

# BigHomo

Sunday, March 4, 2012

## Cato in the Crosshairs - Is it good for the gays?

The Cato Institute, co-founded by Charles Koch and Ed Crane, and funded largely by Charles Koch and his brother David Koch (with sometime relatively minuscule assistance by the owner of this blog) is in the news a lot lately, because the Kochs are pursuing a legal takeover of its shares of stock and board of directors.

Many at Cato and in the libertarian movement think the plan is to revamp Cato as a fusionist organization that concentrates only on fiscal, tea party issues. That does look like what they are doing, though the new board members they are bringing on do include libertarian TV journalist Andrew Napolitano and Ted Olson, the libertarian Republican lawyer (and now Koch Industries employee) who brought gay marriage back to California.

Cato used to be the butt of the occasional gay jokes in the inside the Beltway political world, because it has always had a sprinkling of gay writers, policy analysts, and senior staffers, and has always been gay friendly, hosting a few events a year on gay marriage and other topics, most of which are archived on their website. It may be the only DC think tank, other than those of gay groups, with a gay vice president. This was kind of the continuation of the culture on the right in the 60s that was part of the genesis of the libertarian movement, as YAFFers threw out libertarian opposed to the Vietnam War at a convention, while chanting "lazy fairies."

Let's say the Kochs get the court to agree with them when deciding on the ambiguities about the ownership of shares of stock and whether they can be inherited without following rules in the group's founding charter. Given that our looming debt tsunami is going to force tea party Congresspeeps to start cutting the military budget and the war on drugs, would a more tea party Cato be all that different?

Maybe Peter Thiel can buy at the shares, and then scribblers like Jane Mayer can spend their time writing about how gay Cato is instead of her past claims (now shown to be ludicrously fictional) that it was a Koch puppet.

One of the openly gay Cato Policy analysts writes about the tempest in a tea party over on the prettily formatted and dully centrist blog "The League of Ordinary Gentlemen:"

Koch v. Cato – Some Further Thoughts

by JASON KUZNICKI on MARCH 4, 2012

When I learned that the Kochs were suing Cato, I'm sorry to say that one of the first things I felt was vindication. I'd been saying for years that Cato was essentially an independent shop. The suit makes no sense unless I was right all along.

I've worked at Cato for five and a half years. In that time I have never seen a single decision made in consideration of the Koch brothers' wishes. Cato has always appeared to be run by two people: its president, Ed Crane, and its executive vice president, David Boaz. It was like that when I was hired, and it's like that now.

Even they don't call all the shots, either; plenty of things get published that they actually disagree with, including some of my stuff. The people who spin elaborate fantasies about the Kochs acting as our puppet masters were, and are, dead wrong. They've been wrong since at least the early 90s, if not earlier. I've been saying so for years. Now the whole Cato Institute is in open revolt against the Kochs, a revolt that grew up with astonishing speed.

Why? And why do the Kochs want control? Ed Crane and Bob Levy, the chairman of Cato, think that the Kochs want to turn the Institute hard to the right, favoring neoconservatism and right-wing cultural issues at home. Most likely they want it silent on civil liberties and the War on Drugs. Their view is corroborated by my colleague Jerry Taylor's statement over at the Volokh Conspiracy:

Last year, they used their shares to place two of their operatives – Kevin Gentry and Nancy Pfotenhauer – on our board against the wishes of every single board member save for David Koch. Last Thursday, they used their shares to force another four new board members on us (the most that their shares would allow at any given meeting); Charles Koch, Ted Olson (hired council for Koch Industries), Preston Marshall (the largest shareholder of Koch Industries save for Charles and David), and Andrew Napolitano (a frequent speaker at Koch-sponsored events). Those four – who had not previously been involved with Cato either financially or organizationally – were likewise opposed by every member of our board save for Gentry, Pfotenhauer, and David Koch. To make room for these Koch operatives, we were forced to remove four long-time, active board members, two of whom were our biggest donors. At this moment, the Kochs now control seven of our 16 board seats, two short of outright control.

More at:

<http://ordinary-gentlemen.com/blog/2012/03/04/koch-v-cato-some-further-thoughts/>

Posted by Bruce Majors at [11:39 AM](#)