability](#) for the papers that it publishes. Science has written extensively between [July 25, 1997](#) and [August 9, 2013](#) about the use of the relationship between fine particulate air pollution (PM2.5) and mortality to justify costly EPA regulations and the lack of access to the data underlying this relationship.

Because this 'secret science' data has never been available for independent analysis, Congress has introduced the [Secret Science Reform Act](#) to "prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, and disseminating regulations or assessments that are based upon science that is not transparent or reproducible." However, [AAAS](#) has written at least three letters to Congress raising objections to an act which requires access to underlying data. I request that AAAS reconsider its objections to this act and take a clear position in favor of access to the data underlying the PM2.5-mortality relationship. During the past ten years I have assembled extensive evidence that scientific misconduct has occurred in PM2.5 epidemiology and on December 1, 2014, I submitted [65 pages](#) of such evidence to EPA (<http://www.scientificintegrityinstitute.org/JEECPPI20114.pdf>). On February 17, 2015, I submitted [72 pages](#) of similar evidence to the UCLA Vice Chancellor for Research (<http://www.scientificintegrityinstitute.org/Economou021715.pdf>). My evidence is far more extensive than the [27 pages](#) of evidence that supported the retraction of the LeCour and Green paper.

I request that you and the AAAS Board of Directors examine my evidence, much of which involves UCLA Professor [Michael Jerrett](#), who is at the same university as LeCour. The stakes are high for both scientific integrity and the U.S. economy. The PM2.5-mortality relationship is currently being used as a major justification for many major EPA regulations, most recently EPA's Clean Power Plan. The CPP has been estimated to cost up to \$479 billion over the next 15 years and a strong case can be made that it is not scientifically or economically justified. I will be giving a talk about "EPA's Clean Power Plan and PM2.5-related Co-benefits" on June 11, 2015 at the [Tenth International Conference on Climate Change](#) in Washington, DC. You and others from Science and AAAS are welcome to attend my presentation.

Last Friday I sent the email message below to most of the scientists involved with PM2.5 epidemiology misconduct and no one has yet responded. I hope that Science and AAAS will take my evidence of misconduct seriously. In any case, I am going to use this evidence to support the April 11, 2014 [Lancet Comment](#) of Editor Richard Horton, who stated, in part, "The case against science is straightforward: much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue . . . science has taken a turn towards darkness."

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely yours,

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REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Scientific Fraud and Politics

A press release from the Union of Concerned Scientists recently hit our desk titled "Science Leaders Decry Congressional Attacks on Science and Science-Based Policy." It flagged an op-ed in the journal *Science* that laments "a growing and troubling assault on the use of credible scientific knowledge."

Hmmm. Is this about science, or politics?

Since the scientists brought it up, which is the greater threat to their enterprise: the Republicans who run Congress, or the most spectacular scientific fraud in a generation, which was published and then retracted by the journal *Science*?

Last year UCLA political science grad student and maybe soon-to-be Princeton professor Michael LaCour released stunning findings from a field trial on gay marriage called "When Contact Changes Minds." He found that a 20-minute conversation with a house-to-house canvasser could convert huge numbers of opponents into supporters, at least if the canvassers explained they were gay and told personal stories.

The study quickly became a media sensation, the most talked-about poli-sci paper in years, and it led gay-rights activists including some working on the Ireland referendum to retool their voter outreach.

The problem is that Mr. LaCour stands accused of faking everything from start to finish. Ph.D. candidates at Berkeley David Broockman and Josh Kalla tried but failed to replicate Mr. LaCour's results. They then noticed unusual statistical irregularities in Mr. LaCour's survey panel. He now says he pulled a Hillary Clinton and deleted his raw data. But the canvassing firm he claimed to have employed has never heard of the project—and there is no proof anyone was ever contacted, much less changed their minds.

Mr. LaCour denies wrongdoing and in a response paper assailed the motives of Messrs. Broockman and Kalla, whose violations of academic decorum include their decision to go public and "bypass the peer-review process." That would be the same process that failed to catch Mr. LaCour's

non-findings at *Science* magazine.

The larger question is why anyone invested Mr. LaCour's paper with the authority of "science." Experience and common sense suggest that persuading people to reconsider their opinions is difficult. An uninvited nag carrying on about politics on the front porch sounds like

Look who is lecturing Republicans about scientific truth.

one of the less successful approaches.

Then again, the study flattered the ideological sensibilities of liberals, who tend to believe that resistance to gay marriage can only be the artifact of ignorance or prejudice, not moral or religious conviction. Mr. LaCour's purported findings let them claim that science had proved them right.

Similar bias contaminates inquiries across the social sciences, which often seem to exist so liberals can claim that "studies show" some political assertion to be empirical. Thus they can recast stubborn political debates about philosophy and values as disputes over facts that can be resolved by science. President Obama is a particular aficionado of this bait and switch.

As for those supposedly "anti-science" Republicans, they stand accused by *Science* magazine of trying to introduce more transparency and accountability to federal science grants. The House GOP is also guilty of attempting to spend more on the harder sciences, passing a bill last month that allocates money for the National Science Foundation by directorate—for example, boosting engineering spending by 13.2% over 2015 and biology by 12.6%. Money for the social and behavioral sciences declines by 44.9%.

Scientific misconduct does seem to be mercifully rare, but a lesson of the LaCour retraction is to show more humility amid the illusion of scientific omniscience and to be more skeptical of studies that carry heavy political freight. That goes for the profusion of foods that are purported to cause or prevent cancer, and macroeconomic literature that claim to document a stimulus "multiplier."

Meanwhile, *Science* magazine editors who rebuke politicians might have more authority if their own science wasn't so political.