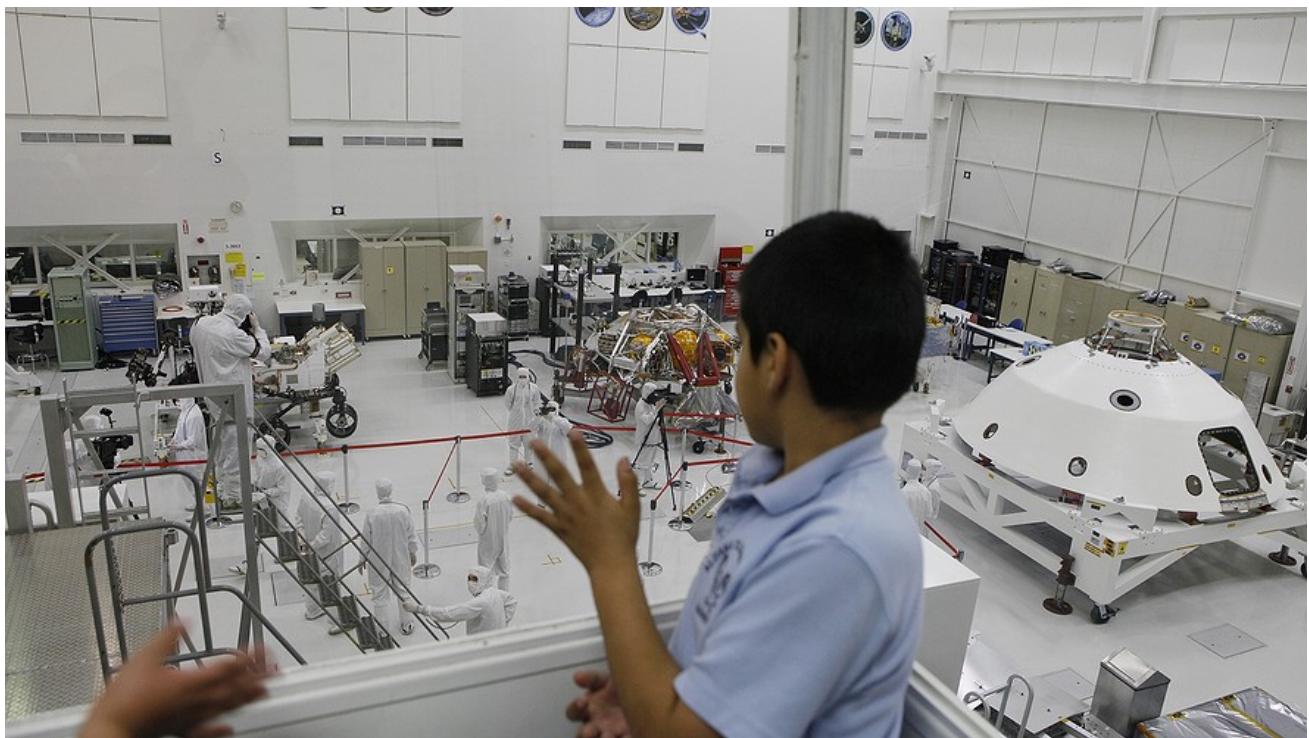


Q&A: Clinton and Trump offer different views on some science issues

By Los Angeles Times, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.05.16

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School children wave at NASA engineers working on the rover Curiosity at the Mars Science Laboratory, at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., Monday, April 4, 2011. Photo: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

Science has rarely made headlines during this presidential election, but that doesn't mean it's not important. On the contrary, policy decisions made by the next president will influence the future of the planet and all of its inhabitants for years to come.

ScienceDebate.org asked the candidates, Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump, to share their views on some overlooked issues. Parts of their responses are printed below.

Space Exploration And Climate Change

Question: *What should America's goals be for space exploration and earth observation from space? What steps would your government take to achieve them?*

Clinton: We must maintain our nation's leadership in space with a program that balances science, technology and exploration. We must send more drones and other robots into the solar system. We must also promote more collaboration between national agencies and businesses.

Trump: Space exploration has given so much to America, including tremendous pride in our scientific and engineering abilities. A strong space program will encourage our children to learn science and math. It will also bring millions of jobs and trillions of dollars. We should seek global partners, because space is not the sole property of America. All humankind benefits from reaching into the stars.

Q: *What are your views on climate change, and how would your administration act on those views?*

Clinton: The science is crystal clear. Climate change is an urgent threat and a defining challenge of our time. I will set three goals that we will achieve within 10 years of taking office:

- Generate half of our electricity from clean sources, including solar power.
- Cut energy waste by a third and make American factories the cleanest and most efficient in the world.
- Reduce American oil consumption by a third. This will be through cleaner fuels and more efficient transportation.

Trump: There is still much that needs to be investigated in the field of “climate change.” Perhaps the best use of our limited funds should be in dealing with making sure that every person in the world has clean water. Perhaps we should focus on eliminating diseases around the world like malaria. Perhaps we should focus on efforts to increase food production. Perhaps we should be focused on developing energy sources that get rid of the need for fossil fuels.

Public Health And Cybersecurity

Q: *How would you protect Americans from public health threats, such as antibiotic-resistant superbugs?*

Clinton: As president, I will devote funds to respond to major public health crises.

We need to support research for new tests, treatments and vaccines for emerging diseases. We need to train the next group of public health professionals. We also need to provide funds for states and local governments to plan for public health threats.

Trump: By asking this question at all, it suggests that one should give more money to research and public health institutions. We cannot simply throw money at these institutions and assume that the nation will be well served. We will have to balance giving money to these institutions with other demands for funds.

Q: *What steps will you take to protect institutions from cyberattack, and to balance national security with personal privacy on electronic devices and the internet?*

Clinton: I will build on the Obama administration’s work, making our government-wide cybersecurity more modern and hiring someone to focus on cybersecurity. I will also support collaboration between the government and companies.

I will make it clear that the United States will treat attacks on our computer systems just like any other attack, and we will be ready with serious political, economic and military responses. I believe the United States should lead the world in setting the rules of cyberspace. If America doesn't, others will.

Trump: The United States government should not spy on its own citizens. That will not happen in a Trump administration. Any attack on the internet should be considered a provocative act that requires the utmost in protection. It would also require, at the very least, a proportional response. This response must identify and then eliminate threats to our internet.

Mental Illness, Energy And Education

Q: *What will you do to reduce the human and financial cost of mental illness?*

Clinton: We will encourage early detection and intervention. This includes a national project on suicide prevention. We'll make it so health care delivery focuses on the "whole person" – both their physical and mental health. We will improve community-based treatment opportunities and train law enforcement officers in crisis intervention. We will also prioritize treatment over jail for low-level, nonviolent offenders. And we'll give funds to developing safe and effective treatments.

My goal is that within my time in office as president, Americans will no longer separate mental health from physical health. The next generation must grow up knowing that mental health is a key part of overall health. There should not be any shame or obstacles to seeking out care.

Trump: Any mental health reforms must be included in our efforts to reform health care in general. We must ensure that the national government provides the support to state and local governments. A comprehensive solution must be developed so that we can keep people safe and productive.

Q: *As president, what will your plan for energy be?*

Clinton: My plan will deliver on the pledge President Obama made at the Paris climate conference. This includes:

- Putting into action pollution standards that clean our air, save families money and fight climate change.
- Dedicating money to creating clean energy.
- Expanding clean energy production on public lands and waters tenfold within a decade.
- Making sure that fossil fuel production, such as oil digging, is safe and responsible.
- Cutting methane emissions, which contribute to global warming, and reducing leaks.

Trump: It should be the goal of the American people and their government to achieve energy independence as soon as possible. This means exploring every possible energy source including wind, solar, nuclear and biofuels. Consumers will determine the best sources of energy.

Q: *How would your administration work to ensure all students are prepared to address 21st-century challenges?*

Clinton: Every student should have the opportunity to learn computer science by the time they graduate high school. Strong science and math programming in every public school is critical to our nation's success. It is also critical to reducing economic and social inequality.

Trump: There are a host of science and math programs already in existence. The federal government should make sure that educational opportunities are available for everyone. This means we must allow market influences to bring better education to more children.

Clean Water And Global Cooperation

Q: *If you are elected, what steps will you take to ensure all Americans have clean water?*

Clinton: Not giving enough money or attention to clean water has put Americans all over the country in danger. We saw this happen in places like Flint, Michigan. Failing water systems pose health risks to humans and wildlife, hurt ecosystems and unfairly affect communities of color.

We will establish a new lab that will bring water managers, farmers and tribes together with engineers, business people and conservationists. Together, they will develop technologies for industries and environmental projects across the country.

Trump: This may be the most important issue we face as a nation for the next generation. Therefore, we will devote money to our fresh-water technologies and systems. We must explore all options, such as desalinization, or removing the salt from saltwater, by making it more affordable.

Q: *How would your government balance national interests with global cooperation when tackling threats that cross national borders?*

Clinton: The United States has a responsibility to lead the global response to the climate challenge. President Obama was able to persuade and pressure other major greenhouse gas creators to step up by making strong progress to lessen greenhouse gas emissions here in America. This was a process where a national law change helped create action around the world.

We must work to support more clean energy in developing countries, and help them counter climate change. We must also work to drive clean energy development here at home.

We will create a complete and thorough global health plan that involves a global health system capable of quickly responding to and ending outbreaks of diseases.

Trump: Our best advice to helping with global issues is to make sure that the United States has a strong economy and its businesses are doing well. An America where people are making money and living well will be much better at tackling global problems.

Quiz

- 1 What is the purpose of the following statement from the first paragraph?

On the contrary, policy decisions made by the next president will influence the future of the planet and all of its inhabitants for years to come.

- (A) to describe the role of the president in making important science policy decisions
- (B) to show why not many people have paid attention to issues of science in this election
- (C) to predict the outcome of the election based on candidates' responses to science questions
- (D) to explain the importance of knowing where the candidates stand on issues related to science
- 2 Read the section "Public Health And Cybersecurity." How do the viewpoints of Clinton compare with those of Trump on the subject of public health threats?
- (A) Neither candidate believes there are any serious public health crises that will need to be addressed in the future.
- (B) Both candidates believe that funding public health research and institutions is important for the future of the nation.
- (C) Clinton believes there needs to be more funding to find treatments and vaccines; Trump believes public health research isn't always the best use of federal funds.
- (D) Clinton believes state and local governments are not doing enough about health threats; Trump believes these governments could do more with better funding.
- 3 Based on the section "Clean Water and Global Cooperation," Trump would be MOST likely to agree with which of the following statements?
- (A) There are many issues the U.S. faces that are more important than fresh-water technology.
- (B) Failure to protect our water systems will damage the ecosystem and pose health risks.
- (C) The U.S. needs to work with other nations to create a global plan for dealing with crises.
- (D) The most important thing Americans can do to help the world is focus on building a strong economy.

- 4 Read the section "Mental Illness, Energy, and Education." What is the MOST important reason why Clinton wants to encourage early intervention in mental health?
- (A) so that the national government can help local governments make people productive
 - (B) so that people will be as willing to seek help for mental health as for physical health
 - (C) so that fewer people will get arrested or spend time in jail for small offenses
 - (D) so that we can improve relations between communities and law enforcement officers