

# Scientists leaving labs to experiment with politics

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

They have built careers isolating cells, designing integrated circuits and mastering computer languages. Now they are knocking on doors, being interviewed on TV and asking perfect strangers to give them money.

Across the country, scientists – card-carrying members of an elite that prizes expertise – are exiting their ivory towers to enter the political fray. There’s the cancer researcher from Mississippi, the integrated circuit designer from New York, the physician from Utah and the stem cell biologist from Southern California, among dozens of others.

It’s a move that appears to defy the first principle of their profession: logic. Unlike a law degree, a Ph.D. does not provide a well-worn path to politics. And while 79 percent of Americans believe that science has made life easier, their esteem for the scientific enterprise has been on a steady decline, according to the Pew Research Center.

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