American Evaluation Association

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Letters to the Editor
The New York Times
620 Eighth Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Dear Editor,

The problem of political pressure on policy-oriented research and evaluation findings, such as that documented in Ian Urbina's recent article, goes far beyond environmental issues, urgent as these are. In a democratic society, policymakers and citizens alike need carefully collected evidence and even-handed evaluations about government initiatives that render their effects transparent to the public gaze. But, such evaluations cannot be credible or serve democratic interests if they are politically manipulated.

Political pressures on evaluators have been endemic since time immemorial, in both Democratic and Republican administrations. This is why the American Evaluation Association, in its recent policy statement on government evaluation (*An Evaluation Roadmap for a More Effective Government*), has insisted on independence in the design, execution, report-writing, publication, and dissemination phases of their work.

Thank you for bringing this important matter to public attention, and especially for the article's careful reporting and documentation.

Jennifer Greene, Ph.D.
President, American Evaluation Association