

[Next Sunday: Protest at Right-Wing Billionaires' Secret Summit near Palm Springs](#)

A broad coalition of consumer, community, labor, environmental, student, civil liberties, and faith-based groups are sponsoring a rally in Rancho Mirage (near Palm Springs, California) next Sunday, January 30 to protest and draw attention to a secret meeting of right-wing billionaires and millionaires who are the key funders of the Tea Party, conservative think tanks like Cato Institute, and the extreme right wing of the Republican Party.

The leaders of this group, the Koch brothers, oil billionaires, have invited like-minded big-money conservatives to a behind-closed-doors three-day summit at the Rancho Las Palmas Resort in Rancho Mirage to plot their strategy for the 2012 elections. Their agenda is simple: Roll back consumer protections everywhere, including the environment, health care, credit cards, banks and more. Thousands of progressives are mobilizing to peacefully and creatively call them out.

Koch Industries injected \$1 million into our elections last fall to try to roll back California's global warming law with Prop 23. They have been major underwriters of the Tea Party and its efforts to disrupt congressional town hall meetings to keep the insurance companies in charge of our health care. The Koch brothers used their wealth to finance scurrilous attack ads -- and recruit others to do the same -- in the wake of the Supreme Court's Citizen's United ruling that allows corporations to spend unlimited amounts of secret money on politics. (At previous gatherings, [the Koch brothers hosted Supreme Court Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas](#)). The Koch brothers' goal is to undermine our democracy so they can increase their profits and control and undermine our standard of living. In addition to these broad ideological goals, the Koch brothers have a narrow self-interest in dismantling government regulations that impose environmental and other standards on the oil, paper, and other corporations they own.

To learn more about this shadowy group of billionaires and their political influence, read [Think Progress' background research](#); [Jane Mayer's brilliant expose](#) of the Koch brothers and their Tea Party and corporate ties in *The New Yorker* magazine last August; and this fascinating [visual look at the Koch family's long history of right-wing activism](#), starting with the John Birch Society, on AlterNet.

The *New York Times* ran a story in October about this meeting under the headline: ["Secretive Republican Donors Are Planning Ahead."](#)

Here's the story's opening paragraph:

A secretive network of Republican donors is heading to the Palm Springs area for a long weekend in January, but it will not be to relax after a hard-fought election -- it will be to plan for the next one. Koch Industries, an energy and manufacturing conglomerate run by the billionaire brothers Charles, left, and David Koch operates a foundation that finances political advocacy groups, but is protected from having to disclose much about what they do. Koch Industries, the longtime underwriter of libertarian causes from the Cato Institute in Washington to the ballot initiative that would suspend California's landmark law capping greenhouse gases, is planning a confidential meeting at the Rancho Las Palmas Resort and Spa to, as an invitation says, "develop strategies to counter the most severe threats facing our free society and outline a vision of how we can foster a renewal of American free enterprise and prosperity."

The protest action will take place from 1-4 pm next Sunday, January 30. Buses will be leaving from all over Southern California. More information about the event and the bus locations can be found at websites for [Common Cause](#) and the [California Labor Federation](#). The rally location is 41-000 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270.

Before the rally, starting at 11 am, you can attend a panel discussion "Uncloaking the Kochs: The Billionaire Causus and Its Threat to Our Democracy" at the Hilton Garden Inn (71-700 Highway 11, Rancho Mirage, CA). Speakers will include *Robert Reich*, former Labor Secretary; *Van Jones*, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress; *Erwin Chemerinsky*, UC Irvine Law Dean; *Lee Fang*, Center for American Progress investigative journalist and Koch Brothers expert; and *DeAnn McEwen*, Co-President of the California Nurses Association.

Some of the groups involved in this action include the Courage Campaign, Common Cause, California Labor Federation, California Council of Churches, ACLU, Sierra Club, U.S. Action, Rock the Vote, Alliance for Justice, California Civil Rights Coalition, CALPIRG, MoveOn, California Nurses Association, Greenpeace, Health Care for America Now (HCAN), AFSCME, Energy Action Coalition, California Partnership, Health Access, Code Pink, United Domestic Workers, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, California Student Sustainability Coalition, Poder Popular, National Council of Jewish Women, Planned Parenthood of California, CREDO, Consumer Watchdog, and others.

Families and communities across America are in crisis. Jobs are down, foreclosures are up, and people are truly struggling to make ends meet. The middle class is under attack. Families in America don't believe their children will have a better life than they have.

This assault on our well being -- this infectious theft of the American Dream -- is fueled by a handful of big corporations and billionaires like the Koch brothers, who are trying to drown out the voices of ordinary Americans by buying our democracy and taking control of our civic and economic life. The Koch Brothers and their corporate allies are spending unprecedented amounts of money to elect politicians who will promote greater profits

and fewer rules for insurance companies, polluters, banks and mortgage companies. This sickness is tearing apart the fabric of our society and must be stopped.

This is a great opportunity to challenge the influence of the right-wing forces that are trying to undermine what liberals and progressives have fought for.