

academics contact other international rights organizations. “We will not give up until justice is done in these sad cases,” Corillon says.

The persecution of academics who don’t see eye to eye with the government is likely to continue. “Currently there are hundreds of academics in similar situations,” who may face reprisals for holding views at odds with the government, says Çiğdem Atakuman, an archaeologist at Middle East Technical University in Ankara. Turkish academics who study “dangerous topics” such as the Kurdish or Armenian minorities, evolution, or secular

democracy are at risk of being “excommunicated from academia,” she says. Atakuman says she is disappointed that “despite all the outcry of Turkish academics,” the European Union and United States haven’t brought any pressure to bear on the Turkish government.

Discouraged Turkish scientists may take heart from Atakuman’s own story. She was chief editor of a popular science journal published by the government until she ran an issue in 2009 celebrating Charles Darwin, whose theory of evolution does not sit well with many supporters of the AK-led govern-

ment. After losing her position over the publication, Atakuman sued the government for lost wages and damage to her reputation. Last week, she won the first of two cases.

Gürüz and his five colleagues facing more than a decade in prison can only hope for a similar vindication when their appeal is heard. “Throughout my life, I have pursued academic excellence and upheld human intellect above all,” Gürüz penned in an essay in prison last year. “Where I should get rewarded, I now get punished.”

—JOHN BOHANNON

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

# House Subpoena Revives Battle Over Air Pollution Studies

Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives have taken an old battle over the health data that underlie Clean Air Act regulations to a new level. For the first time in 21 years, the House science committee has issued a subpoena, demanding confidential data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Committee Chair Lamar Smith (R-TX) has said that if EPA does not oblige, he may go after the institutions that conducted the groundbreaking studies decades ago.

Since 2011, Smith has made repeated requests to EPA for what he calls the “secret science” used to justify regulations that the agency promulgates under the Clean Air Act. Smith argues that the public should have a chance to scrutinize the data from two federally funded studies: the so-called Harvard Six Cities Study and a body of related data gathered by the American Cancer Society (ACS). Yet critics say the move is designed to allow industry to attack what is widely considered to be seminal work on the health impacts of air pollution. The latest move is “déjà vu all over again,” says economist C. Arden Pope of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, an author of both studies.

In the 1993 Six Cities study, published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Harvard researchers followed more than 8000 participants for 14 to 16 years and found an association between the risk of death from lung cancer and cardiopulmonary disease and exposure to particulate matter, or soot, in the air. Two years later, some of those same researchers used ACS’s much larger patient database to support the

connection between air pollution and mortality in Cancer Prevention Study II. Both studies were cited in EPA’s tightening of soot standards last December.

The battle over Six Cities is almost as old as the study itself. In 1997, EPA issued new air quality standards based on the Six Cities findings, placing the first limits on fine parti-



**Mounting evidence.** Chair Lamar Smith is apparently unpersuaded by the stacks of research, handed to him by Democrats, in support of air pollution regulations.

cles (2.5 micrometers across or less), whose sources include vehicle exhaust and industrial smokestacks.

Industry representatives demanded that the raw data be made public so the findings could be checked for errors (*Science*, 25 July 1997, p. 467). Harvard refused, citing confidentiality agreements with the study participants. The researchers had collected birth and death dates, smoking habits, diet, and health information including the presence of cancer and lung disease. In a compromise, Harvard shared the data with the Health Effects Institute (HEI), a nonprofit research organization partially funded by the auto

industry. HEI convened a team of independent scientists, which confirmed the findings in a study published in 2000.

At a contentious committee meeting last week, ranking member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) placed that HEI study in front of Smith, along with thousands of pages of other peer-reviewed research supporting the studies. She asked that the stacks be inserted into the committee record “since the Majority has claimed they don’t have enough science to review.” House Democrats also argued that most of the information requested was already available to legitimate researchers. ACS has a procedure for sharing its data with other institutions.

“I have to assume you will be passing this data to—excuse my language—industry hacks,” Johnson said in her opening statement Thursday. Smith asserted the data would be shared with “various reputable entities and organizations” and would be “de-identified” so that no names would be made public. But because the six cities were small, it would be easy to quickly figure out who the participants were, according to Pope.

The resolution was passed on 1 August in a vote strictly along party lines. It authorizes subpoenas for EPA as well as “other custodians of research data,” which could include both Harvard University and ACS, Smith said. Only EPA has received a subpoena so far, directing EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to produce the data by 19 August. The agency has not indicated what it intends to do.

—KELLY SERVIC