

## Quantum Leap

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Credit: Ross MacDonald[/caption]

It is big news that Scientific American, one of the world's most prestigious sources on science and technology, after 175 years of publication, has endorsed a presidential candidate for the first time ever. The Editors declare that "[Scientific American Endorses Joe Biden](#)." They feel "compelled to do so" and "do not do this lightly." The first and foremost reason given for this historic endorsement is clear: "The evidence and the science show that Donald Trump has badly damaged the U.S. and its people—because he rejects evidence and science." They detail the catastrophic consequences of this rejection, like the nearly 200,000 Americans who have succumbed to the coronavirus. They further note his lies and, beyond that, the attacks on "environmental protections, medical care, and the researchers and public science agencies that help this country prepare for its greatest challenges."

I wrote in my book that "We enjoy a vast architecture of science—peer-reviewed journals, conferences, research institutions, and graduate schools, plus government, foundation, and corporate funding to support it all. We have come to rely on science to inform us about dangers to public health and the health of our ecosystems, to provide cures for many of our ills, including fixes for the ills we have brought on ourselves through industrial pollution. Further, we rely on science to inform public policy so that we will better know where to devote the finite resources at our disposal for maximum benefit to ourselves and to posterity. Responsible policy makers have long since become confident in the knowledge that they can depend on expert scientific testimony to help guide them." The Trump Administration has spent the last 3½ years assiduously doing everything in its power to dismantle this critical infrastructure.

Joe Biden, by vivid contrast, "comes prepared with plans to control COVID-19, improve health care, reduce carbon emissions and restore the role of legitimate science in policy making. He

solicits expertise and has turned that knowledge into solid policy proposals.” Scientific American goes on to document these plans and to cite Biden’s expert advisors. Go [here](#) to see Biden’s plans for fighting COVID-19, bringing us into a clean energy future, for ending gun violence – very much a public health priority, and fostering environmental justice, among all his other policies. The SciAm Editors tell us: “It’s time to move Trump out and elect Biden, who has a record of following the data and being guided by science.”

Another globally important voice was heard from this week. *Science*, along with *Nature*, is at the pinnacle of scientific journals. *Science* first appeared on July 3, 1880. This publication, although not political, over the years has “commented on the scientific foibles of U.S. presidents. Inadequate action on climate change and environmental degradation during both Republican and Democratic administrations have been criticized frequently. Editorials have bemoaned endorsements by presidents on teaching intelligent design, creationism, and other antiscience in public schools.” But their editorial, “[Trump lied about science](#),” takes these critiques to a new place, a new quantum level. Why? Because “... a U.S. president has deliberately lied about science in a way that was imminently dangerous to human health and directly led to widespread deaths of Americans. This may be the most shameful moment in the history of U.S. science policy.” The editor, of course, is referring to the [revelations from the Bob Woodward book, \*Rage\*](#).

*Science* quotes Franklin Roosevelt: “Confidence thrives on honesty, on honor, on the sacredness of obligations, on faithful protection and on unselfish performance.” None of these qualities were exhibited by the “president and his coconspirators. Trump was not clueless, and he was not ignoring the briefings. Listen to his own words. Trump lied, plain and simple.”

And in yet-another [unprecedented statement](#), this one from the presidents of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine, they “find ongoing reports and incidents of the politicization of science, particularly the overriding of evidence and advice from public health officials and derision of government scientists, to be alarming.” They go on to say that “Any efforts to discredit the best science and scientists threaten the health and welfare of us all.”