

## Ohio Tea Party survey to candidates: "The regulation of Carbon Dioxide in our atmosphere should be left to God and not government and I oppose all measures of Cap and Trade as well as the teaching of global warming theory in our schools."

Posted By [Joe](#) On September 1, 2010 @ 12:26 pm In [Politics](#) | [40 Comments](#)

At first, I wasn't going to blog on this because I thought it must be a hoax. Who could possibly ask such a question of candidates? Then again, the Tea Party have [outsourced their thinking on climate to The Viscount Monckton of Brenchley](#) <sup>[1]</sup>, which is as ridiculous as it gets.

Yesterday, the UK *Guardian's* Leo Hickman [reported](#) <sup>[2]</sup> the story, "with a side order of jaw drop":

A local Ohioan newspaper called the [Sandusky Register has unearthed an email](#) <sup>[3]</sup> sent out last week by a local Tea Party group called [The Freedom Institute of Erie County](#) <sup>[4]</sup> to the representatives of candidates seeking office in the forthcoming elections. The email ([pdf](#) <sup>[5]</sup>) begins:

"We are a Tea Party Group in Erie County called The Freedom Institute of Erie County and we are preparing a Conservative voter guide and would like help from your candidates. We ask they answer the following 15 questions so that we can more clearly define their position on many items. These answers will be put into our voter guide and allow us to rate, recommend, and endorse candidates. Without these questions being answered we cannot give a full endorsement of your candidate...You are allowed qualifiers to your answers but please keep it short sweet and simple. We intend to distribute this list in Erie County and hope it to reach 1,000+ Republicans and at least 4,000+ Independents that have a history of voting conservatively."

You can read all the items at your leisure — with your head in a vise, to be on the safe side — but the one that strains credulity, even for the Tea Party, is

2. The regulation of Carbon Dioxide in our atmosphere should be left to God and not government and I oppose all measures of Cap and Trade as well as the teaching of global warming theory in our schools.

The second half is, I suppose, pretty standard fare, but the first half is based on a theology known to nobody. Even if one were to adopt that worldview, it still remains the case in most religious philosophies that God can act through man.

**One merely need replace "carbon dioxide" with, say "toxic air pollutants" to see how absurd and self-contradictory the statement is. Or one could replace "Carbon Dioxide in our atmosphere" with, say, "crime" — that's what the 10 Commandments are therefore, no? But that all does assume these folks are open to even a modicum of logic.**

Hickman himself writes:

The use of the word "God" should inform us – as if we really needed telling – what helps to frame the thinking behind many of these questions. Then there's the use of the term "government": [climate change](#) <sup>[6]</sup> is not a question of science for the Tea Partiers, it's merely a Trojan horse being used by socialists to increase the role and influence of Big Government. So much so, that it should not even be taught in schools. (I've [written before](#) <sup>[7]</sup> about the efforts by Tea Party groups to strip climate change from the school curriculum.)

Certainly Hickman has nailed [the real reason conservatives don't believe in climate science](#) <sup>[8]</sup> — it's about the solution, not the problem. And the right wing desire to teach anti-scientific disinformation to our children is nothing new (see [South Dakota legislators tell schools to teach 'astrological' explanation for global warming](#) <sup>[9]</sup>).

In case you were wondering who [The Freedom Institute of Erie County](#) <sup>[4]</sup> is, just click on their website and click on "The Enemy" tab, and up pops shadowy images of Barack Obama. Hickman does a bit more digging:

The email sent out to candidates, as revealed by the Sandusky Register, was authored by Jon P Morrow, who is listed on the Freedom Institute of Erie County website as a member of its "steering committee". Morrow also writes a [blog over at Patriots Unite!](#) <sup>[10]</sup> in which a [recent entry](#) <sup>[11]</sup> provides this rather intriguing analysis of Hurricane Katrina's impact on the citizens of New Orleans:

"Government rules, program, and fees and taxes, though some are well intentioned, do nothing but hold those back that they were designed to help. Take Hurricane Katrina for an example. There were so many people that were on welfare and section 8 housing before the storm and after the storm literally kicked them out of a socialized (government provided) lifestyle many now have jobs and are starting to enjoy a taste of success."

In other words: "Yay, thank God for the Big Government-busting winds of Hurricane Katrina."

One would be tempted to put these folks into the lunatic fringe, but Hickman explains why "that would be a mistake":

... it would appear they attract the support of some significant players. From an environmental perspective, it is a concern to see that Freedom Institute of Erie County website lists among its "partners" the Heritage Foundation and the [Koch-funded](#) <sup>[12]</sup> Cato Institute. These two influential right-wing thinktanks are very familiar names to those who participate in the climate debate as they are among the leading sponsors of climate scepticism. That their names are now being associated with the views being espoused by the likes of the Freedom Institute of Erie County should act as a sobering reminder of the United States that might await us if the wider Tea Party movement achieves the political victories it seeks in November and beyond.

Think Progress notes in its [post](#) <sup>[13]</sup> on this candidate survey:

... while some Republicans view the Tea Party as [toxic to the GOP](#) <sup>[14]</sup>, House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) has [fully embraced](#) <sup>[15]</sup> the Tea Party's input, stating that members "represent the same values, concerns" of "tens of millions of other Americans" and that "we should listen to them, we should work with them and we should walk amongst them."

And I would add that hard-core anti-scientific pro-pollution climate denial is becoming a litmus test for the Tea Party and indeed the entire conservative movement:

- [GOP WI Sen. candidate Ron Johnson: "I absolutely do not believe in the science of man-caused climate change," claims "sunspot activity or just something in the geologic eons of time" is warming the planet](#) <sup>[16]</sup>
- [Every GOP New Hampshire Senate candidate is a global warming denier](#) <sup>[17]</sup>
- [New Mexico GOP candidates deny global warming reality](#) <sup>[18]</sup>
- [Leading GOP Senate candidate Joe Miller says "We haven't heard there's man-made global warming."](#) <sup>[19]</sup>

We ignore these folks at our peril — and at the peril of our children and countless future generations.

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Article printed from Climate Progress: <http://climateprogress.org>

URL to article: <http://climateprogress.org/2010/09/01/tea-party-candidate-survey-global-warming-denial/>

URLs in this post:

- [1] outsourced their thinking on climate to The Viscount Monckton of Brechley: <http://climateprogress.org/2010/04/06/tea-partiers-to-hear-from-climate-disinformer-lord-monckton-freedomworks/>
- [2] reported: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2010/aug/31/tea-party-candidates-climate-change>
- [3] *Sandusky Register* has unearthed an email: <http://www.sanduskyregister.com/sandusky/2010/aug/30/tea-party-cooks-candidate-questionnaire>
- [4] The Freedom Institute of Erie County: <http://www.americaslastbesthope.org/>
- [5] pdf: [http://www.sanduskyregister.com/files/www2.sanduskyregister.com/file\\_attach/2010/August/TeaPartyQuestions.pdf](http://www.sanduskyregister.com/files/www2.sanduskyregister.com/file_attach/2010/August/TeaPartyQuestions.pdf)
- [6] climate change: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/climate-change>
- [7] written before: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2010/may/28/rightwing-group-climate-change>
- [8] the real reason conservatives don't believe in climate science: <http://climateprogress.org/2008/06/01/krauthammer-part-2-the-real-reason-conservatives-dont-believe-in-climate-science/>
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- [10] blog over at Patriots Unite!: <http://patriots-unite.com/blogs.php>
- [11] recent entry: <http://patriots-unite.com/blogs/conservative-principles>
- [12] Koch-funded: [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/30/100830fa\\_fact\\_mayer?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/30/100830fa_fact_mayer?currentPage=all)
- [13] post: <http://thinkprogress.org/2010/08/31/tea-party-boehner-ohio/>
- [14] toxic to the GOP: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/24/AR2010082405001.html>
- [15] fully embraced: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jul/21/boehner-gop-should-walk-amongst-tea-party/?page=1>
- [16] GOP WI Sen. candidate Ron Johnson: "I absolutely do not believe in the science of man-caused climate change," claims "sunspot activity or just something in the geologic eons of time" is warming the planet: <http://climateprogress.org/2010/08/18/gop-wi-sen-candidate-ron-johnson-%e2%80%9ci-absolutely-do-not-believe-in-the-science-of-man-caused-climate-change%e2%80%9d-claims-sunspot-activity-or-just-something-in-the-geologic-eons-of-time/>
- [17] Every GOP New Hampshire Senate candidate is a global warming denier: <http://climateprogress.org/2010/08/22/every-gop-new-hampshire-senate-candidate-is-a-global-warming-denier/>

[18] New Mexico GOP candidates deny global warming reality: <http://climateprogress.org/2010/08/24/new-mexico-gop-candidates-deny-global-warming-reality/>

[19] Leading GOP Senate candidate Joe Miller says "We haven't heard there's man-made global warming.": <http://climateprogress.org/2010/08/25/alaska-firestorm-leading-gop-senate-candidate-joe-miller-says-we-haven%E2%80%99t-heard-there%E2%80%99s-man-made-global-warming/>