



Obama's Climate/public Health Threat Claim Right out of EPA Faux Scare Playbook

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Following a playbook designed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as described in memos the Obama administration fought to keep secret, on April 7 President Barack Obama announced efforts to highlight the alleged public health impacts of climate change on children and minorities. Obama made the announcement personal, noting he was terribly frightened once when he had to rush his daughter Malia to the emergency room when she couldn't breathe due to asthma.

As an asthma sufferer myself, I can attest such an attack is frightening. However, as a recent study (one in a long line of studies) shows, asthma attacks and the increasing rates of asthma have nothing to do with global warming, and everything to do with poverty, increasingly sedentary lifestyles, and indoor air quality. It is shameless of Obama to exploit his daughter's asthma to push his politically unpopular climate agenda.

The recent study, authored by a research team led by Dr. Corrine Keet of Johns Hopkins Children's Center, found no link between outdoor air quality and childhood asthma. Rather, the study points to indoor air pollution, from secondhand smoke, mold, rodents, and the like, as a significant factor in childhood asthma cases. EPA does not have authority over indoor air pollution.

Discussing the study in *Environment & Climate News*, Paul Knappenberger, assistant director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute, said, "Clearly, I think it undermines one of the primary excuses used by the EPA to regulate carbon dioxide emissions and some types of air pollutants as well."

Since science has not established a link between climate change and public health, much less a specific link between global warming and the health of children or minorities, one cannot help but wonder why the administration is pushing this line of argument.

A memo released as part of an ongoing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request examining EPA rule-making reveals the administration's motives. The March 2009 memo shows EPA feared it was losing support for its climate efforts because opinion polls consistently showed the public ranked fighting global warming very low on its list of priorities. The memo describes EPA's decision to shift the debate from concerns about melting ice caps and declining polar bear populations, to promoting the idea global warming poses a direct threat to public health, especially children's and minorities health. Quoting the memo,

Most Americans will never see a polar ice cap, nor will [they] ever have a chance to see a polar bear in its natural habitat. Therefore, it is easy to detach from the seriousness of the issue. Unfortunately, climate change in the abstract is an increasingly – and consistently – unpersuasive argument to make. However, if we shift from making this issue about polar caps [to being] about our neighbor with respiratory illness we can potentially bring this issue home to many Americans.

According to the memo, EPA took steps to raise concerns about climate change among minority groups and women, using headline-catching “hooks” concerning social justice and children's health.

Per the memo, “We must begin to create a causal link between the worries of Americans and the proactive mission we're pushing.”

Chris Horner, an attorney and senior fellow of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, obtained the memo through FOIA. Horner said, “This memo shows EPA's recognition the global warming case is ‘consistently – an unpersuasive argument to make,’ and thus required a facelift, from a pro-scarcity movement of wealthy white elites to a racial and ‘social justice’ issue.”

Considering how the mainstream media unquestioningly parrots every claim made by the Obama administration concerning climate change, it did not surprise me reporters failed to link the president's April 7 announcement to the recently uncovered EPA memos. Evidently bad climate news, as opposed to the truth, sells papers.