

Pittsburgh protesters: “Kennedy should not be allowed to speak in public because he doesn’t know what he’s talking about”

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About 1,000 doctors, researchers, healthcare workers, students and other supporters of science took part in a rally in Pittsburgh last Friday as part of the national Stand Up for Science protests against the Trump administration’s attack on science.

Shattera Jackson and her fiancée Chandler Daniel attended the rally to speak for her best friend, who is now recovering from lymphoma. Shattera also works at Children’s Hospital doing research on asthma in children.

She said:

I’m here for my best friend. She is 28. Last year she was diagnosed with lymphoma. Now she is on her last round of chemo, and it is working. That is science. She is going to live because of science. It is scientific research into blood cancer that is saving her life and that of many other people. Blood cancer research has obviously come a long way, and that’s why she’s here.

I work and do research at Pitt, so my job is at risk. We are all worried.

I work in asthma research at Children’s Hospital. We work in pediatric assistance. I’m specifically interested in severe asthma in black and Latino kids. I just feel really happy to know that what I do is going to help these families. We are looking at the environmental factors affecting asthma. We have a lot to learn.

Kennedy should not be allowed to speak in

public because he doesn’t know what he’s talking about. I actually reached out to (US Senator John) Fetterman and told him that this wasn’t a good idea, and obviously he didn’t listen. But I’m here, people are standing up.

Chandler added:

We’re here speaking for the fact that science literally drives healthcare in this country, research that is funded to simply save lives and not make money. That is the reason why people like my fiancée’s best friend is going to live. The very fact that somebody wanted to help somebody else just for the sake of helping.

Science backed by the government is there to help the people. I think the steps that we’re currently taking are going to greatly impact American citizens. Minority groups, less fortunate economic groups are going to be hurt. This is just nonsensical, not a way to live. We should care for others.

Phyllis, a nurse at UPMC, said:

All our work is based on science. During the [COVID] pandemic we worked around the clock to save lives. The research that people did here at Pitt helped to find the vaccine. Now the government wants to eliminate this research.

Speaking on the appointment of Robert F. Kennedy Jr., she continued:

We developed the polio vaccine here in Pittsburgh. When it came out, people were lining up to have their children vaccinated. Now children are dying again because of these anti-vaxxers being led by Kennedy.

I think the whole attack on science is an attack on knowledge. To promote the bigotry, the hostility to women, the attacks on immigrants, Trump must attack truth. Trump must attack an understanding that we are all people.

Josh works as a lab technician at Carnegie Mellon University. He is applying for graduate school to study physics. He said:

I am here because of the funding for physics research which I do. And in general, science is under attack.

It's awful. Everything from just basic research to diversity, equity and inclusion programs are important in science. This is not only to lift the basic science and lift technology up but to lift each other up. To make the overall community better, not just individual people.

I'm here because research is getting cut. I'm here to stand up for not just myself but for my friends who are even more affected than I am in this current climate of war on science in this country.

The Trump administration is attacking science this way because they want to be able to control truth and facts. That is how fascists have done it before in history. History is the future, and science is objective. He realizes that our bosses are the things that we research. For me I research what happens in the stars and galaxies. For others here, they research cells.

We try to learn what's going on. Trump just wants to be the boss. That is what matters to

him most, to inflate his ego and to take control of whatever he can.

Science is amazing. Science is important, and it needs to be funded. With all these cuts that are happening the best place to do science research in the world is going downhill. It's going to take decades to come back, if we let this happen.



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