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## Billionaires and hypocrites

By Tim Constantine

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Koch Industries is the second-largest privately held company in the United States. The Koch family, and specific to this story, the Koch brothers, are fabulously wealthy as a result of the success of this enterprise. With a portion of their funds, the Koch Family Foundation was created. It provides money to a variety of causes and efforts, including research, arts and education. Among the beneficiaries is the United Negro College Fund.

The Koch Family Foundation's stated goal is "advancing liberty and freedom" and one of the ways they endeavor to achieve this goal is by providing funding to conservative think tanks, including the Heritage Foundation, and to the CATO Institute.

The Koch brothers have been active for many years in political campaigns and issues, nearly always on the Republican side.

Tom Steyer is a wildly successful hedge fund manager. He was the founder of Farallon Capital Management, and since 1986 he has been a partner in Hellman and Friedman, an \$8 billion private equity firm. Mr. Steyer sits on the board of Next Generation, an organization with stated goals of promoting children's issues and saving the environment.

Like the Koch brothers, Mr. Steyer uses his success and wealth in the political arena. He has been active in campaigns and referenda for more than 30 years. He has big plans for the upcoming election cycle as well.

Mr. Steyer recently unveiled his 2016 game plan. It leans heavily on attempting to mock and shame those who don't buy into his brand of environmentalism. Rather than using his funds to promote any factual data on alleged global warming - of which there is turning out to be precious little - Mr. Steyer will attempt to embarrass anyone who doesn't embrace the theory and the doomsday predictions.

Of course, beating up the opposition is nothing new in the world of politics.

Big money pointing at big money as the bogeyman, however, is a fascinating new step.

In the 2014 election cycle, Mr. Steyer spent \$74 million and his NextGen Climate Action political action committee an additional \$11 million. Nearly all of it went to losing candidates. Rather than realizing perhaps their message wasn't in step with the average American, Mr. Steyer is doubling down in 2016. Expenditures are expected to be nearly \$100 million and here is the kicker. Mr. Steyer intends to spend that huge sum criticizing the role of big money in politics.

Of course he'll tie big money to the GOP and is using the Koch brothers in an attempt to put a face on this "evil purchase" of our political system. NextGen has released a video in which they have coined the term "Koch Republicans." Their message is simple: The Koch brothers are evil; the Koch brothers have bought the Republican Party; and together they favor big oil over the warm fuzzy safety of climate change alarmists.

When you look past the obvious comic side of spending \$100 million to rail against big money influencing politics what do you see? First and foremost, hypocrisy. My money for my cause is OK, but your money for something I don't like isn't. It's childish. It's embarrassing.

But you also see what they are peddling. Fear.

Rather than convince the American public that the gloom and doom of global warming is real through the use of factual information, a task made very difficult since both the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration and NASA have been caught fudging temperature numbers and since highly accurate satellite measurements of Earth's surface temperatures show the warmest days on record were in the 1930s, not today, NextGen uses fear. Fear those with success. Fear money. Fear the loss of the polar ice caps (despite the fact the South Pole had more surface ice in 2014 than ever in recorded history). Fear the Koch brothers and fear the Republican Party. Sow the seeds of fear in hopes the scared masses will flock to your way of thinking.

There is actually some good news in all of this. Sen. Harry Reid tried to tie the Republican Party to the Koch brothers in 2014 and the GOP picked up nine U.S. Senate seats. Perhaps Mr. Steyer's big money efforts to do the same in 2016 will be equally successful.

In the meantime, watch out for big money in politics. Unless you agree with them. Then apparently it's OK.