

Science AMA Series: Hi Reddit, we're the organizers of the March for Science, and we're here to talk about the importance of fighting for science and how you can get involved. Ask us anything!

March_{for science}¹ and r/ScienceAMAs¹

¹Affiliation not available

April 17, 2023

Abstract

Hey Reddit! We're organizers from the March for Science, here to answer your questions about the March. The March for Science champions robustly funded and publicly communicated science as a pillar of human freedom and prosperity. We unite as a diverse, nonpartisan group to call for science that upholds the common good and for political leaders and policy makers to enact evidence based policies in the public interest. The March for Science got started with a reddit discussion on /r/politics about a Scientists' March on Washington. We scientists took that initial interest and started a website and social media accounts to start recruiting. The march quickly gained hundreds of thousands of followers on social media and became the March for Science, an event planned to take place in over 400 cities across the globe, with hundreds of thousands of people expected to attend. More information about March for Science at marchforscience.com. We are: Dr. Jonathan Berman - National Co-Chair I'm a postdoctoral fellow at UTHSCSA. I study how the kidney reabsorbs sodium and the relationship between sodium reabsorption and blood pressure. I'm one of three national co-chairs for the March for Science, along with Dr. Caroline Weinberg, and Valorie Aquino. Dr. Rachael Holloway - National Diversity & Inclusion Lead I'm a clinical psychologist who specializes in behavioral medicine, trauma, and neurocognitive disorders. My graduate program has won national awards for its training in diversity and its rate of graduating underrepresented minority students. In my postdoctoral fellowship at VA San Diego/UCSD, I served on the diversity committee and completed mentorships in diversity and social justice advocacy. Miles Greb - Organizer of the Seattle March for Science. Sci Comm writer focused on returning optimism to science and science fiction. Creator of several comics designed to promote skepticism, scientific wonder, and a dedication to accurate science in literature. Organizing the the Satellite March for Science group in the beautiful city of Seattle Washington. Dr. Bryan Dunyak - Steering Committee, Chair of Marketing & Tech, March For Science - San Francisco I'm a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California at San Francisco. I study the role of cellular housekeeping mechanisms and their misregulation in cancer and neurodegeneration. I am passionate about science outreach; I have a long history working as a moderator with /r/science to encourage scientific discussion while helping to bridge the gap between practicing scientists and the public. We'll be back at 1 pm EST to answer your questions, Ask Us Anything!

[REDDIT](#)

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MARCH_FOR_SCIENCE [R/SCIENCE](#)

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More information about March for Science at marchforscience.com.

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Dr. Rachael Holloway - National Diversity & Inclusion Lead

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Miles Greb - Organizer of the [Seattle March for Science](#).

Sci Comm writer focused on returning optimism to science and science fiction. Creator of several comics designed to promote skepticism, scientific wonder, and a dedication to accurate science in literature. Organizing the the Satellite March for Science group in the beautiful city of Seattle Washington.

Dr. Bryan Dunyak - Steering Committee, Chair of Marketing & Tech, [March For Science - San Francisco](#)

I'm a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California at San Francisco. I study the role of cellular housekeeping mechanisms and their misregulation in cancer and neurodegeneration. I am passionate about science outreach; I have a long history working as a moderator with [/r/science](#) to encourage scientific discussion while helping to bridge the gap between practicing scientists and the public.

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- How will you avoid being painted as a liberal event by the media ?
- How do you keep the message centered to arrive at clear results. Many big events get hijacked by

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other parties to convey their message, how do you stay on point ?

- Let's say i am a politician, what should i learn from this event ? What should i do afterwards ?

[ballthyrn](#)

MILES:

"How will you avoid being painted as a liberal event by the media ?"

No political party has a monopoly on good ideas, and no party asks scientist what they think first. Some scientific issues end up being accepted or rejected more by one party or the other. We can see the science around climate change being more accepted by the left; but matters around GM, vaccines, or Nuclear power are not as accepted. Sadly ideas that are not controversial in scientific fields, become so when partisan politics get engaged. We hope to create a new energy for people who want more science in their politics to be engaged. We may not be able to create a perfect science party, but we can create more science voters.

"How do you keep the message centered to arrive at clear results. Many big events get hijacked by other parties to convey their message, how do you stay on point ?"

There is a common saying about organizing groups of free thinkers, scientist, and highly engaged people – "It's like herding cats". While this is true, that the group will attract all manner of people with equally diverse causes, the good news is that the internet loves cats. ;) But more on point, up here in Seattle we have three major values. 1 Science is the best method we have of understanding the world.

1. Science is for everyone
2. Science is an active process.

If you think there is something preventing those values from manifesting, I wouldn't consider that a side issue. For example, if we say "Science is for everyone" and there are problems with access to scientific institutions for groups of the population, then clearly that value is not being upheld. Science is just the method, is one way to look at it. That view isn't wrong on many levels of course. But we cannot ignore the human element to science. We must also protect and stand up for that.

"Let's say i am a politician, what should i learn from this event ? What should i do afterwards ?"

People want evidence based politics. Nothing delivers the goods like Science. If you want to understand or bolster your economy, you need good analytics. You want healthier and happier voters, you need medical research and institutions. You want to inspire the country to look forward, you need astronomy and new technology.

- How will you avoid being painted as a liberal event by the media ?
- How do you keep the message centered to arrive at clear results. Many big events get hijacked by other parties to convey their message, how do you stay on point ?
- Let's say i am a politician, what should i learn from this event ? What should i do afterwards ?

[ballthyrn](#)

The best thing we can do is be true to our message, stay on point, try to set a non-partisan tone, and tell the truth about what we stand for. -Jonathan

What are the advocacy plans for *after* the March? Having an enormous turnout looks great on TV but in order to have any significant effect, there needs to be mobilization of the participants to push for pro-science policy and legislation. It would be fantastic to see all the partner science organizations (AAAS, SFN, etc.) come together with march participants to advocate for science at all levels of government. Those email lists gotta be useful for something right?

[shiruken](#)

Marching gathers attention to show the world that people care about science and makes people invested. The march is just the first step! We're going to have a week of science action following the Marches (details forthcoming), as well as a number of other projects. 400+ cities will now have experienced organizers. Thousands of scientists and science enthusiasts will be ready to take action and make their voices heard. We plan to continue as an organization to advocate for our mission and goals. We're connected with all the people most ready to advocate for science.

The march itself sends a strong message but that alone is not enough to create the lasting change we need to shift the role of science in policy and move science forward. We hope to move forward with all of our partners together -- from large scientific societies to small local non-profits -- to advocate for science at all levels of government and society. We have the opportunity to couple an incredible coalition of science organizations with thousands of motivated scientists and science supporters to change the world.

-Jonathan and Caroline

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Rachael: The march itself sends a strong message but that alone is not enough to create the lasting change. We need to shift the role of science in policy and move science forward. We hope to move forward with all of our partners together - from large scientific societies to small local non-profits - to advocate for science at all levels of government and society. We have the opportunity to couple an incredible coalition of science organizations with thousands of motivated scientists and science supporters to improve conversations between scientists and the public.

More specifically, we have an "action week" planned for after the March to get us started - stay tuned for more details!

Hi! I live in Alabama, shhhh

Science is more important here now than ever and I fear that as usual this will just turn into a hippie earth day gathering. What can we do to get this recognized as legitimate and not just an activity for kids to do construction paper posters to put on local news channels. Trust me, I hate to ask this question but we have larger turn outs for fish tossing competitions. We are less than a month away, no news coverage on this and the locations are still TBA

Edit: tried to post your link to the local subReddit, was rejected and considered spam.. maybe get someone to check that out

[Robisall](#)

Personally I think there's a fine balance between science-as-entertainment and discussing science without condescension or oversimplification. All the marches plan to have a diverse speakers list that elevates the voices of actual scientists, and who discuss science in a way that's accurate, honest and free of jargon. We'll also have speakers whose lives are affected by science in other ways. Science

teachers, science communicators, patients whose lives have been saved by medical research, firefighters, and more. We're going to address a lot of topics. Yes climate change is one of them but it's certainly not the only science issue to be addressed. -Jonathan

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Bryan: Certain areas of the country are likely going to embrace the MFS far differently than others. One thing that seems to resonate with people is having a discussion on how science changes their lives. They don't necessarily realize it, but scientific advancements have a huge impact on what they do and work with every day. In Alabama, for example, I'm guessing that agriculture and veterinary medicine regularly make use of new science and technologies. Finding ways to highlight this (town hall meetings, flyers, digital media on facebook, etc) may go a long way towards legitimizing the movement in your community!

I'm not crazy about the march. Here's my main two reasons why.

(1) The public doesn't perceive that scientists are not passionate or caring. The public perceives that scientists don't work on issues relevant to everyday concerns and don't come to a single concrete consensus the way other professional classes do. A march isn't going to help explain why, for example, working on the development of a fly eye is relevant to understanding cancer in humans. (It is! Ask a molecular biologist why!) Or why having 98% of scientists agree on man-made climate change IS a consensus. That level of dissent is ridiculously low for matters scientific.

(2) The numbers are going to be poor relative to other marches. The visuals of fewer people than the inauguration or women's march, for example, will not do the scientific community any favors among those who are sore about the perceived "slight" by the media about reports of low inauguration numbers.

There are a lot of things we can do to promote science in this country. Walking through the streets of DC chanting "Hey Hey Ho Ho NIH cuts have got to go" is not one of them.

Activism is good, but a march, not so much.

I'm happy to hear the organizers' thoughts on this.

[crabbypage](#)

Bryan: Happy to provide some thoughts!

1) One issue with biology especially is that it is incredibly difficult to isolate testable variables and understand the system you work in. Some people in the tech community have said things like "if we can reverse engineer a microchip, we can reverse engineer a cell". The problem with this thinking is that we understand many of the fundamental processes that occur in a microchip and understand basic

principles towards it's output. This isn't true at all with a cell. So, yes, you're absolutely right it's a communication problem on why working on a fly eye is important to someone with late stage cancer. One goal of this March is to get scientists to better engage with the public. That is something we work for continually on [/r/science](#) as well. We need to be better at explaining our research and it's value to those outside of the science community. While the March itself may not explain why working on the development of a fly eye is relevant to cancer in humans, *it does* however work towards building a new paradigm in which scientists are better advocates and interface more with the community. Having scientists talk and explain what they are doing and why actually does directly answer that question.

2) I'm not sure the numbers are going to be as poor as you think. There is **a lot** of support for the March in local communities. That said, it's not a competition. We aren't trying to beat the Women's March, and even if we did it wouldn't change anything. This is already the largest gathering of scientists and science-advocates ever. That is hugely powerful, and it has the potential to be the beginning of a shift in the way the public perceives science, scientists, and scientific research.

The March is just one part of a broader goal to increase scientific outreach and activism.

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Miles: I am not a "protest" guy. I support tons of causes, but I am more of a thinker and planner than a marcher. So I understand where you are coming from. I can tell you though that we are not looking to simply chant "Yeah Science!" down the street and be done with it. We are working long sleepless nights to find ways to engage the public with actual hard science. I don't want to just get a giant group of people together, I want to put the scientific method in people's hands and say "This is yours too". We are reaching out to people doing real science in Seattle, and telling their stories. Not only to highlight their work, but to humanize the whole struggle that is trying to understand the cosmos. Some say marches are just steam. That may be true. But let us be the steam that moves the wheels.

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Rachael: You actually touch on issues that we ourselves are working to address through the March. We aren't only interested in portraying scientists as passionate and caring, but also in demonstrating to people why they, personally, should care about science, and how a devaluing and defunding of science hurts everyone. This includes issues like medical research and climate science, as well as educating the general public on the process of science, just like you mention.

There are a lot of things we can do to promote science in this country. Walking through the streets of DC chanting "Hey Hey Ho Ho NIH cuts have got to go" is not one of them. Activism is good, but a march, not so much.

We don't see them as mutually exclusive. A March is just the jumping off point to galvanize scientists and science supporters into activism. Marches aren't singular events in a vacuum - they're ways to initiate people to take action, and even sway to possible, on-the-fence supporters of the issues.

How are you planning to share your message to places where rational/science/evidence-based thinking is needed most? Such as places where literacy isn't high.

[Inform2015](#)

We think about this a lot. Scientists and science supporters are not limited to large cities and the global nature of the march reflects that. We hope that bringing together scientists and science supporters in areas around the world will encourage people to go into their communities to talk about the importance of their science at PTA meetings, science fairs, and rotary clubs. Our message supporting science's role in society and policy needs to be emphasized all over the world and we hope through the power of social media and a grassroots movement, we can help to do that.

Critical thinking need to be taught early and we're hoping to work with teachers and students to make this happen. - Jonathan

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[Inform2015](#)

Bryan: This is a great question, and I suspect it is going to be different for regions around the US (and

world!). Even in areas considered to have a high science literacy, like here in San Francisco, there is a problem with some communities not having equal access to education. In the short-term, we're hoping to get groups from all over our region involved with the March and are hosting a festival afterwards for members of the community. One of our main focuses is reaching out to communities and involving them in the development of the March, making sure that it is accessible to them and turning it into a positive learning experience. Long-term, we would like to find ways to regularly engage all of the different communities that surround us, provide educational materials, host science fairs and facilitate interactions with scientists to increase exposure to science, and more! This is just the beginning of our brainstorming process for long-term outreach.

Why haven't you put forward any concrete goals? I read through your websites stances and goals and there is not a single actual tangible goal. Mostly esoteric goals about diversity in STEM and how science is good for everyone.

This march doesn't appear to have a purpose outside of virtue signaling about science being great. It doesn't even specifically reference what funding is being cut in the part about defunding or what you recommend funding in it's place.

I'm a scientist who disagrees with the marchforscience because my experience in reality doesn't align with what you appear to be putting forward. It is not anti-intellectualism or lack of diversity that is wingclipping the scientists of the future, it's the dynamics of global economics. The fact that that is unaddressed alienates me as a scientist from your cause.

Here is why I would not suggest someone become a Chemist as I did (In ultra summary form). Even if someone was passionate about Chemistry I would tell them to think long and hard about joining my field. With respect to pharmaceuticals. Large companies are outsourcing large amounts of their workforces or recruiting largely low wage foreign nationals, driving the payscale of incoming entry level scientists through the floor. massive prohibitive costs by regulatory agencies make production of in human therapeutics insanely expensive. This has driven the industry more towards sourcing their projects by buying out (often foreign based) CROs or simply contracting the development milestones to the CROs leading to downsizing or elimination of domestic R&D. Doing specialist contract labor or flipping companies isn't an entry level market so there is often no place for entry level employees in this new ecosystem. Due to a mixture of economic recession and decreased federal spending the idea of getting a PhD and then entering tenure track academic careers is becoming less and less viable. These days if you get a degree you're looking at having spent 8+ years in school (ignoring post doc work if you do that) to fight tooth and nail over relatively low paying jobs with no chance at advancement not only against other domestic grads, but foreign grads and against an enormous force of experienced workers who are now re-entering the workforce.

So when I see the bleak future of myself and my fellow scientists early in their career and I see awful job/career prospects due to regulation/outsourcing/globalization/economics and you march on washington with non-concrete handwavey goals about diversity and outreach it makes me want to distance myself from your movement.

[doctorcrass](#)

Bryan: I'm also a PhD with a background in Chemistry that is now focused on biomedical research looking to join the pharmaceutical/biotech industry.

I think you raise some valid concerns, but it is taking an overly simplistic view of the entirety of the March. The issues that scientific research faces are multi-faceted. You raise some great points about the issues with that one particular field (and one I am of course passionate about). However, just because you haven't experienced anti-intellectualism and dismissiveness of your work in the field of Chemistry, doesn't mean that it isn't a huge concern to the more global scientific community. I think a

lot of Environmental Science researchers, for instance, would disagree with that assessment.

One goal that helps all of us, regardless of field, is humanizing scientists and increasing our outreach efforts. Breaking down stereotypes of science and scientists, while enhancing the outreach towards marginalized communities and making science more accessible, is a tangible goal that we can improve. I don't think having an aspect of the March and our broader efforts afterwards focusing on diversity and outreach is handwavey in any way, and I think that working on those aspects (as well as others) does great benefit to the scientific community and our society as a whole.

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[doctorcrass](#)

MILES: I can only speak for Seattle here. But one of our goals is very clear. The administration purposed cuts to the Puget Sound area EPA of 93%. We want to make it known to all our representatives that we expect them to stand against these cuts. That isn't trimming the budget based on disagreements on fiscal matters. It undermines an important field of science in the North West.

I'm a conservative & soon-to-be computer science phd. In these events, I often feel left out because it turns out to be a left-wing rally that's all about climate change and bashing right wing ideology. I'm very

strongly and passionately for science funding especially NASA missions and AI research. But I'm worried that I'm not really welcome to this rally. What would you say to people like me?

[danielcanadia](#)

Miles:

Please come. I have personally tweeted out, and posted in our facebook group making it clear that conservatives are welcomed. I grew up in a small town, a very conservative town. I know many right wing people that care about science. Many of them feel like their party dose not always represent their commitment to science. The left is not going to be able to change that. More right wing people, who let their representatives know that they too care about science and it's findings can.

Thank you for hosting the AMA and for organizing the March for Science.

Do you find it odd that science has become politicized, considering when done properly it is void of bias? How do you respond to criticism of your work and the work of your colleagues?

[hnglmkrnglbry](#)

Bryan: In some form or another, I think that science has often been politicized. Science is also often biased, it is done by humans and we all have some form of bias. However, by working together, replicating data and results, addressing limitations and potential biases in our work, we can continue to build towards a consensus and highlight the body of evidence that arises.

On a personal level, I actually like being criticized for my work. It keeps me grounded and exposes me to new ways of approaching my data that I had not considered before. I take it as a challenge! It allows me to do better science, and if I'm confident in the work I've done (properly controlled, asks the right questions, etc.) then it becomes another conversation about science, which I love!

Thank you for hosting the AMA and for organizing the March for Science.

Do you find it odd that science has become politicized, considering when done properly it is void of bias? How do you respond to criticism of your work and the work of your colleagues?

[hnglmkrnglbry](#)

Void of bias

I don't think that's true. Bias is inherent to human nature, and impossible to eliminate entirely. Science as a tool is our best way of minimizing biases.

How do you respond to criticism of your work and the work of your colleagues?

By deeply considering it, sometimes crying over it, and trying to do better if the criticism is valid. Personally I make a lot of mistakes. I'm a deeply flawed person and when someone calls me out on it, I want to do better and make right when possible. That said, not all criticism is good or true. At the end of the day you have to be true to yourself, true to the evidence, and true to the epistemology that underlies the scientific method. -Jonathan

How do you plan to unite all of your marchers behind the importance of all scientific research as a whole?

We are people who value science and recognize how science serves. We come from all races, all religions, all gender identities, all sexual orientations, all abilities, all socioeconomic backgrounds, all political perspectives, and all nationalities. Our diversity is our greatest strength: a wealth of opinions, perspectives, and ideas is critical for the scientific process. What unites us is a love of science, and an insatiable curiosity. We all recognize that science is everywhere and affects everyone.

While this is a great message, I worry about that diversity when it comes to science in particular. I find many who tout the importance science to be all too similar to many of those who practice religion in that they pick and choose what parts to believe, practice, and live by. I foresee people in this movement touting vaccines and climate science while blaspheming GMOs, and other various combinations of this.

Outside of the march, will there be any speeches, workshops, and other ways to stress the benefits of all types of scientific studies?

[Messiah](#)

Rachael: Well, we don't really have control about what individual people who march are claiming to march for, but we as an organization are interested in promoting science-based policy across the spectrum. This means we are pro-vaccine, pro-GMO, pro-advocating for climate science, etc.

Our post-March plans are still in the works - so stay tuned!

Hi everyone, and thank you for doing this AMA. I think the March for Science is a great idea, and I am looking forward to marching myself in DC later next month.

I have a couple of questions for you. First, you say:

The March for Science champions robustly funded and publicly communicated science as a pillar of human freedom and prosperity. We unite as a diverse, nonpartisan group to call for science that upholds the common good and for political leaders and policy makers to enact evidence based policies in the public interest.

This is something that I think sounds great in principle, but is a bit hard to define when you get closer to the problem. For example, what is the criteria for determining whether a national science program is being 'robustly funded' (a percentage of GDP?) or what do you mean by science that is 'publicly communicated' (is this a critique of paywalled journals?).

My second question relates to a talking point that I have seen floating around your social media - the idea that the March is a non-partisan, but political event. I get the concept, and I understand why a nonprofit organization has to be non-partisan, but let's be real: in the U.S. the major threat to science and scientific policy comes from Republicans and in particular the Republican in the White House. I say this because, I have seen the idea that "both sides have anti-science views" gain traction. That seems like a huge false equivalency to me. No major policy position by the Democratic party comes anywhere near the level of some of the anti-science policies GOPers in the US are clamoring to enact. So I would be curious to hear your thoughts on that, and I wish I would hear a lot less of the "both sides are bad" nonsense from the MfS.

Thanks! Looking forward to the March.

[SirT6](#)

Rachael: As to your second question, I don't think it's a false equivalency at all to claim that both sides have anti-science views. They do. We've never made a claim about them being *equally* anti-science in their policy-making. But a March that focused on one political party to the exclusion of the other would

ignore the anti-science attitudes that are present across the spectrum of political belief.

Our stance of being political means that we will criticize and target specific policies that are anti-science, and we have no qualms if those "targets" are disproportionately against one particular party or candidate. But our mission isn't solely against only one party or politician - it's against anti-science attitudes and policies in general. That's why we're non-partisan.

Hi everyone, and thank you for doing this AMA. I think the March for Science is a great idea, and I am looking forward to marching myself in DC later next month.

I have a couple of questions for you. First, you say:

The March for Science champions robustly funded and publicly communicated science as a pillar of human freedom and prosperity. We unite as a diverse, nonpartisan group to call for science that upholds the common good and for political leaders and policy makers to enact evidence based policies in the public interest.

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Thanks! Looking forward to the March.

[SirT6](#)

MILES:

The most green, sustainable, and safe power source we have is Nuclear. But, we are not investing and supporting this tech. This is largely due to the left. We need the Science March to support science based policy. The universe is complex, no "side" is ever likely to get it right all the time.

Hi everyone, and thank you for doing this AMA. I think the March for Science is a great idea, and I am looking forward to marching myself in DC later next month.

I have a couple of questions for you. First, you say:

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Thanks! Looking forward to the March.

[SirT6](#)

Non-partisan isn't for tax purposes. It's the right approach to the problem. It isn't like science denial is a new thing, or invented by any one politician, or group. We're just at a point where science denial threatens to be institutionalized in a way it hasn't before. Science isn't a liberal issue or a conservative issue. That's the exact point of the March. Having science mischaracterized as having partisan polarity is exactly what we're fighting against. -Jonathan

Thank you for hosting an AMA!

I have a few comments and questions, but first a little about my own background. I'm a professional scientist (PhD in Physics) who works at one of our national laboratories. Many of our national labs, including where I work, are more conservative than liberal due to the nature of the work we perform. On the political spectrum, I normally fall somewhere in the middle (social liberal/fiscal conservative with many nuances), trying to rely on being accurately informed prior to forming opinions, and openly willing to change my mind.

Because the march for science is a reaction to the suppression of scientific information by the current crop of politicians, and an attack on the scientific method more generally, I feel this is a crucial movement.

I am concerned that this movement will devolve into an anti-Trump/anti-Republican agenda, allowing conservatives to easily dismiss the crucial advancements science provides for everyone (not only the general public, but also war fighters and national security, which are near and dear to the conservative ideal), by simply claiming the movement as a liberal agenda. Scientists know this is false, but scientists do not communicate well with the general public.

1. What ideas does the movement have to address the misunderstanding by the general public of the process and importance of science for the months and years after the march?

I see this disconnect as more systemic than simply the administration/congress de jour. For example, the space race did wonders to cement the relationship between science and a positive popular opinion.

1. What is the plan to help break free from a political label?

This is of course complicated and nuanced. The reason for the protest is directly linked to the anti-science agenda that republicans have been pursuing for decades, but liberals are not immune to such stupidity. **I'm looking at you anti-vaxers.** One suggestion would be to encourage participants to RESPECTFULLY carry the American flag. I realize this is not something scientists are particularly comfortable with, and many scientists are not American by birth or identity. However, our protest is that the American government is not acting the way we think the American government should and the

consequences are dangerous. We have to stand up and say "Americans will not stand for our government behaving this way," and should therefore carry the flag as a symbol. In addition, popular opinion is swayed by images and video. Having a prominent American symbol associated with the movement will help persuade people, and make it difficult to be labeled as simply a liberal movement. In other words, the movement cannot come across as unAmerican.

1. Would it be better for the movement to attend our local march, or head to D.C.?

[medalgardr](#)

Rachael: I'll address some of your questions - I've been grappling with the political vs. partisan issue quite a bit in my efforts with the March so I can speak to that.

I am concerned that this movement will devolve into an anti-Trump/anti-Republican agenda, allowing conservatives to easily dismiss the crucial advancements science provides for everyone (not only the general public, but also war fighters and national security, which are near and dear to the conservative ideal), by simply claiming the movement as a liberal agenda.

Well, we don't have very much control over how politicians will "spin" this movement, but for our own part we are actively working to maintain our "non-partisan" stance. We aren't advocating for or promoting any messaging that attacks entire policies or politicians, but rather, the specific policies they support that are anti-science.

What is the plan to help break free from a political label? This is of course complicated and nuanced. The reason for the protest is directly linked to the anti-science agenda that republicans have been pursuing for decades, but liberals are not immune to such stupidity. I'm looking at you anti-vaxers.

To clarify - We *are* political. It's hard to have a literal march on Washington and claim it's not political! But we are *non-partisan*. Your point about the anti-vaccine movement is exactly why we maintain this stance. There are anti-science views and policies across the political spectrum, and we're interested in addressing all of them.

A large criticism levied against scientists, as unfair as it may be, is that we are agenda driven.

How do you counter the concern among scientists that this march actually strengthens that unfair argument by literally making it an agenda item?

How do you justify politicising that which should be inherently apolitical?

[captmrwill](#)

Rachael: The fact is, science isn't apolitical in practice. Certain politicians are less likely to support science-based policy and to slash funding for science, which can only harm both scientists and the people science serves and benefits (read: all citizens). When your career and science itself is being attacked, refusing to actively fight to stop that simply for the notion of being "apolitical" seems like a pretty ineffectual way to handle the situation.

Hi everyone and thanks for stopping in for an AMA!

Can you comment on the challenges unique to organizing scientists and science enthusiasts for such a large event? My assumption would be that we're typically harder to motivate to do things that aren't in the lab, field, or interview room, and not as experienced in politics or activism as people who are passionate about other issues.

How do you maintain engagement and focus of such a non-traditional group of activists?

[superhelical](#)

Both scientists and experienced activists are just people, and I think most people share a lot of the same values and ideas. I'm a scientist and activism is new to me, so I'm still learning. We need a wide tent that includes a lot of groups and voices. On the other hand, we need to strive for scientific accuracy in all our public positions. One of the most jarring discoveries from this process has been how often people, both scientists speaking outside their field, as well as many experienced activists, use the word science to justify their prior beliefs without regard to evidence. Anti-vaxxers, climate denialists, "alternative medicine practitioners," the anti-GMO crowd and creationists all claim to love science despite not understanding how it works. -Jonathan

There seems to be a lack of representation amongst you in the traditionally conservative and right wing associated scientific fields: Engineering, Aerospace, Chemistry, Geology, Genetic Engineering, Agriculture etc... you know the sort of scientist who would work for Defence Contractors, or Chemical companies, or Monsanto, or Big Oil... Does this corrode your claim to be non-partisan?

[Lucretius](#)

Miles:

We, the people answering these questions, are not the full spectrum of people organizing or joining the march. We have no problem working with private sector scientists, and will be highlighting one of our "People of Science" video series soon.

I will say as someone who writes a comic about how cool GMO's are I do get accused of working for Monsanto often. Does that count?

It would seem that science has become trendy in popular culture, so that people that don't really understand it, embrace it if just for the "cool factor". So much so, that it generated a counter-movement, and some people roll their eyes at the first mention of the word "science". This type of trend dynamics is common to other things like fashion, music styles and so on. I would argue, admittedly without any hard evidence, that we've reached "peak science", and perhaps we are enduring the backlash.

Now, conjectures apart, I don't think you can teach science, same way you can't teach religion. Attempting to do so is very superficial, and all you're left with are dogmas. In a way, without sufficient understanding, people will accept science the same they accept any other ideas: that is to say, blindly. On the other hand, you'll have people rejecting science for similar reasons. More important than teaching "science", is probably teaching philosophy and give person rational tools to make up their own minds. If not philosophy, at least a strong critical sense, which is maybe what science boils down to. I'd argue this is the best way to avoid those dogmas, and the main difference between a religious and a scientific view of reality.

I realized I don't really have a question, but these two:

1. what exactly is the message you are trying to get across?
2. what is your plan to do it and minimize the backlash, and without sounding "pedantic" or "passé", bearing in mind that that message will be filtered by the media?

edit: bullet points

[whatevs](#)

Rachael:

This type of trend dynamics is common to other things like fashion, music styles and so on. I would argue, admittedly without any hard evidence, that we've reached "peak science", and perhaps we are enduring the backlash.

Hmm, it might be worth considering that you live in an area, or are in a social group, where being interested in science is seen as "cool" or "trendy." There are many, many regions and social groups in which that is not the case. If it were, we would have politicians supporting science-based policy, because they would fear backlash from their constituents.

The fact is, science has improved its public image, but we still have a long way to go. A great way to continue on this path is to demonstrate how science does serve all citizens, or how it should better serve them, so that more people will support science-based policy (I believe this answers your first question).

what is your plan to do it and minimize the backlash, and without sounding "pedantic" or "passé", bearing in mind that that message will be filtered by the media?

Well, all we really can do is make sure our messages are accessible, clear, and inclusive, and hope for (but not bank on) the media covering it accurately.

What's the history behind the March for Science? Who initially thought of it and how did it grow into the enormous operation it is today? How has social media helped or hurt that process?

[shiruken](#)

Bryan: To give some of my thoughts on how it grew into the enormous operation it is today (so not the specifics on the history, but the mentality), I've personally felt that this was "a long time in coming". This attitude towards dismissing scientific consensus has been pervasive for a lot longer than recent events and across the entire political spectrum. It has motivated scientists and science-advocates alike to get involved! In SF, it started as a grassroots group of people that wanted to make the MFS happen in our area and it's exploded from there!

What's the history behind the March for Science? Who initially thought of it and how did it grow into the enormous operation it is today? How has social media helped or hurt that process?

[shiruken](#)

It would be dishonest to claim that it was any one person's idea. I see it as an almost Kuhnian paradigm shift in the discourse about advocacy among scientists. There's been a building desire to speak out, especially among young scientists and MfS became a fulcrum to that shift. Everyone has an individual story about how they got involved. -Jonathan

Hi all,

Thanks for hosting this AMA!

Having ran large(ish) events in academic environments before, I've found that there is often a lot of friction and sometimes conflict with managing the expectations of different parties. Despite the public perception of scientists all uniformly striving towards one singular aim, this is sometimes not the case (thankfully it was uncommon in my experiences, but it did happen).

How do you manage the expectations of different teams trying to influence how the March is handled and organised, and how do you try to balance out any friction that often comes with such large events and movements?

[OldBoltonian](#)

Bryan: I think there will always be some friction with large groups that comprise many different parties and philosophies. The same thing happened with the Women's March, yet it was still a massive success.

Locally, at least, we spent a long time working on our mission statement and making sure that it was inclusive of all parties. We recognize that there will be people from every walk of life participating in the March and they may have many different goals. If friction arises, we reiterate our Mission to support Communication, Funding, Policy, Literacy, and Diversity in Science.

Have you applied or been issued your 501c? Noticed non-profit wasn't anywhere in your statement.

Im put off by your group wanting to sell merchandise within one day of forming, and getting defensive when others do the same. When can we expect your organization to be a non-profit, instead of riding the "March for" bandwagon?

[neuromorph](#)

We are a non profit organization but C3 applications can take months to process. We filed in February but are currently using a fiscal sponsor to accept tax deductible donations on our behalf. We started selling merchandise a few days after we formed because we needed funding for the event. We are entirely staffed by volunteers and every cent of the money raised has gone to putting on the Washington DC march. We encouraged all satellites to sell merchandise, including connecting them to our contact at bonfire and allowing them free use of the logo.

My wife will be attending. She is a Bernie supporter.

Probably missed the window here, but, my question is pretty simple:

Q) Will anyone be discouraged from attending, or simply turned away, based upon their political views?

[rivalfish](#)

Miles:

Everyone who cares about the method of science is welcome. We have far right wing people, far left wing people, people that want to know more about science, people that don't care much about science but love trees, Vulcans, and people who just like marching. We are a diverse march in many ways.

Thanks for organizing the march and for doing this AMA!

I am currently planning on attending, but it is clear to me (from Facebook, Twitter, and my own lab) that people have growing concerns about the way the march is heading. Specifically, the march seems to have gotten a bit off-topic by incorporating LGBTQ issues, as well as some pseudoscience groups, into its core mission. While I am extremely liberal and an active supporter of LGBTQ and similar movements (not the pseudoscience, though), many scientists simply aren't interested in marching for those things. Thus, incorporating "protest culture" into the march has taken away from the core message of the group, politicizing and polarizing what should be a non-partisan issue.

My questions

- How do you plan to keep the march on topic? Lots of people are mad at the moves this administration is making, and for lots of reasons. Is the point just to raise numbers and get everyone involved to show how mad we are about the entire direction of the whole country, or to effect specific policy changes that we want as a field/pursuit/industry?
- Do you not alienate, say, Evangelical Christian or Muslim scientists from your march by claiming that the social liberal agenda is a "scientific issue"? What about public perception among social conservatives who support science, biomedical research, or biotechnology?
- I know you aren't the "thought police" but how do you intend to prevent pseudoscience groups (like anti-vaxxers) from using this march as a platform to legitimize their movements?

[subito_lucres](#)

Rachael: I'll speak to your questions about LGBT issues (which should frankly not be in the same sentence as pseudoscience, but I digress...)

From the very beginning we have been interested in incorporating issues of diversity and inclusion into the March. There are plenty of instances where LGBT issues intersect with science advocacy. For instance, equitable access to good healthcare is both an LGBT concern as well as a science concern. Same goes for discriminatory policies that impact LGBT mental health, suicide rates, etc. These are LGBT issues *and* science issues, not one or the other. Personally, when I march I will be marching for these issues as well as many other issues of diversity and inclusion as they relate to science. They aren't a distraction from science - they *are* science.

Do you not alienate, say, Evangelical Christian or Muslim scientists from your march by claiming that the social liberal agenda is a "scientific issue"? What about public perception among social conservatives who support science, biomedical research, or biotechnology?

I would certainly hope that supporting the science around LGBT issues is something that people of all faiths or non-faiths can get behind.

Why did you guys choose to hold the march on Earth Day? I am very conflicted between going to the march (in Seattle) and doing volunteering (removing invasive plants, trail work, planting, etc) which are scheduled at the same time. Are you guys going to acknowledge that it is Earth Day and encourage environmental stewardship? This is very important to me, since I am going to school for environmental science/studies/conservation.

Also I know some other people who want to go to the march, but they are torn between going to that or meeting with a house representative who will only meet them at that time.

[FourthDragon](#)

Miles -

I can only speak for Seattle here. But, I know many other marches are doing, or are working on doing similar things. We want to host some tree planting, clean up, and other wise environmental stewardship style events. We plan on doing them building up to the march, and after.

Thanks for doing an AMA.

Aside from climate change, what do you think is the most important, science related, issue that is being overlooked in the US?

[kalypsodore](#)

As a physiologist/biophysicist, vaccination. An entire movement has arisen to basically advocate against one of the greatest public health boons in human history. This movement threatens to bring back diseases that have nearly been eradicated and kills children. Much of this seems to be based around a ad hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy, since symptoms of autism occur around the same time as the normal childhood vaccination schedule. Similarly the Supplements Complementary and Alternative Medicine (SCAM) industry is a huge threat to human welfare. If there is sufficient evidence that a treatment works and is more effective than other treatments or placebo, then it is called medicine. Ignoring science and seeking treatment from "alternative practitioners" puts patients at risk of not receiving life saving treatment. -Jonathan

Like all marches, what is this actually going to achieve? Why would a politician listen to a bunch of people walking around who may or may not be their constituents? Why is a march any better than a letter-writing campaign?

[tyluy](#)

Rachael: Well, as the Women's March and its aftermath demonstrated, politicians *do* frequently pay attention to large demonstrations against their policies, particularly if they are concerned about their approval ratings. They want to get re-elected, and regular large demonstrations against their policies is often enough to change their support for a policy.

Marches also have the potential to really change public opinion, or at least solidify public opinion against already-unpopular policies. There are plenty of historical examples of Marches being seen as the turning point of public opinion, and subsequently, eventually changing politicians' actions.

Another thing that Marches do is galvanize people to action - participating in or even hearing about large demonstrations of like-minded people can be enough to encourage people to take more action, whether that be actually voting, showing up to local town halls, calling their representatives, or even running for office themselves. April 22 isn't the end goal - it's just the jumping-off point.

Right now I think there's this perception that scientists don't do work that's relevant to the average person, and won't get out of their labs or university offices to protest their funding being slashed. It's important for us to both change the perception of scientists as stodgy elitists who can't relate to the average person, and also to demonstrate to the average person how they are negatively affected by the devaluing and defunding of science. Basically, win hearts and minds.

Like all marches, what is this actually going to achieve? Why would a politician listen to a bunch of people walking around who may or may not be their constituents? Why is a march any better than a letter-writing campaign?

[tyluy](#)

Bryan: Scientists in many respects have too often been poor advocates and not engaged with the public and/or their communities. Rarely have scientists been outspoken on this magnitude, if ever. So, this is important for helping to try and shape mentalities towards science within the public/communities/policy-makers, but will also hopefully be motivating to scientists themselves and create a lasting effort to have them involved in advocating for the work that they do.

We unite as a diverse, nonpartisan group to call for science that upholds the common good and for political leaders and policy makers to enact evidence based policies in the public interest.

Have you made any effort to reach out to scientists who are or lean conservative? My perception has been that the March for Science has explicitly aligned itself with progressive movements, but here you say you're taking a stance of political neutrality.

[chaosmosis](#)

Rachael: We don't make efforts to reach out to scientists based only on their political views. We are working to ensure that scientific causes and issues from across the spectrum are represented though, and have a range of people from different scientific fields working on the national committee as well as satellite committees to ensure that issues from different fields and perspectives are being represented.

Hi!! My husband couldn't understand why I wanted to go to the local March, or support it in general. I used the passing of Senate Joint Resolution 18 as an example, to which he replied "that's not science." While I understand the March is for all aspects of science, are wildlife and the laws protecting them too on the edge of the objective of the March?

[ReclusiveWolf](#)

Miles:

We know of one planet where life has evolved. And, on our little part of the cosmos, it has bloomed. This diversity of life is a beautiful and interesting thing. For that reason alone I would want to protect it.

However, protecting it is a major benefit to science and humanity. Having access to all this biological diversity teaches us about new medicines, technology, natural systems etc. That reason alone is also enough to want to protect wild life. I could go on listing reasons, from varying view points. But, to be brief, the answer is Yes.

What efforts do you have in place to ensure the march does not politicize science, acting as a polarizer pushing more right wingers away from approaching science?

[ghrarhg](#)

Miles:

I have personally invited them to join, and I hope they do. Just cause someone is a fiscal conservative does not mean they don't care about science.

How can i help? I am an 8th grade physical science teacher.

[SilverMaples](#)

Thank you for the work you do teaching. Probably the most important thing you can do from that position is to make sure your students are critical thinkers who understand science isn't just studying for tests, its way of thinking about the world that makes it a little bit more comprehensible, and little bit less frightening, and a little bit more beautiful. -Jonathan

Why is a National Diversity and Inclusion Lead needed when science by its very nature is diverse and inclusive?

Why is the focus *not* on pushing the government to respect the scientific method, and to create policies based on the best available data and analysis we have?

Why are you diluting the message?

[dalekcutaway](#)

science by its very nature is diverse and inclusive

Rachael: It *should* be, but in practice it still isn't. Underrepresented minorities are still, well, *underrepresented* in scientific fields, and science as a career choice isn't equitably available to all people (think of how difficult it is for certain groups to access a quality education that's necessary to enter the sciences, for instance).

Certain marginalized communities are also less likely to benefit from science research by virtue alone of SES, race, or other demographic variables (think the Flint water crisis, the disproportionate impact of climate change on certain communities, health and mental health access disparities, the difficulty transgender people have accessing equitable healthcare, etc). These issues often get less focus in the public discourse of science, but they're crucial to attend to when advocating for science. Simply advocating "for science" while failing to attend specifically to issues like these, and hoping they just get included in the discussion and advocacy, means reinforcing the status quo. And the status quo is a dismissal of these issues.

We aren't diluting the message at all - science and diversity/inclusion are absolutely intertwined, and attempting to advocate for science while ignoring diversity means you're ignoring huge parts of science. Heck, my own field *studies* issues of diversity, inclusivity, psychological and societal effects of discrimination, the psychological and societal benefits of social justice advocacy, etc. Many other social science fields study these issues through different lenses as well. So the idea that diversity and inclusion "dilute" science is a bit of a foreign one to me - they're one and the same. That's why I've been serving on the diversity committee from the very beginning of the March - to make sure these issues are properly attended to.

How do you guys feel about the recent discovery made by some really bright NBA players that the earth is actually flat?

[pzea](#)

Miles -

I look forward to reading their research paper once they finish it.

There are certainly going to be news cameras in the faces of the participants of your march.

Reading the comments on your Facebook page, it seems many of the loudest members will say foolish things about science.

How will you protect against these voices from being used by your opponents to discredit your event?

[BigBobby2016](#)

Unfortunately that may not be possible. With so many thousands of people marching it may always be possible to cherry pick one or two images that tell a story different from what actually happens overall.

We hope to set the right tone and we hope that overall the attendees are on board with the message of the march. -Jonathan

Do you have anything to say that would encourage a scientist (in particular: me, kinda, I'm a PhD student) who's pretty much given up and doesn't see the point, because it seems like everyone around them is either entirely one side or entirely the other, to the point where they just flat out refuse to listen to anything other than what they already believe to be true, and it's like 50% these people don't want change even in their own self interest, and 50% screw em, they reap what they sow.

[breville135](#)

Miles -

I understand being down. But let us not forget that because of science and what it produces the world is getting better. Life spans are increasing, poverty is decreasing, our understand of the universe advances, we are getting better at going to space, we are getting better are curing daises. Cynicism isn't an evidence based position. However seductive it may seem. We can make the world a better place with Science. Don't give up on us.

What are your suggestions for what to write on signs to bring to the event to clearly get the point of the march across if televised/when photos are shared on social media? Or ones that are witty/fun but still with a point.

[TomBradysRedSox](#)

Try to stay away from signs that attack specific politicians. Have fun. We'll be releasing some printable posters and suggested slogans in the next couple of weeks. -Jonathan

I was bothered by the recent comments from the March for Science co-chair, Dr Caroline Weinberg, who recently told The Chronicle, "This isn't about scientists. It's about science."

How can this not be about scientists? Especially in a Trump-era, where anyone who doesn't conform to his near Aryan notion of what it means to be American is at risk of being excluded, quite literally, from participating in science in the U.S.

I say this because this is a political event. I argue these comments, and comments like them, privilege the status quo in science, by cementing the politics, identities and values of White scientists, especially White cisgender, able-bodied men, who are less affected by changes to the Trump's social policies.

Can the March be more active in fighting back against this ever the same attitude? I know that you (eventually and not without awkwardness) released a diversity statement. But do more! Can the March actively champion the rights of under-represented minorities? Can you do away with childishly naive rhetoric like "this is about science, not scientists"?

[OtherSociologist](#)

Thanks for your comment. Caroline is going to tag in on this one because it references her directly:

I believe that reducing the march's message to be only about professional scientists does a grave disservice to the many people around the world who are not scientists but are deeply affected by science. Centering the march on current professional scientists privileges the status quo by fixing a

lens only on existing scientists rather than the people who science serves -- including the students who want to go into science but have not yet had the opportunity due to severe lack of diversity and equity in the field, the people who do not have access to science because their backgrounds or neighborhoods have been unjustly left out of research and conversations for decades, and the people who fight for science every day in their lives and work but who do not wear the traditional hat of "scientist." The policies we are discussing here affect everyone, without exception.

This march is about scientists, yes. Scientists are teetering on a precipice with their work and livelihoods at danger from all sides and we must defend them. But it is also about science and its role in society and policy. Science should be for everyone and it is the height of privilege to only discuss it in the context of the lucky few who manage to work in the field professionally. My statement in the Chronicle may come across as "childishly naive" to some but it is a statement I stand behind wholeheartedly and I'm grateful for the opportunity to explain why. Making the march about science means that we can center it around underrepresented-minorities and make sure that we address the ways that all interact with science, not only the ones who pursue it as a job. Why limit the scope of how we discuss the benefits and failings of science to only the profession?

I recognize that the use of Aryan for many calls to mind Nazi experimentation and some of the most noteworthy crimes in our field's history. I will respond to that usage personally by sharing a bit of my personal story. I am the Jewish granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor. As a teenager, my Bubbe was shuttled as property between seven concentration camps over five years before she was finally liberated. I lost more than 100 family members I will never know because they were murdered for their faith in an unthinkable mass extermination developed in part by scientists. My grandmother and her two surviving sisters expected to be infertile after the war because of Nazi experimentation. Even if I were not Jewish, I would have been at risk in Nazi Germany due to my disability. The devastation visited upon underrepresented minorities by scientists is not a concept I take lightly and I strongly believe that this march is as much about vulnerable members of society as it is about scientists. Science should craft policy to the benefit of all people and it can only do that effectively when it listens to diverse voices and perspectives both inside and outside of science. Scientific advancements will only reach all people when we make a deliberate decision to ensure that fact. We need scientists and science supporters engaging one another and standing together if we have any hope of success in changing both the field of science and its role in society and policy.

-Caroline

What are your thoughts on GMOs?

[CaptainPepe420](#)

Miles -

The consensus on GMO's foods are that there is no inherent risk. They are safe. This consensus is actually a touch higher than on climate change. So this is pretty settled Science. They are a very useful tool that will help us make the world better in a myriad of ways. I agree with about 95% of this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TmcXYp8xu4>

What are, if you have any, your current goals regarding nanotech and expanding that field?

[Novaraa](#)

If we expand nanotech too much it won't be nano anymore. -Jonathan

Hello! I live in Charlotte, North Carolina. As far as being a local to this progressive mixing pot of people from vast backgrounds, I still have a lingering feeling that education, specifically science and critical thinking, is not being held up as significant. What are some ways I could volunteer to help bring awareness to this issue?

Certainly there are great schools in this state that have their names known for being great engineering schools. However I feel as though I am a rare case when it comes to being motivated to study. Without my senior year engineering teacher I would have not become who I am today, an inquisitive minded individual. And I would like to share this train of thought with my communities.

[kittehlord](#)

Miles:

Please reach out to the march in your area. I see these two that are somewhat close.

<https://twitter.com/March4ScienceSC>

and

<https://twitter.com/MFSCCharleston>

I think your energy and ideas could really help those marches. See if you can contact them :)

How would you respond to those (including myself, and iirc Dr Prescod-Weinstein has as well, off the top of my head) who have criticised the apolitical stance of the March?

I've heard it claimed that science is apolitical and hence its advocacy should be, but science *isn't* apolitical and never has been, so I don't find this particularly convincing.

[lzoe](#)

Miles:

We are not apolitical. We are nonpartisan. We want politics to be more evidenced based. There is no science party in america, both "sides" have room to improve.

I have a question regarding how some legal issues are resolved and convictions made based on something that is not scientifically proven, but more the "experts" interpretation. Fingerprints for example. How can science prove fingerprints are definitely unique? and that the minimum number of points of matches to guarantee that. It seems much of "gut feeling" is enough for the 'expert' convince a court. thanks for reading

[non-stick-rob](#)

Miles:

That is a bit outside of the March scope. But, it is an interesting question. Let me refer you to this Ask a Scientists thread on that very topic!

https://www.reddit.com/r/askscience/comments/1cy3vq/how_unique_are_fingerprints_really/

Why did you make a 'March for Science' instead of a 'Meet with our elected officials for Science'?
Which makes more logical sense as a scientist wanting to affect social change; protest, or an [open dialogue](#)?

[Blitz_and_Chips](#)

Miles -

I hope we can do all these things. The march is the spearhead, not the totality of tactics we must use.

The MfS started out in the vein of the women's march as strongly intersectional and committed to fighting for diversity in science as much as funding and open publication, but a disgusting sort of anti "identity politics" vein of discourse dominated the subreddit for weeks until personally I found it necessary to step back.

Given pervasive inequalities in science education in [science education](#), the targeted exclusion of international and muslim scientists with Trump's anti-immigration policies at very least (even ignoring impacts of his latest executive order on LGBTQ scientists or persistent advancement and recruitment gaps by gender/race), this seems short-sighted.

How is the MfS in its current iteration reconciling the need for intersectionality with the demand for a narrower viewpoint of some of its supporters?

[falconinthedive](#)

Rachael: Great question! For us, issues of inclusivity and diversity have always been intertwined into science, which is why the Diversity Committee was the first committee formed at MfS (fun fact!) We approached the March that way for all of the reasons you mention - inequalities in science education, the targeting of Muslim scientists and Muslim science grad school applicants and students, discriminatory policies that affect LGBT citizens, inequity in science representation, etc. These are all issues central to science, but which are commonly ignored in the status quo. We aren't interested in reinforcing and upholding the status quo.

We have certainly struggled (sometimes publicly) with how best to incorporate these issues into the March. The silver lining of this struggle is that this is a struggle all of science is facing right now - actually attending to issues of diversity and inclusivity properly. The March is a great way to highlight that and bring it to light, so that the public can see how scientists are grappling with it (or perhaps the public can pressure scientists to better grapple with it).

Thanks for the question!

How can I get involved as a working scientist, a marine biologist, and why do so many people seem to be against me joining in local and state level politics?

[crowcawer](#)

MILES:

Please contact your local march! I am sure they would love to have your voice be part of theirs.

I'm planning on going to the march in Atlanta and my mother has expressed concern that I am unwittingly entering in to some sort of neo-communism cult. Can you assuage her fears? Thanks :)

[luludog98](#)

Miles -

Good morning Miss Luludog98. I want to thank you for raising luludog98 to be such a good redditor that cares about science! I know you have some concerns about the march being a front for the red menace. But I personally promise you that many of us have seen the movie Red Dawn. So there is nothing to worry about.