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The Heartland Institute is trying to fool teachers. NCSE is fighting back. [You can help us.](#) [7]

EDITOR'S NOTE: New resources for teachers dealing with Heartland! Click [here](#) [8].

It's April Fool's Day today, but at NCSE we're not really in the mood. Why? As *Frontline* recently [reported](#) [9], "Twenty-five thousand science teachers opened their mailboxes this month and found a package from the Heartland Institute," containing a booklet entitled *Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming* (sic) as well as a DVD rejecting the well-established fact that recent climate change is primarily due to human activity. Heartland evidently hopes to fool the recipients of the mailing into thinking that there's a scientific controversy over the causes of climate change—when in fact [over 97%](#) [10] of climate scientists are in agreement.

Naturally, NCSE was immediately alerted about the mailing. NCSE's executive director Ann Reid told *Frontline*, "It's not science, but it's dressed up to look like science," adding, "It's clearly intended to confuse teachers." Is it a fool's errand? Judging from the rigorous national [study](#) [11] (PDF) on climate change education conducted in 2014–2015 by NCSE and researchers at Pennsylvania State University, most teachers already know better. Still, about three in ten middle and high school science teachers reported telling their students, wrongly, that the causes of recent climate change are the matter of scientific debate. Doubtless Heartland hopes to encourage such teachers to continue and to encourage their colleagues to follow suit.

But science teachers generally don't like to be taken for fools. Judging from the reactions we've seen, the most common response to the mailing is a visit to the recycling bin. (And the DVD? One ingenious teacher reports making "a table-top hovercraft" out of it!) A few teachers took advantage of the enclosed response card to take Heartland to task (with references to the "alternative facts" on offer not uncommon). And a few enterprising teachers have taken the opportunity for a teachable moment with their classes on the nature of propaganda, reveling in the jiu-jitsu irony of using the efforts of the

enemies of science education against them.

We, too, like irony, so in the same spirit, we invite you, during the month of April, to register your reaction to Heartland's foolishness by making a special [donation](#) [7] to NCSE to support our ongoing and expanding efforts to help science teachers present climate change accurately, honestly, and confidently—including a flyer (in preparation) providing teachers with the information they need to explain why the materials in Heartland's mailings are not suitable for the science classroom. Our goal is modest: to reach \$25,000 by the end of April—a mere dollar for each teacher pestered by Heartland's initial mailing. We'll periodically update you on our progress here on NCSE's blog.

We'd also like to share stories from teachers about their reactions to the Heartland mailing. We've heard from dozens of teachers already, expressing heartfelt concern, genuine anger, and hilarious sarcasm over the mailing, and it would be a treat for us to be able to share more. Plus it would help us understand better how teachers respond to such mailings and what they need to cope with them in the future. Such information will be especially useful for the incoming Director of Teacher Support, who will be staffing a new position at NCSE aimed at providing tangible and practical support to as many science teachers as possible. So send your stories to info@ncse.com [12]!

A fool and his money, it is said, are soon parted. But it would be anything but foolish of you to part with a few dollars to help to show that there is widespread support for teaching climate change in the public schools in accordance with the consensus of the scientific community—and to help to show that there is widespread contempt for attempts of ideological organizations such as Heartland to peddle misinformation about and misrepresentations of climate science to hard-working science teachers. May we suggest, in honor of the 97% level of scientific consensus on climate change, [donations](#) [7] of \$9.70, \$97, and even (if you can swing it) \$970?

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