



Sheldon Whitehouse: So-called 'scientists' may be engaged in fraud against public

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The Journal's March 8 editorial "For scientific freedom" makes a big presumption: that what is at issue is "scientific freedom."

As many authors have pointed out (e.g., Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, "Merchants of Doubt"; Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, "Lead Wars"; David Michaels, "Doubt is Their Product"), an industry strategy of creating false doubt about product hazards is well established.

In a recent case brought by the Justice Department, a federal court found the false doubt strategy used by the tobacco industry to be so riddled with falsehood as to amount to a racketeering enterprise.

Asking how the climate denial "scientists" are funded is an important part of uncovering whether this is legitimate science, or a climate replay of tobacco's fraudulent racketeering enterprise. No one is saying the industry "scientists" should be silenced, just that the public should know how they're paid.

Since The Journal's Commentary page has become a persistent mouthpiece for climate denial front groups (running pieces by the likes of the Cato Institute's Chip Knappenberger or the Heartland Institute's Tom Harris), it is perhaps unsurprising that it should presume that industry-funded climate denial is legitimate science, and not a fraudulent enterprise. But that is the very question at issue.

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