



A neurosurgeon who believes the human brain is too complex for anyone but God, an ophthalmologist who refuses to talk about the age of the Earth, and a Harvard-trained lawyer beloved by creationists are running for president of the United States, raising the prospect of an election without science.

Retired doctor Ben Carson joined senators Rand Paul (the ophthalmologist) and Ted Cruz (the Harvard alum) on the campaign trail on Monday, vying for the Republican nomination against each other and other confirmed and likely candidates including Senator Marco Rubio, former Florida governor Jeb Bush and Wisconsin governor Scott Walker.

But despite assorted elite educations and illustrious careers, none can apparently make up their minds about basics of modern science – that the Earth is about 4.5bn years old, that humans evolved from earlier primates over millions of years, and that people are making the world dangerously warm.

“I think on issues like climate change and evolution it ends up being a proxy for identity politics,” said Michael Halpern, a program manager for the nonprofit and nonpartisan Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). “You’re not actually talking about the science, you’re talking about values.”

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