



Are Mercury Emissions as Evil as Abortion? Somebody Wants Voters to Think So
Green group's notion of pro-life comes straight from Alice in Wonderland
"When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."—Humpty Dumpty

by E. Calvin Beisner, Timothy D. Terrell, and Pierre Bynum

How do you turn politicians with 100% pro-abortion voting records into pro-lifers?

The old-fashioned way would have been to persuade them that killing babies in their mothers' wombs violates the God-given, unalienable right to life that governments are instituted among men to protect.

But persuasion can be difficult.

Not to worry. The Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) found a different way. Just redefine the terms.

In December EEN ran radio, television, and billboard ads in nine states and the District of Columbia claiming 11 politicians are "pro-life or sensitive to pro-life concerns."

"Pro-life"? That would be unequivocally true of only 2 of the 13 members of Congress mentioned in the ads—Sen. John Boozman, R-AR, and Rep. Bob Latta, R-OH, the only ones with 100% pro-life voting records in the 110th Congress. A third, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), with an 88% pro-life voting record, could arguably be added to the pro-life list.

But none of the rest has better than a 55% pro-life voting record, and if you exclude those three, the average among those with voting records is a miserable 22%.

What's worse, the ads imply that because Latta opposed, and Boozman didn't support, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new regulation of mercury emissions from power plants they might not really be pro-life.

And even worse, they imply that Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin, Michigan's two Democrat senators, both with 100% pro-abortion voting records, and Maine's two Republican senators, Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe, both with 88% pro-abortion records, are pro-life because they supported EPA on mercury.

How does EEN justify this? It says one in six American babies is born with a harmful blood mercury level, so support for EPA's regulation qualifies one as pro-life.

In EEN's ad targeting Latta, Tracey Bianchi, a Chicago-area pastor, says, "... being pro-life means protecting the unborn from mercury pollution." In all the ads she says, "... I expect members of Congress who say they are pro-life to ... protect that life, especially the unborn. ... EPA's mercury regulations were created specifically to protect the unborn from the devastating impacts of mercury which causes permanent brain damage in the unborn and infants."

"Protect that life"? "Devastating impacts"? "Permanent brain damage"?

Liberal Environmentalists Co-Opting the Term "Pro-Life"

by Jeff Walton | Washington, DC | LifeNews.com | 1/19/12 8:03 PM

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Tens of thousands of Pro-Life activists will gather in the nation's capital this coming week, marking the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that swept away state laws restricting abortion.

While the youthful and energetic group of primarily Catholic and Evangelical Christians will flex their muscle in this presidential election year, Evangelical Left groups are trying to splinter the Evangelical Christian and pro-life voting blocks.



Among their efforts is a redefinition of "pro-life" to include environmental causes and defense of Big Government. Liberal evangelicals and others are claiming issues outside of abortion and euthanasia as equally crucial sanctity of life matters.

Early attempts at this strategy occurred in 2011, when the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) sought in a media campaign to rally "pro-life" supporters against coal power plants. Other similar "broadening" of the term has attempted to include global warming, alleged U.S. torture practices, loosened immigration controls, and single-payer (government controlled) health care.

Forget that the truth, documented in a scholarly paper published in October by The Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, is that:

- The exposure rate is not one in six but more likely 1 in 100 or even 1 in 1,000.
- What EEN calls a harmful level of mercury—EPA’s “reference dose” of 5.8 parts per billion—has not been shown to be harmful.
- The lowest level at which harm has been detected is 15 times higher, 85 parts per billion, and studies give no indication that American infants are exposed to that much.
- Harm caused even at that level is not “devastating ... permanent brain damage” but an almost undetectable, temporary delay in neurological development, less than the common variation between identical twins raised in the same household.
- EPA admits that its mercury reductions would have no significant health benefits (not surprising since most of the mercury to which American infants are exposed comes from natural sources, not power plants).

In addition, harm to our economy caused by the regulation (likely \$20 to \$40 billion per year in higher electricity bills, and 180,000 lost jobs per year) can be estimated to cause from 2,500 to 4,250 deaths per year as people scrimp on health care and other life-prolonging expenses.

With the political cover generated in part by EEN’s ad campaign, EPA announced its new mercury regulation in a ceremony December 21 at—emotional drum roll, please!—Children’s National Medical Center (“It’s for the children!”), a setting perfectly suited to distract attention from the fact that mercury at levels targeted by the new regulation has never been credibly linked to childhood illness. EEN President Mitch Hescox was one of the speakers at the ceremony.

Chances are no one considered that the hospital depends on electricity to treat children, and the new regulation will raise average electric bills by about 11.5%. With its soon-to-be 3-million-square-foot facility, and average hospital electricity costs of about \$1.67 per square foot, that means the hospital could be spending about an extra \$575,000 a year on electricity just because of EPA’s new mercury regulation. With nearly 5,800 hospitals in America, that could add up. Even if they averaged only one-fifth National Children’s size, that would come to about \$668 million—money that otherwise could go to healing children.

Even if EEN’s exaggerated numbers and harms were true, the organization neglects an enormous difference between mercury exposure and abortion.

With mercury exposure, you might accidentally wind up with one child out of every six experiencing a slight delay in mental development but growing into an alert, healthy adult no one can distinguish from any other—except perhaps by rigorous neurological testing by a specialist.

With abortion, you wind up with over 1 in 5 babies—more than 3,000 every day, 1.2 million per year, 54 million since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973—intentionally killed.

Whether EEN’s leaders intend it or not, the campaign’s result will be to water down the meaning of “pro-life,” split the pro-life vote, and cripple the effort to protect the lives of the unborn in America.

EEN President and CEO Mitch Hescox says he’s pro-life. We take his word for it. Presumably, then, he doesn’t intend this tragic result.

Who might? Perhaps EEN’s funding source. We’ve not been able to unearth, yet, where the funding for December’s quarter-million dollar ad campaign came from. But EEN received a \$50,000 grant last July from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund “to elevate the voice of the evangelical community in its efforts to protect the Environmental Protection Agency.” And Rockefeller Brothers (which gave EEN \$200,000 in 2009 and \$400,000 indirectly in 2006 to support its global warming campaign) is a long-time supporter of abortion on demand as a means of population control. Divide and conquer, anyone?

If EEN still wants to support mercury-emission reductions, let it do so honestly and above board. But not under the pro-life banner. It’s simply not an issue of life or death.

But for 1.2 million babies aborted every year in America, obscuring the meaning of “pro-life” and splitting the pro-life vote is.

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www.CornwallAlliance.org

www.ResistingtheGreenDragon.com