

## Politicians shouldn't play doctor

### Why do Ohio's politicians attempt to play doctor?

Just for fun, let's consider the following familiar claims made by various politicians:

- (1) Rape shuts down a woman's conception process.
- (2) Human individuals originate at the moment of conception.
- (3) Every human fetus senses pleasure and pain.

Then consider that each of these claims is patently false, exhibiting gross ignorance of evidence to the contrary:

- (1) Rape is just as likely as consensual sex to result in pregnancy [gynecology].
- (2) For several days after conception, a single human embryo can divide into two or more genetically identical siblings [embryology].
- (3) The neural complexity necessary for sentience does not begin to develop until after the 22<sup>nd</sup> week of pregnancy [neuroscience].

Some politicians, finding themselves in positions of authority, apparently imagine they have the power to recreate reality to suit their agendas, and thus need not consult science or history to learn what actually works and what does not. One glaring example of Ohio lawmakers' creative scheming is this "Catch-22": On the one hand, the law requires clinics offering abortion services to have admission agreements with local hospitals; on the other, it forbids hospitals to enter such agreements with abortion providers. There is no medical justification for such obstructive doubletalk this. Its sole purpose is to block access to a legal procedure to which a vocal minority objects on primarily mythical grounds.

Now consider that these same schemers are inclined to inject made-up "facts" into other crucial fields as well: banking, defense, education, emergency response, energy, infrastructure,

labor, safety, security, and more. Experience shows relying on bad information seldom produces good results. Taxpayers need, and should demand, better.

But the task of leadership does not fall only upon those we elect. We cannot realistically expect even the best lawmakers to be experts in all fields. Thus, technical policy is appropriately entrusted to regulators, presumably appointed for academic or professional expertise within their respective fields. In practice, though, some appointments are granted more as rewards for favors than for relevant expertise. Such cronyism must be corrected if we expect better results for our tax dollars. So, the problem must be addressed on two fronts: elective and appointive.

I am not one to suggest constitutional amendments without compelling reason. However, in a world of increasing complexity, we clearly need better quality control in governance. Public policy at all levels should be prudently guided by expert advice, relevant evidence, cogent reason, and reliable fact-checking—not by dogma, lobbying, hunches, and social media.

So, I propose a general rule to this effect: “No law or regulation, reliably shown to be based on false premises or faulty reasoning, shall be enacted, retained, or enforced; and any person or organization penalized for failure to obey such law or regulation, or suffering wrongful effects from complying therewith, shall be exonerated and fully compensated.” Such a rule would, in one swoop, eliminate truckloads of legalese garbage, and perhaps even empty a few jails. Of course, it might also put a current policymaker or two out of a job. **Good riddance!**

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