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# KILLING OUR CLIMATE

A Primer on the Koch Network's Impact  
on the Environment Through Dark Money,  
Deceit, and Disinformation

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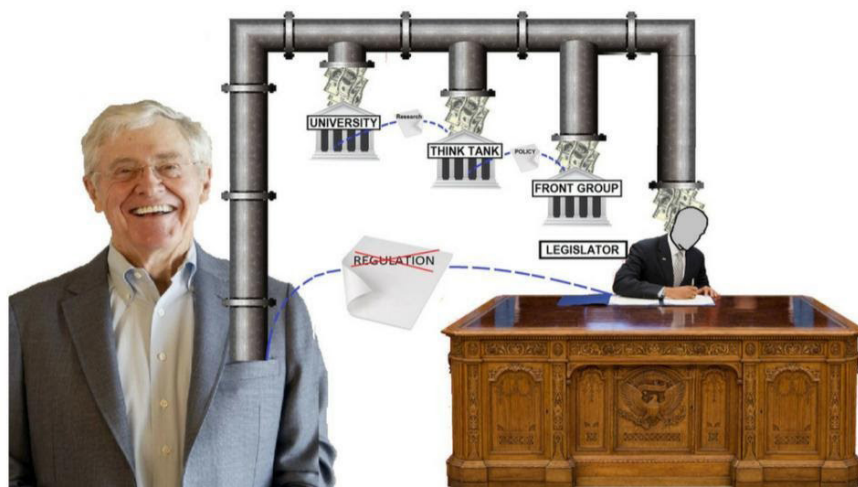


## OVERVIEW

From funding university-affiliated research centers and state-based think-tanks to making sure climate-denying politicians are seated in legislatures across the country, the Koch network has been one of the largest driving forces behind climate misinformation in the United States. This has stalled government action on climate change, disrupted efforts by the states to transition to renewable energies, and paved the way for the Trump administration's privatization of public lands.

The Koch network is helmed by billionaire Charles Koch, head of Koch Industries -- a multinational corporation with subsidiaries involved in the manufacturing, refining, and distribution of petroleum, chemicals, energy, fiber, and more. Koch has a vested interest in delaying climate action: he's made billions from his ownership and control of Koch Industries, an oil corporation that is the second largest privately-held

company in America. Much of the Koch network's success in cutting environmental regulations and delaying action on climate change can be attributed to its commitment to a "battle of ideas" that seeks to mainstream favorable narratives of privatization and limited government intervention, along with the direct promotion of climate change denial content.



**“...there are basically four ways in which [the pro-capitalist businessman] can fight for free enterprise - through education, through the media, by legal challenges, and by political action... I do maintain, however, that the educational route is both the most vital and the most neglected... We should [support] only those programs, departments or schools that contribute in some way to our individual companies or to the general welfare of our free enterprise system.”**

From the 1974 Charles Koch Speech: *“Anti-Capitalism and Big Business and How the Powell Memo Did Not Go Far Enough*

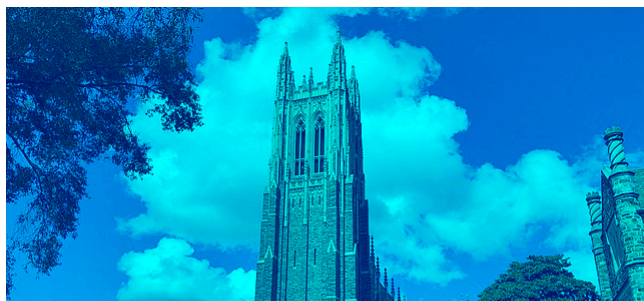
Through dark money infusions in the political realm, communications, the judiciary system, and education since the 1970s, the Koch network has been able to create and manipulate pro-corporate messaging that translates into deregulation policy -- policy that is championed by people who have been plucked from the network's talent pipeline to ensure that profit wins out over the common good.

This report looks at the Koch network's involvement in education, the media, the courts, and politics to see just how interwoven they are when it comes to climate disinformation and harm to the environment.

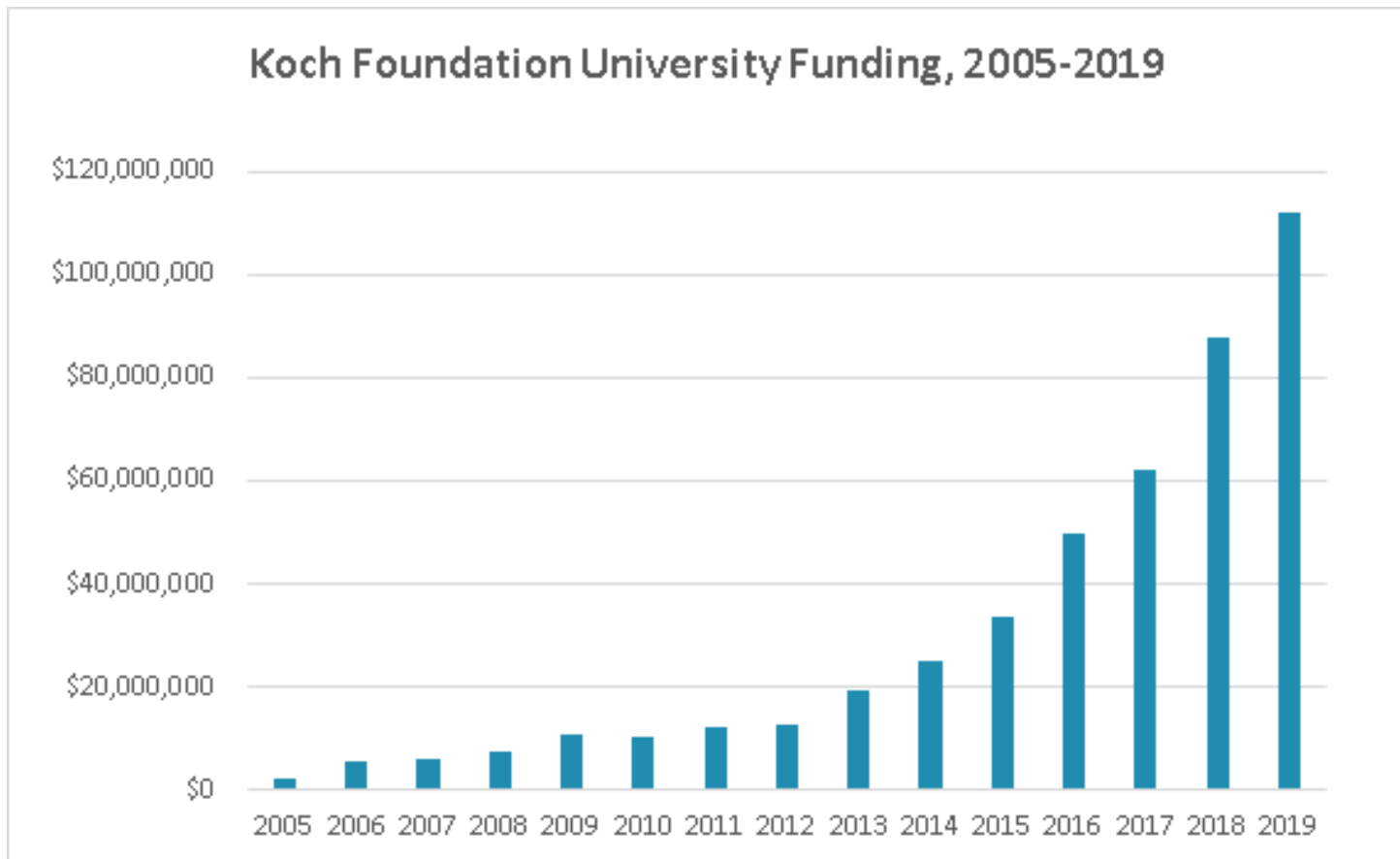
# EDUCATION

From 2005 - 2019, the Koch Foundation donated over \$456 million to universities and colleges across the country. In 2019 alone, they donated over \$112 million to 225 distinct campuses<sup>1</sup> and campus-rooted non profits. This number was up from \$87 million in 2018, and \$62 million in 2017. Charles Koch has said that the funding of hundreds of universities across the country is intended to mainstream free-market ideas and approaches to public policy that support the Koch network's legislative goals at the state and federal levels.<sup>2</sup>

Koch achieves his goals in education in three ways. First, by funding campus centers and think tanks that produce research that endorses/supports the Koch network's policy agenda. Second, by mainstreaming favorable ideas to the general public via curriculum and public relations strategies. And lastly, by



**Duke University's Center for the History of Political Economy: The Koch funded center brought Bjorn Lomborg to give a talk on "climate alarmism" as part of the Hayek Lecture Series, despite his lack of a background in climate science. Lomborg is best known for his books that downplay the risks of global warning.**



1 Gibson, Connor. "Koch Foundation Funding to University Higher Education Programs, 2005-2019." April 2021. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1c8h3cx5PouCV62KhG624NalwR4ROfULjYF7yWOWXk8A/edit#gid=0>.

2 Koch, Charles. "'Anti-Capitalism and Big Business' and How the Powell Memo Did Not Go Far Enough." KochDocs. 07 June, 2019. <https://kochdocs.org/2019/06/07/charles-koch-anti-capitalism-big-business/>.





**Tufts University, The Center for State Policy Analysis (CSPA): A new program housed by Tufts University, has Koch-linked funding which raises questions about the independence of the center's policy analysis.**

identifying sympathetic students to recruit into the Koch network “talent pipeline.”<sup>3</sup> Koch and his network provide large financial gifts with terms and conditions attached to the scope of research, curriculum taught, and faculty hired to mainstream ideas that validate their policy objectives.<sup>4</sup>

A school that accepts funding from the Charles Koch Foundation is making a commitment to endorse and enable the Koch network’s harmful political agenda to halt action on climate change, put hundreds of thousands of people in prison, deny millions of people healthcare, and strip rights and wages from workers globally.

One way that Koch funding propagates climate misinformation in their favor is via curriculum. Thomas Rustici, a George Mason University economics professor who has done research for the Charles Koch Foundation, has required students to read *The Science of Success* by

Charles Koch. Despite not being a climate scientist, he has recommended students read books by climate change skeptics such as Fred Singer, Robert Balling, and Patrick Michaels, -- all writers who have taken money from the oil and gas industry.<sup>5</sup> Student-created audio recordings show Rustici spouting climate change denialism and claiming global warming is not the extreme concern environmentalists suggest.

3 Levinthal, Dave. “Koch Brothers Higher Ed Investments Advance Political Goals.” Center for Public Integrity. 10 October 2015. <https://publicintegrity.org/2015/10/30/18684/koch-brothers-higher-ed-investments-advance-political-goals>.

4 UnKoch My Campus. “Violations of Academic Freedom, Faculty Governance, and Academic Integrity: An Analysis of the Charles Koch Foundation.” UnKoch My Campus. Dec, 2018. <http://www.unkochmycampus.org/academic-violations>

5 Schwartz, Dan. “The Last of the Climate Deniers Hold On, Despite Your Protests.” VICE. 18 November, 2019. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/wjwawq/the-last-of-the-climate-deniers-hold-on-despite-your-protests-v26n4>.

## CASE STUDY:

### George Washington University, Washington DC

In June of 2020, thanks to the hard work of student advocates, George Washington University administration committed to full divestment from fossil fuels, carbon neutrality by 2030, and reversing GW's entire 200 year carbon footprint.<sup>6</sup> George Washington leadership aligned with science and acknowledged the need for our society to transition off of fossil fuels as quickly as possible. However, the university continues to lend its name and credibility to climate deniers and efforts to deregulate the fossil fuel industry by harboring the Koch and ExxonMobil funded Regulatory Studies Center (RSC).



Pre-pandemic student organizers marched to the home of George Washington President Thomas LeBlanc.

The RSC has repeatedly acted as a front for fossil fuel interests with a history of using George Washington's name to provide credibility to climate deniers, fossil fuel cronies, and other discredited backers of pseudoscience.<sup>7</sup> The center almost universally advocates against environmental regulation and relies on researchers with ties to groups funded by the Koch family.

The RSC has received over one million dollars from both ExxonMobil and the Koch Foundation—part of a fossil fuel empire that profits from the deregulation of the industry. Notably, the Kochs and ExxonMobil are prominent architects of the decades long disinformation campaign fueling climate denial. There is no way to truly know what role these funders play, due to the lack of transparency when it comes to the RSC's donor agreements.

**“For over a decade the RSC has offered GW’s name and credibility to climate deniers, laundered the political agenda of fossil fuel billionaires, and polluted public discourse with discredited junk science,” says GW sophomore Ethan Gettes. “If GW is serious about ending its complicity in the climate crisis, the RSC must be shut down or removed from campus.”**

The information and recommendations coming from the RSC also has had real world environmental impacts. The Trump administration acted on many of the center's polluter-friendly recommendations, such as reducing the costs that the government attributes to greenhouse gases and raising the bar for issuing new energy efficiency standards.

On February 8th, 2021 student organizers marched to the home of George Washington President

6 Press Release. “GW to Eliminate All Fossil Fuel Investments from Endowment.” GW Today. 29 June, 2020. <https://gwtoday.gwu.edu/gw-eliminate-all-fossil-fuel-investments-endowment>.

7 Lincoln, Taylor. “A Key Cog in Charles Koch’s Master Plan: How the Purportedly Unbiased George Washington University Regulatory Studies Center Advances an Agenda to Deregulate America.” Public Citizen. 3 June, 2019. <https://www.citizen.org/article/koch-cog-rsc/>

Thomas LeBlanc and taped to his front door a copy of their open letter demanding action.<sup>8</sup> Hundreds of supporters have already signed on.

“For over a decade the RSC has offered GW’s name and credibility to climate deniers, laundered the political agenda of fossil fuel billionaires, and polluted public discourse with discredited junk science,” says GW sophomore Ethan Gettes. “If GW is serious about ending its complicity in the climate crisis, the RSC must be shut down or removed from campus.”

Since the letter was launched, articles have been written about the action, students and UnKoch staff have written Op/Eds for school and national outlets, and the RSC responded! However, their response was riddled with inaccuracies and fallacies, so we had to take our red pen to it and fix a few things.

## Columbian College of Arts & Sciences

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

February 11, 2021

As George Washington University faculty and administrators involved with the [GW Regulatory Studies Center](#), we would like to provide accurate information about the Center’s membership, scholarship, and activities.

But not a transparent overview of who funds the center (Koch ExxonMobil Searle Freedom Trust) and what these donors get in return.

### About the Center

The GW Regulatory Studies Center is a chartered academic center in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences’ Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration, subject to all policies and oversight by Columbian College Dean Paul Wahlbeck.

Overall, the RSC appears to have played a significant role in shaping a deregulatory agenda.

The Regulatory Studies Center’s mission is to improve regulatory policy through research, education, and outreach, and its scholars publish in a wide range of leading peer-reviewed academic and legal journals. These faculty members bring different backgrounds and perspectives to bear on scholarship and teaching, and the Center’s research covers a diverse range of topics in regulatory policy and practice. The Regulatory Studies Center’s website offers a transparent presentation of its faculty, research, and scholarly activity.

In addition to academia, the Regulatory Studies Center’s faculty have worked in different branches of government during Democratic and Republican administrations. Their expertise and achievements are recognized by leading organizations in their fields of public policy and administration, economics, administrative law, regulatory impact analysis, and political science. In addition, the Center supports Trachtenberg School graduate students through research opportunities and career guidance.

The Regulatory Studies Center organizes well-attended events that feature insights on regulatory policy and practice from individuals across disciplines and the ideological spectrum, including members of Congress from both major political parties and independents, high-ranking officials from each of the last six administrations, international diplomats and academics, and legal, policy, political science, and economic scholars.

The Regulatory Studies Center receives support for its activities from diverse sources including governments, foundations, companies, and individuals. It does not accept funding that is conditioned on hiring (or retaining) particular individuals, nor that influences the content or conclusions of its work.

Unfortunately, without releasing funder information or terms of funding, we have no data to back this up. It also doesn't bode well that some of the RSC's most significant donors - like the Koch network - have been embroiled in academic freedom violations in the past. And, those in the Koch network have gone on record explaining how they use college campuses as recruiting grounds and to spread their ideological ideals.

<sup>8</sup> Wardwell, Jarrod. “Sunrise GW marches letter to LeBlanc, demanding closure of RSC” The GW Hatchet. 10 February, 2021. <https://www.gwhatchet.com/2021/02/10/sunrise-gw-marches-letter-to-leblanc-demanding-closure-of-rsc/>.



Then what is this? "Numerous papers endorsed changes to the process for creating regulations. One paper, signed by five RSC researchers, offered 10 proposals for the Incoming Trump administration. The recommendations included requiring rules proposed by independent agencies to undergo centralized review within the executive branch; requiring proposed rules to undergo additional phases of analysis, such as for their potential effects on competition and innovation; and making a general request of the government to "improve the rigor of regulatory impact analyses."

### Correcting Some Inaccurate and Uninformed Claims

Contrary to unsubstantiated claims, no one in the Regulatory Studies Center questions climate science. In fact, most of the Center's scholars do not focus on environmental or energy issues. Those who have written on climate issues address economic and legal questions, not the science. The Regulatory Studies Center explicitly does not take institutional positions on any issues.

The source of many of the criticisms are based on a misleading and inaccurate report of an advocacy organization. That organization's characterizations of the scholarship produced by members of the Regulatory Studies Center are highly misleading and inconsistent with an objective review of the facts. For example, the claim that 96 percent of the Center's research is antiregulatory is based on a biased (and nontransparent) analysis of less than seven percent of its research output.

Numerous papers took issue with the government's calculation of benefits of proposed regulations, especially concerning air quality. The RSC's researchers have consistently argued that government analysts have credited rules to reduce air pollution with providing greater public benefits than warranted.

The Regulatory Studies Center-supported academic [journal articles](#), [book reports](#), [commentaries](#), [insights](#), or [working papers](#), nor does it acknowledge the Center's [Information Digest](#), which incorporates news and viewpoints from across the policy community. If the small sample it does consider, it arbitrarily discards the majority of the research because it acknowledges that they do not support the advocate's narrative that the research is antiregulatory.

The organization's characterization of the Regulatory Studies Center scholars' affiliations is also misleading. It systematically ignores more than two-thirds of the Center's staff, excluding many [senior scholars](#) (Professors Steven Balla, Christopher Carrigan, Joseph Cordes, and Bridget Dooling), while attempting to tie the Center to unaffiliated [individuals and former interns](#).

The Regulatory Studies Center welcomes academic debate and peer review, and we encourage interested people to visit our [website](#) and read our work. These attacks, however, eschew the opportunity for [fact-based exchange](#); they focus instead on challenging rigorous scholarship with ad hominem rhetoric. While individuals and organizations are free to disagree with the tools of evidence-based analysis applied by scholars in the Center, mere disagreement with another discipline does not entitle them to censor individuals or units, nor to cut off intellectual debate. This attempt to dictate the direction of scholars' research pursuits through intimidation and mischaracterization is inconsistent with GW's values related to [open inquiry and academic freedom](#).

Here are some facts: In support of a thesis that regulations are on the rise, RSC Director Susan Dudley has on numerous occasions written or testified that "every year" federal agencies "issue tens of thousands of new regulations." Dudley has made this claim in a commentary on the RSC's web site, in a blog for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in testimony before U.S. Senate committees and in a law review article. The characterization that "tens of thousands" of regulations are issued annually far exceeds other experts' assessments. Dudley does not provide helpful insight into the source of her claim. In one case, she footnoted it by referring to the count of pages published in the Federal Register. But page counts are not synonymous with the number of regulations. The number of final rule notices published in the Federal Register this century has ranged from about 3,000 to 4,000 a year. A 2015 report issued by the Congressional Research Service reported similar findings. Even claiming that the government issues as many as 3,000 or 4,000 regulations a year is misleading unless additional context is provided. It turns out that under this all-encompassing measure, the number of regulations has generally fallen over the years - to less than half what it was in the mid-1970s.

That isn't the claim. The claim is that 96% of the public comments submitted to federal regulatory agencies by RSC researchers relating to the stringency of specific regulations recommended less regulation than the proposal or status quo. 100% of the comments relating to overarching regulatory policy recommended changes that would result in less regulation in the future."

Like Sofie Miller? Miller was a regulatory policy intern at the RSC in 2010 before being hired as a policy analyst by the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation. She returned to the RSC in 2012 as a senior analyst. Under the auspices of the RSC, she filed at least 16 public comments, several of which expressed opposition to proposed energy efficiency standards for appliances.



Paul Wahlbeck  
Dean, Columbian College  
Professor of Political Science

Dudley has been affiliated with at least eight Koch-funded organizations besides the RSC: Mercatus Center, Association of Private Enterprise Education (APEE), Federalist Society, International Foundation for Research in Experimental Economics, National Federation of Independent Business Small Business Legal Center, Cato Institute's Regulation Magazine, Strata Policy think tank, U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Regulatory Affairs Committee

Susan E. Dudley  
Director, Regulatory Studies Center  
Distinguished Professor of Practice in Public Administration

Dudley published a report for GMU that included a bit about how a little pollution is okay because the smog protects us from cancer causing UV. "Ozone in the troposphere, like ozone in the stratosphere, has the beneficial effect of screening ultraviolet radiation, which is known to have various health and welfare effects including melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer, cataracts, and crop and fishery damage. This appendix presents our analysis of the harmful public health and welfare impact that would be caused by the reduction in tropospheric ozone if this rule is implemented."

Steven J. Balla  
Co-director, Regulatory Studies Center  
Associate Professor of Public Policy and Public Administration  
International Affairs

More Koch connections: Mannix worked as a senior fellow at the Mercatus Center. Mannix was also listed as an academic fellow at the Koch-funded think tank Stratus in that organization's 2016 annual report.

Joseph Cordes  
Co-director, Regulatory Studies Center  
Professor of Economics and Public Administration  
International Affairs

Brian F. Mannix  
Research Professor, Regulatory Studies Center

J. Howard Beales  
Professor Emeritus of Strategic Management and Public Policy

Peter Linquti  
Director, Environmental Resource Policy Program  
Associate Professor of Environmental Resource Policy

Richard J. Pierce  
Lyle T. Alverson Professor of Law

Tara M. Sinclair  
Associate Professor of Economics and International Affairs

Why aren't there signatures from other folks on the team, like Mark Febrizio - he previously was a fellow at the Mercatus Center, worked for the Institute for Energy Research through the Koch Associate Program, and interned for the Heritage Foundation and The Institute of World Politics

## K-12

The Koch network's impact is not relegated just to higher education. The Koch-funded educational non profit Izzit creates curriculum and videos for grades K-12 on a variety of topics. Included among their free, supplemental offerings to schools is the video "Unstoppable Solar Cycles," which downplays the role of people in climate change, even going so far as to reiterate that point in an accompanying quiz where the correct answer to a question is that man which the correct answer is that man "plays a small part in global warming."<sup>9</sup>



The Koch-funded Center for Independent Thought (CIT) produces "Stossel in the Classroom," a teaching series for middle and high school teachers based on the punditry of John Stossel, a former FOX Business host who consistently denies the scientific evidence of global warming.<sup>10</sup> The material for Stossel's videos was produced by economics professors at George Mason University's Koch-funded Mercatus Center.<sup>11</sup> The videos include climate denialism theories that have been debunked thoroughly, like the ideas that atmospheric CO2 changes lag behind temperature changes or that global warming is caused by the sun. John Stossel's company, JFS Productions, is among the Charles Koch Institute's top disclosed contractors. JFS Productions received over \$1.5 million from the Koch Institute from 2017 to 2019, a time when Stossel's JFS-branded op-eds promoted longtime climate change deniers and disinformation that contradicts climate science.<sup>12</sup>

9 Barakat, Matthew. "Videos used by schools question minimum wage, climate change." AP News. 18 February, 2020. <https://apnews.com/article/ce5b65cd2b088cacb3b1c32a6a82ab92>.

10 Greenpeace. "Center for Independent Thought: Stossel in the Classroom." Greenpeace. 2018. <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/ending-the-climate-crisis/climate-deniers/front-groups/center-for-independent-thought-stossel-in-the-classroom/>.

11 Martens, Pam. "The Koch Whisperers." CounterPunch. 12 September, 2011. <https://www.counterpunch.org/2011/09/12/the-koch-whisperers/>.

12 Gibson, Connor. "John Stossel is Rolling in Koch Money." Grassrootbeer Investigations. 22 December, 2020. <https://grassrootbeer.substack.com/p/john-stossel-is-rolling-in-koch-money>

## POLITICS

Koch Family Foundations have spent over \$145 million directly financing anti-climate organizations that have attacked climate change science and policy solutions, from 1997-2018.<sup>13</sup>

One of these organizations, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has received over \$3 million, and has been extremely busy spending all that money creating model climate related legislation that is being used in various states, along with organizing politicians to actively fight federal climate legislation. Charles Koch's company and organizations hold overlapping and deep influence within ALEC, matched by no other corporation with ALEC membership.<sup>14</sup>

### Critical Infrastructure Laws Protecting Corporations Over People

ALEC has drafted versions of a bill that would raise the stakes when it comes to gathering and protesting harmful polluters. ALEC has promoted these bills across the country, providing blueprints for state representatives who place profit and corporate interests over the common good. Fourteen states have enacted these bills into law: North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Iowa, Louisiana, Indiana, Tennessee, Texas, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kentucky, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Ohio. Koch Industries lobbied directly in support of the laws passed in Texas and Iowa, met with the bill's sponsor in Ohio, and supported trade associations lobbying for these laws in many other states.<sup>15</sup>



Under these types of bills, simply gathering and holding a peaceful sit-in at a pipeline construction site -- deemed a 'critical infrastructure'-- could be considered a criminal activity, and depending on the state, could be punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine. These types of laws tend to target already marginalized communities, like Indigenous ones who are protesting gas and oil pipelines that are destroying their land.<sup>16</sup>

### Political Organizing to Combat Climate Legislation

According to recent leaked phone calls, a new, secretive, ALEC task force, the Functional Federalism

13 Gibson, Connor. "Koch Foundations Funding to Climate Science Denial Front Groups, 1986-2018." Greenpeace. [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JOcU8NPZYCshtxXJJb6hTIPAAhDP-g8yn8\\_J52Fauek/edit#gid=1558376028](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JOcU8NPZYCshtxXJJb6hTIPAAhDP-g8yn8_J52Fauek/edit#gid=1558376028)

14 Gibson, Connor. "Koch Industries and ALEC: a History of Documents." KochDocs. 3 September 2019. <https://kochdocs.org/2019/09/03/koch-industries-and-alec-a-history-of-documents/>

15 Gibson, Connor. "State Bills to Criminalize Peaceful Protest of Oil & Gas 'Critical Infrastructure.'" PolluterWatch. 18 February, 2019. <https://polluterwatch.org/state-bills-criminalize-peaceful-protest-oil-gas-critical-infrastructure-pipelines/>.

16 Mueller-Hsia, Kaylana. "Anti-Protest Laws Threaten Indigenous and Climate Movements." Brennan Center for Justice. 17 March, 2021. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/anti-protest-laws-threaten-indigenous-and-climate-movements>.



Working Group, is having state leaders systematically attack and stall President Biden's agenda.<sup>17</sup> Over the last few months seemingly separate groups of politicians began challenging environmental actions of the new administration. Recently, 21 Republican-controlled states, led by Texas and Montana, sued the Biden administration for revoking a permit for the Keystone XL pipeline - calling it an unconstitutional overuse of executive power that would diminish the states' economies and tax revenue. Both lawsuits are pending in federal courts. Also in Texas, Governor Greg Abbott issued an executive order in January directing state agencies to "use all lawful powers" to challenge federal policies that disadvantage oil and gas operators. During the ALEC-led phone meetings, former Utah state representative, Ken Ivory, shared three ways that state leaders can collectively fight against Biden's climate plan "nullification, or passing state legislation to invalidate federal actions that states believe are unconstitutional; the initiation of a constitutional convention that would pass amendments giving states more power; and the passage of non-binding resolutions reaffirming the U.S. Constitution's Tenth Amendment, which declares that powers not explicitly granted to the federal government belong to the states, in state legislatures."<sup>18</sup>

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) is another example of a Koch-funded political group pushing against climate action. AFP was founded in 2004 with an undisclosed \$850,000 seed grant from David Koch, and has since received over \$6 million from Koch foundations.<sup>19</sup> While AFP has promoted a variety of corporate friendly legislation, one of their significant moves was the "No Climate Tax" pledge that they circulated, which would prohibit the government from putting a price on carbon emissions.<sup>20</sup> Over 400 office-holders from state to federal politicians, signed on.<sup>21</sup> Not only did this pledge and other efforts help derail plans to pass a cap and trade plan for greenhouse gas emissions in 2009 and 2010, but it had a noticeable impact on our environment. In a little over a decade since, levels of carbon concentration have surpassed 400 parts per million, the highest level recorded in the past 800,000 years.<sup>22</sup>

### Americans for Prosperity "No Climate Tax Pledge":

**"I,\_\_\_\_, pledge to the taxpayers of the state of \_\_\_\_ and to the American people that I will oppose any legislation relating to climate change that includes a net increase in government revenue."**

Since most solutions to the problem of greenhouse-gas emissions require costs to the polluters and the public, the pledge essentially commits those who sign to it to vote against nearly any meaningful bill regarding global warming, and acts as yet another roadblock to action.

17 Sadasivam, Naveena. "Leaked Calls Show ALEC's Secret Plan to Fight Biden on Climate." Grist. 12 April, 2021. <https://grist.org/politics/alec-biden-climate-republicans/>.

18 Ibid.

19 Gibson, Connor. "Koch Foundations Funding to Climate Science Denial Front Groups, 1986-2018." Greenpeace. [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JOcU8NPZYCshtxXJJb6hTIPAAhDP-g8yn8\\_J52Fauek/edit#gid=1558376028](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JOcU8NPZYCshtxXJJb6hTIPAAhDP-g8yn8_J52Fauek/edit#gid=1558376028)

20 Mayer, Jane. "Koch Pledge Tied to Congressional Climate Inaction." The New Yorker. June, 2013. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/koch-pledge-tied-to-congressional-climate-inaction>

21 <https://web.archive.org/web/20131214222423/http://www.noclimatetax.com/pledge-signatories/>

22 Lindsey, Rebecca. "Climate Change: Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide." Climate.gov. 14 August, 2020. <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-atmospheric-carbon-dioxide>.



## COMMUNICATIONS

Supporting news media that can craft a narrative that is both favorable to a corporate agenda while minimizing the climate crisis is a key tactic for the Koch network. From reported news to video platforms, the climate misinformation that is put out there is dangerous and only serves to promote profit over the common good.

Tucker Carlson's Daily Caller News Foundation is a prime example. *The Daily Caller* has received over \$3.5 million from Koch foundations over the years,<sup>23</sup> which in some years has made up almost all of the budget for the online news outlet. The site is a frequent platform for both climate science deniers and Koch apologists. For many years, Michael Bastasch was *The Daily Caller's* primary reporter on climate change and energy. Bastasch regularly promoted the ideas of known climate deniers and repeatedly wrote about there being a global warming "pause."<sup>24</sup> Bastasch's own career is firmly rooted in Charles Koch's fortune, from the Koch Internship Program at the Charles Koch Institute, to the Koch Summer Fellowship at the Koch-controlled Institute for Humane Studies, to positions at ALEC and the Heritage Foundation, before taking a role at the Koch-funded Daily Caller News Foundation.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the Koch-funded conservative college news site, Campus Reform, is also a platform for climate misinformation. Campus Reform, a project of the Koch-funded Leadership Institute, trains conservative students to monitor, surveil and report on the speech and actions of left-leaning professors, students and campus activist groups for the organization's daily blog. There are many articles reporting on professors pushing a climate change "agenda,"<sup>26</sup> with the insinuation clear that it's not an appropriate topic to discuss outside of a science course.

Even outlets not directly funded by Koch are finding themselves as platforms for Koch-funded climate misinformation. A January 2020 report by Avaaz found that YouTube is driving millions of people to watch climate misinformation videos. YouTube's recommendation algorithm is giving these videos free promotion and showing misinformation to millions who wouldn't have been exposed to it otherwise. Avaaz also

**YouTube is profiting from climate denial.**

**#DitchDenialDollars**

**and turn YouTube Green.**

**UNKOCH**  
MY CAMPUS

23 Gibson, Connor. "Koch Foundations Funding to Climate Science Denial Front Groups, 1986-2018." Greenpeace. [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JOcU8NPZYCshtxXJJb6hTIPAAhdP-g8yn8\\_J52Fauk/edit#gid=1558376028](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JOcU8NPZYCshtxXJJb6hTIPAAhdP-g8yn8_J52Fauk/edit#gid=1558376028)

24 Bastasch, Michael. "NOAA Is Hiring Outside Experts To Review 'Pause-Busting' Global Warming Study" *The Daily Caller*. 13 February, 2017. <https://dailycaller.com/2017/02/13/noaa-is-hiring-outside-experts-to-review-pause-busting-global-warming-study/>

25 "Michael Bastasch." DeSmog. <https://www.desmogblog.com/michael-bastasch/>

26 Snitsar, Victoria. "Berkeley lecturer uses 'Game of Thrones' to push climate change agenda" *Campus Reform*. 17 April. 2019. <https://www.campusreform.org/article?id=12121>.

found that YouTube is incentivizing this climate misinformation content via its monetization program. Every time an ad is shown on a YouTube video, the advertiser pays a fee, of which 55% goes to the video creator and the other 45% to YouTube.<sup>27</sup> YouTube's promotion and monetization of climate misinformation, including John Stossel's Koch-funded videos, mentioned above, directly contribute to the Koch network's ongoing success in casting doubt on climate change and the ongoing harm climate inaction is causing communities of color.

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27 Avaaz. "Why is YouTube Broadcasting Climate Misinformation to Millions?" 16 January, 2020. [https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/youtube\\_climate\\_misinformation/](https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/youtube_climate_misinformation/)

## JUDGES & COURTS

The federal judicial selection process has been manipulated by special interest groups that have pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into sophisticated campaigns to influence judicial nominations, judicial decisions, and judges themselves with very little transparency about who is funding such campaigns.

Judges are being educated at Koch-sponsored seminars that seek to train judges on how to apply a pro-corporate analysis to their judicial decisions. Some of these seminars included workshops where judges were warned against consideration of “junk science” — like specific methods to measure the effects of pollution.<sup>28</sup> By manipulating gaps in gift acceptance policies at colleges and universities, the Koch network has been able to facilitate the education of future lawyers and judges in an effort to achieve their goals of privatization, corporate favor, and regulatory rollbacks. Many states also do not have proper ethics rules to combat this form of judicial lobbying.

Judges sympathetic to Koch’s agenda are gaining positions of power to enforce this agenda because Koch-backed special-interest groups are able to spend millions of dark money dollars to get them elected and appointed at the state and federal level. These interest groups are able to achieve success because of campaign finance loopholes like Citizens United, laws that allow Supreme Court justices to run for multiple terms, and a lack of public financing laws that would prevent judges from having to raise money from lawyers and corporations that appear before them.

The Koch network has spent a significant amount of money ensuring that corporate-friendly judges are sitting on benches, from the state level all the way to the Supreme Court. Through organizations like Americans for Prosperity, campaigns to push Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett through to the Supreme Court over the past few years have spent well into seven figures, much of the bill footed by Koch.<sup>29</sup> It’s no surprise, then, that these judges hold views that put profit over the planet when it comes to the environment.

During the Senate committee hearing for her confirmation, Coney Barrett refused to say whether she accepts the science of climate change when questioned by Kamala Harris. In fact, she continuously

**“Dark money campaigns to capture America’s highest courts are exercises in raw power by some of the richest people and biggest corporations in the world. Those running big ad campaigns about nominees, deploying litigators to influence them to overrule legal precedents, and trying to curry their favor need to be subject to at least the same level of transparency as do elections, lobbying, and gifts to any senior government officials, including of substantial value by friends.”**

From the March 10, 2021 *Testimony to the U.S. Senate Judiciary’s Subcommittee on Federal Courts*, by Lisa Graves, President of True North Research

28 Leonard, Christopher. “Koch’s Big Bet on Barrett.” New York Times. 12, October, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/opinion/charles-koch-amy-coney-barrett.html?smid=em-share>.

29 Ibid.

said she was not a scientist or thought her views on climate science related to her role as a judge when questioned by a couple of other senators. Coney Barrett went on to say that climate change is “a very contentious matter of public debate.”<sup>30</sup> Coney Barrett’s remarks were so inflammatory that 70 climate journalists signed on to a letter challenging her nomination.<sup>31</sup>

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30 The Guardian. “Amy Coney Barrett refuses to tell Kamala Harris if she thinks climate change is happening” The Guardian. 15 October, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/15/amy-coney-barrett-refuses-to-tell-kamala-harris-if-she-thinks-climate-change-is-happening>.

31 Juhasz, Antonia & Nobel, Justin. “More Than 70 Science and Climate Journalists Challenge Supreme Court Nomination of Amy Coney Barrett.” Rolling Stone. 25 October, 2020. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/political-commentary/amy-coney-barrett-climate-journalists-challenge-supreme-court-nomination-1080453/>.