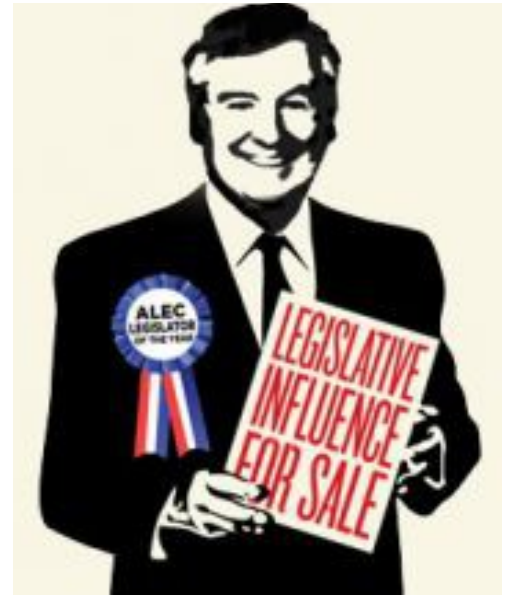


The Koch Brothers, ALEC, and the TPP

What's ALEC?

ALEC is the American Legislative Exchange Council, a far-right-wing organization funded in part by the billionaire Koch brothers, which is dedicated to taking over state legislatures to destroy workers' rights and environmental safeguards (the Koches being heavily into coal and oil).

“For example, the foundations controlled gave ALEC over \$200,000 in 2009. (The Claude R. Lambe Foundation, which Charles Koch, his wife and kids help run, donated \$125,000 to ALEC. His own Charles G. Koch foundation kicked in an additional \$75,000.) That \$200k is before whatever is the undisclosed amount of membership "dues" paid by Koch Industries, which is run by Charles and David Koch. There is no public disclosure of annual gifts the company gives to take part in the one-stop shopping ALEC conventions provide to meet with legislators from every state about their wish list.



Is that All the Kochs Have Done with ALEC?



No, there's more. In 2009, Koch corporate and foundation gifts likely amounted to about three times more income for ALEC than the dues from all of its legislative members combined. Research from CMD and GreenPeacedocuments that the Koch foundations have given ALEC at least \$600,000 in the past decade or so, and Koch Industries has donated an untold amount. The Kochs also bailed out ALEC with a loan of nearly half a million dollars in the late 1990s. Koch Industries has also chaired ALEC's corporate board and has had a seat on its board for over a decade. Plus, another subsidy unaccounted for by ALEC is the money corporations like Koch have spent on having the head of its lobbying arm involved in ALEC's leadership as well as whatever amount of time the company spends crafting ALEC "model" legislation.

The Charles G. Koch Foundation also funds Koch interns and fellows who have worked for ALEC, and Koch foundation "experts" have also provided help, such as analysis attacking the pay of public state employees. And ALEC's Board of "Scholars" includes people who also receive Koch funding or are work for Koch-funded groups. Beyond all that, the Kochs have funded an infrastructure to support their agenda, through funding other groups like Americans for Prosperity (founded by David Koch), which push legislative proposals echoing the ALEC agenda, on climate and countless other issues”¹

What are TPP and Fast Track?

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a massive “free trade” agreement, has been under negotiation for 5 years behind closed doors by officials from the US and 11 other countries. The public & the press cannot see the draft TPP text and Congress has extremely limited access, but more than 600 official corporate “advisers” have access at the click of a button. The TPP is not really mainly about trade –only five of its 29 chapters address trade issues. The rest would set rules on non-trade matters that affect our daily lives: food safety, internet freedom, medicine costs, job off-shoring, financial regulation, and more.

Fast Track is the mechanism that will allow the Obama administration to circumvent constitutional checks and balances To ram TPP and TTIP through congress, just like his predecessors did with NAFTA and the WTO.

“Who Backs the TPP and a ‘NAFTA on Steroids’?

ALEC

If President Obama uses his State of the Union address to launch a major push for “fast-track” authority to bypass congressional input and oversight on a sweeping Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, he will need new allies to generate support around the country.



¹ <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2011/07/10887/cmd-special-report-alecs-funding-and-spending>

The president won't be able to look to organized labor. Unions are overwhelmingly opposed to a deal that Communications Workers of America posters refer to as "NAFTA on Steroids."

The president won't be able to look to major environmental organizations. The Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and other green groups are outspoken in their opposition.

The president won't be able to look to progressive farm groups. The National Farmers Union is explicitly opposed to using a fast-track approach that would allow trade agreements to move through Congress with limited debate and without amendments.

In fact, if Obama decides to ramp up his advocacy for a free-trade strategy that progressive Americans tend to see as a threat to workers, farmers, the environment, human rights and democracy, he won't be able to count on many traditional allies to stir up grassroots support in the states. That's one of the reasons there remains considerable uncertainty about whether the president really will—in a speech that is expected to focus on income equality—spend substantial time talking up a trade agenda that has drawn broad opposition from House and Senate Democrats and so much of his base.

If the president does go all in for the TPP, he will find himself in strange company—with groups that promote policies that critics argue are responsible for the growing gap between a wealthy few and an increasingly impoverished many.

There is, for instance, one group that maintains an extensive network of political connections in states across the country and is enthusiastically on board for "the expedited conclusions and approval of the TPP."

That group is the American Legislative Exchange Council.

ALEC, the corporate-funded organization that stirred considerable controversy several years ago with its advocacy on behalf of so-called Stand Your Ground gun laws and restrictive Voter ID rules, produces so-called "model legislation" for introduction by conservative state legislators. Last fall, the ALEC board of directors approved and circulated a "Model Policy" that celebrates the TPP and declares that it "will be an impetus for further bilateral and multilateral trade agreements..."

Expanding trade along lines established by the North American Free Trade Agreement and the permanent normalization of trade relations with China has always been on ALEC's agenda. The multinational corporations that cover the group's expenses, and help to define every aspect of its agenda, have long embraced an approach that allows them to move factories and jobs from country-to-country in order to lower wages and avoid labor, environmental and human rights regulations.

ALEC's model policy on the TPP even makes respectful reference to President Obama and his administration. That's ironic, as ALEC members have been among the most ardent critics of the president's policies.

Not long ago, the group published a "State Legislators Guide to Repealing Obamacare." Yet, ALEC now highlights the Obama administration's support of the TPP "as one-part of its strategy to increase competitiveness and employment in the United States..."

So ALEC is urging state legislators who have been busy trying to block implementation of the Affordable Care Act to get their states to formally endorse the TPP. The model policy concludes:

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the legislature of [INSERT STATE] call(s) on Congress to support negotiations for a comprehensive, high-standard and ambitious Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement that will provide a platform for regional trade and economic integration...

ALEC's International Relations Task Force, which is co-chaired by a representative from Philip Morris International, declares on its webpage that it "promotes both bilateral and multilateral free trade frameworks, initiatives and partnerships." ALEC has a long history of being at the forefront of fights to sell the trade agenda outlined in the North American Free Trade Agreement and other deals backed by Democratic and Republican presidents.

Indeed, the task force that's promoting the TPP says, ALEC's international policy work is persuasive "precisely because our policy directives are backed by our public and private sector members—American state legislators from all 50 states and some of the world's largest corporations."²

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Call, email, fax, and write your Congressman and Senators and urge them to publicly pledge to OPPOSE any form of legislation to expedite TPP through Congress, whether called "Fast Track", "Smart Track" or anything else. Also ask your Senators to ensure that the Senate version of the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill includes the same language protecting "Buy American" procurement rules from trade agreements like TPP as the House version of the bill, which has already passed. If the Senate bill passes with this language intact, it will be a serious blow to TPP negotiations. You can find your elected official's contact information at <http://tradejustice.net/leg>.

- To learn more or to volunteer contact TradeJustice NY Metro at (718) 218-4523. Email info@tradejustice.net * Web: <http://tradejustice.net>