

As campaign funds run low, Trump requests meeting with billionaire Koch Brothers only a year after he mocked his Republican rivals as 'puppets' for doing the same

- **Charles Koch said he'd granted Donald Trump's request for a meeting**
- **However, the industrialist said he isn't sure Trump is fit to be president**
- **Said Trump's attack on Judge Curiel is 'taking country in wrong direction'**
- **Accusing the judge of bias is 'either racist' or 'stereotyping,' Koch said**
- **GOP insiders warn that Trump might be running out of campaign funds**
- **Might be forced to ramp up fundraising despite brag of self-funded race**

Anton Nilsson

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Koch Industry officials have agreed to meet with **Donald Trump** after a request from the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, as **GOP insiders** say a diminishing campaign chest may force Trump to ramp up his fundraising efforts.

Charles Koch revealed the planned meeting on Wednesday.

But Koch, a powerful political force who famously uses his deep pockets to fund libertarian and free-market projects, has not entirely warmed to Trump.

In an interview with **USA Today**, the industrialist said he doesn't 'know the answer' as to whether Trump is fit to be president.

He said he was afraid that Trump's professed support for Koch's principal causes - including free trade, free speech, and 'trying to find common ground with people' - is 'just hype.'

And the billionaire chairman of the Koch Industries, which he co-owns with his brother David, criticized Trump for his attacks on Judge Gonzalo Curiel, whom Trump has accused of unfairly handling a civil case against Trump University because of his heritage.

Curiel was born in Indiana to parents who immigrated from Mexico.

Trump's jabs at Curiel are 'either racist' or 'stereotyping,' Koch said.

'It's unacceptable, and it's taking the country in the wrong direction,' he said.

Asked if Trump was likely to show he is serious about supporting the issues closest to Koch's heart, he answered 'No, but we want to be open.'

'We are happy to talk to anybody and hope they understand where we're coming from, and they will have more constructive positions than they've had,' Koch said.

A Koch Industries spokesperson said Trump's camp reached out 'a couple weeks ago' to request the meeting. A Trump spokesperson said the meeting would take place 'in the next week or so,' USA Today reported.

Trump, who has bragged about his ability to self-fund his presidential campaign, suggested some of his former Republican primary opponents were 'puppets' for meeting with the Koch Brothers last August.

'I wish good luck to all of the Republican candidates that traveled to California to beg for money etc. from the Koch Brothers. Puppets?' Trump tweeted on August 2 last year.

The mocking language from Trump came despite the fact that he seemed to eye an appearance at the event.

Ahead of the meeting, Trump filled out a questionnaire detailing his policy stances and submitted it to the Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce, the Koch-sponsored group that organized the California event, **Politico** reported.

Who are the Koch brothers?

Charles and David Koch, ages 78 and 74, are billionaire brothers who helped create a broad network of nonprofit groups that control hundreds of millions of dollars flowing into politics. Through their deep pockets, they are reshaping politics with an uncompromising agenda of reducing regulation, advancing libertarian ideas, promoting free-market Republican candidates and ousting Democrats. They have two other brothers, William and Frederick, who aren't involved in the effort.

Where did they get their money?

The Kochs inherited their father's company in Kansas, and turned Wichita-based Koch Industries into the second-largest privately held company in the nation. The conglomerate makes a wide range of products including Dixie cups, chemicals, jet fuel, fertilizer, electronics, toilet paper and much more. William and Frederick cashed out in 1983 and no longer have a stake in the company.

How rich are Charles and David?

With a fortune estimated at \$41 billion each, Charles and David tie for fourth on Forbes' list of the richest Americans, and tie for sixth on Forbes' worldwide billionaires list.

What's their secret?

Charles, chairman and CEO of Koch Industries, attributes the company's success to his business philosophy, 'Market-Based Management,' which he's trademarked. Among its components: hiring and retaining people with the right values, and giving employees a bigger voice in decision-making. The company's growth strategy also includes reinvesting 90 percent of earnings.

How much money do Charles and David put into politics?

That's the big question. It's unanswered because the Kochs channel lots of money into nonprofit groups that don't have to identify their donors. The Washington Post and the Center for Responsive Politics have calculated that the donor network organized by the Kochs took in at least \$407 million in the 2012 election cycle.

However, not all of that money came from the Kochs themselves. David Koch's charitable giving has included \$58 million donated to nonprofits that could include groups such as Americans for Prosperity, the CATO Institute and the Heritage Foundation, according to company spokeswoman Missy Cohlma. In addition, the two brothers' direct political contributions to federal candidates and party committees totaled at least than \$2 million over the past two decades.

What motivates them?

Family patriarch Fred Koch, who built refineries in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, became convinced of the evils of communism and instilled in his sons an aversion to government intrusion. As David said of their father in a 2012 interview with The Wichita Eagle newspaper in Kansas, he "was extraordinarily fearful of our government becoming much more socialistic and domineering. ... So from the time we were teenagers to the present, we've been very concerned and worried about our government evolving into a very controlling, socialist type of government."

Source: **Associated Press**

Last summer, the Koch brothers' operation refused to let Trump purchase data from its political tech firm i360 - data which is used to connect with potential voters - and also rejected a request from Trump to let him speak at another Koch-sponsored event in Columbus, Ohio, Politico reported.

In late July last year, Trump wrote in a tweet: 'I really like the Koch Brothers... but I don't want their money or anything else from them. Cannot influence Trump!'

Trump contributed about two-thirds of his own campaign funds as of December 31, 2015, a **PolitiFact** study found.

OpenSecrets.org reports that three-quarters of Trump's campaign funds are 'self-financed.' The non-profit group reported that the Trump campaign had raised a total of almost \$61 million from internal and external sources as of April, and that about \$58 million of that cash was already spent.

Speaking with the **Wall Street Journal** on Tuesday, the finance chairman of the Republican Governors Association, Fred Malek, said that Trump's fundraising disadvantage as compared to Democratic rival Hillary Clinton 'huge and not widely understood.'

'Unless he's willing to write a huge personal check, which is unlikely, I believe Trump will have a financial disparity of \$300 to \$500 million,' Malek said.

Already in late May, a campaign insider warned that Trump's team might be running short of money.

'They know that they're not going to have enough money to be on TV in June and probably most of July, until they actually accept the nomination and get [Republican National Convention] funds, so they plan to just use earned media to compete on the airwaves,' an unnamed GOP source told the **Washington Examiner**.

For their part, the Koch brothers have ample funds to pour into the political projects of their choice.

The amount of money they spent during the 2012 election cycle has been estimated at \$407 million.

Koch told USA Today on Wednesday his network collected around \$300 million last year, and expected to raise \$450 million this year. About a third of that money will be directed to politics, including both presidential and other political campaigns.