It's interesting to see what conservative think tanks are saying about the coronavirus and compare it with their views on climate change. There are some common themes — both problems tend to get downplayed, along with any possible need for major government action. Like Trump himself, the conservative think tanks seem unable to process scientific evidence and prefer optimistic conjectures. A table at the end of this post gives the details.

On the coronavirus, with the partial exception of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the general approach is to minimize the seriousness of the issue, refrain from any criticism of the Administration, and avoid discussing major government interventions. That largely tracks their approach to climate change, except for expressions of outright skepticism about the existence of any climate problem at all by some organizations. On both problems, with a few notable exceptions, think tanks seemed to track Trump's tweets to a disquieting extent.

In general, the caliber of discussion was highest for AEI and Cato (a libertarian think tank), lower for Heritage and Heartland. Not surprisingly, none of the organizations wanted to talk much about the need for major government action on either problem.

Here's a table comparing the five leading conservative think tanks in more detail:

| Organization | Climate Change | Coronavirus |
|---|---|---|
| **American Enterprise Inst.** | Climate change is not listed as an issue area. Neither are environment or energy. A Google search did turn up a page on climate change, including entries on "the non-problem of global warming" and the "dark side" of renewable energy. But there's also a blog post about possible conservative climate policies. | The epidemic is headlined on top page of website. Sensible post by former FDA head Scott Gottlieb about the need to take measures to delay spread of virus. (He's the major exception from the conservative echo chamber.) Another post of an op. ed. by another author accusing Dems of politicizing the issue. |

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| **Cato Institute** | "Global warming is indeed real, and human activity has been a contributor since 1975. But global warming is also a very complicated and difficult issue that can provoke very unwise policy in response to political pressure. . . Fortunately, and contrary to much of the rhetoric surrounding climate change, there is ample time to develop [new] technologies." | Not mentioned on top page of website. Big headline on healthcare page is about needle exchanges. Blog post links in right margins. Only three relate to the virus. They primarily argue that the epidemic's seriousness is being exaggerated, they accuse the WHO of alarmism. |
| **Heritage Inst.** | Climate change not listed as an issue. Energy economics page highlights benefits of natural gas and fracking; attacks Green New Deal and Paris Agreement. Renewable energy page attacks state renewable energy policies, carbon tax, Senate energy innovation bill, Paris Agreement. | Headlined story on top page. Story calls for international cooperation, "whole" government approach (including Pentagon), and transparency. Nothing about interventions to slow spread. Major theme in an earlier story: "The Trump administration's response to the coronavirus outbreak thus far has been robust." A blog post listed in the right margin calls for spending cuts to offset any additional spending caused by the epidemic. |
| **Heartland Inst.** | The webpage on climate change highlights media quotes touting Heartland as the biggest backer of climate skepticism. | Top page story says "A few years ago, it was ebola. Today, the coronavirus. Tomorrow, because of mutation, it will be something else." Story mentions vaccines and also the importance of good hygiene. It seems to be written for sixth graders. |