

BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE

Thinking about Koch donation requires some reading

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To all MSU administrators and faculty involved in the decision for the proposed “center” in the MSU Economics Department: As you know, the Mercatus Center at George Mason University (GMU) funded in part by the Koch Brothers was blasted by Jane Mayer, the author of “Dark Money - The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right.” You were advised to read this book by a deeply respected Bozeman attorney.

I agree and I recently asked the Faculty Senate to read “Democracy in Chains - The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America,” by Nancy MacLean, a PhD professor of history at Duke University. Another reference: “The Shock Doctrine – The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,” by Naomi Klein. In this book, Ms. Klein documents the Chile of Gen. Pinochet when he followed the economic advice of Milton Friedman (founder of the “Chicago School” of Economics). Friedman told Pinochet to cut social services; open Chile to “unbridled” capitalism; and privatize public institutions. When Chileans began openly protesting Pinochet’s radical economic dictatorship, approximately 30,000 Chileans were “eliminated.”

Now I add a fourth reference for you to contemplate: “The Case Against Education – Why the Education System is a Waste of Time and Money” by Bryan Caplan, an economics professor at GMU and a fellow at the Cato Institute, a deep-right think-tank funded in part by the Koch Brothers. I had read a previous book by Kaplan, “The Myth of the Rational Voter – Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies.”

When I found several off-the-wall “inefficient minimum wage” statements, I e-mailed Bryan and asked him to send peer-refereed articles proving a legislated minimum wage was “bad policy.” He did not answer my queries. Then I read “Dark Money” and I realized why his silence was so deafening.