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Logical Fallacy Discussion

Humans, since of the beginning of times, have been arguing over many different views and ideals. Logical fallacies, or false logic, have been used in these arguments. When they are used, they make that argument false and invalid. Logical fallacies are even used by those who are deemed with a degree of authority and accreditation, including journalists and politicians. They are also commonly found in news articles that may be able to sway public opinion, which creates an important need for the ability to identify logical fallacies in an argument. One form of a logical fallacy is a false analogy; this logical fallacy is committed when two dissimilar things are analogously compared. In a news article published by the *Associated Press* entitled “Efforts to ban chlordane assailed,” a false analogy is used which ultimately creates an invalid argument.

A quick summary of the news article is needed before any analysis or discussion of the logical fallacy may begin. The article is quite brief and it reports about the comments of the Texas Representative, Tom DeLay, on a proposed bill that will ban the use of chlordane and other related chemicals. These chemicals are generally used to prevent termite damage to houses, but have been found to cause cancer to laboratory animals. Supporters of the bill claim that the use of the chemical could cause 300,000 humans to develop cancer within the next 70 years. In opposition of the bill, Tom DeLay gives an analogy as an attempt to give some rationale for his argument. Now that a summary of the article has been given, further discussion may continue.

The analogy that Tom DeLay provides is fallacious, which ultimately makes this point of his argument against the bill invalid. The proposed bill, if passed, would ban the use of chlordane on the grounds that it would cause humans to develop cancer. In disapproval, Tom DeLay said, “This bill reminds me of legislation that ought to be introduced to outlaw automobiles on the grounds that cars kill people.” DeLay uses this analogy in an attempt to make the claim that the use of chlordane should be banned on the grounds that it kills people also means that cars should be made illegal for the same reason. This is the false analogy used by DeLay which makes his argument very weak. Now that the fallacy has been identified, the discussion of why it is a false analogy, and ultimately a logical fallacy, may continue.

The primary reason that this is a false analogy is because of some of the relevant differences between the banning of chlordane and the outlawing of automobiles. The first major difference between these two things is that banning cars would be both economically and socially disruptive. Cars and automobiles are the primary form of transportation of people and goods within the United States; replacing this function of automobiles would be very difficult. The ban of a single pesticide, on the other hand, would not nearly have the disruption. As well, even if this one pesticide was banned, it could easily be replaced by an alternative pesticide. The ban of automobiles, on the other hand, would be much more difficult to cope with since of the widespread use of them for transportation. Another major difference, which is closely related to the previous one, is the fact that automobiles serve a significant role as the primary form of transportation in our society, whereas chlordane plays a much smaller role as only a preventative measure of termite damage to houses. Since automobiles have a much more important role in society than the use of chlordane, comparing these two things analogously is wrong and cannot be done without committing a logical fallacy. In short, the differences between the ban of chlordane and the ban of automobiles are quite significant, thus making the analogy fallacious, thus making this point for DeLay’s claim weak and invalid.

In conclusion, DeLay’s analogy between the banning of chlordane and the banning of automobiles is fallacious because of the significant differences between the two scenarios. These differences include that the banning of automobiles would be much more disruptive than the ban of chlordane. In the end, DeLay’s usage of this false analogy as a major claim for his argument makes his overall argument quite weak.

**Original Article:**

**Efforts to ban chlordane assailed**

WASHINGTON (AP)--The only exterminator in Congress told his colleagues Wednesday that it would be a short-sighted move to ban use of chlordane and related termiticides that cause cancer in laboratory animals.

Supporters of the bill, however, claimed that the Environmental Protection Agency was "dragging its feet" on a chemical that could cause 300,000 cancers in the American population in 70 years.

"This bill reminds me of legislation that ought to be introduced to outlaw automobiles" on the grounds that cars kill people, said Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Texas, who owns an exterminating business.

EPA banned use of the chemicals on crops in 1974, but permitted use against termites because the agency did not believe humans were exposed. Chlordane does not kill termites but rather drives them away.

**Source:** Associated Press, June 25th, 1987