Republican Party Medical
School

Or at least one that I've never heard before.

On Friday night, I was lucky enough to be the "left" in a local version of NPR's "Left, Right, and Center" with Matt Miller. We did it at my local synagogue, where Miller (and I) are members. The "right" was my old friend Larry Greenfield, who is a very good fellow in every way except for an insane world view (what can you do).

One question centered on climate change. I emphasized the overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is real, serious, and anthropogenic; that one could be a serious conservative while advocating climate change mitigation, for example through a revenue-neutral carbon tax; and that unfortunately, the Republican Party has gone insane on the issue, for example crushing Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC) in his primary by 40 points in no small part because of his advocacy of such a conservative policy.

Then Larry chimed in. I'm paraphrasing, but this is basically what he said:

> Congressman Henry Waxman has said that the science is settled, and that is a very dangerous and anti-scientific idea. Real science means that science is never settled; our knowledge is always changing, and we should not be terrified into thinking we are all going to die because of of what some scientists say now.

I admit that I had never encountered this one. Note the massive lacuna upon which it hinges: because science is always changing, we should not make judgments based upon the best scientific knowledge that we have.

Why use antibiotics for bacterial infections? After all, our knowledge of infectious diseases is always changing (maybe we should stick with leeches instead!). When the Space Shuttle returns to Earth, why bother with a heat shield? Our perceptions of thermodynamics are always changing. Certainly, our knowledge of radioactivity and its decay have massively changed over the last several decades. Don't worry about fallout!

Extraordinary. And one of our two major political parties has endorsed it.