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## [Kochtopus the Gathering: Secret Corporate Billionaire Meetings to Set Course of a Nation](#)

By: [David Dayen](#) Wednesday October 20, 2010 9:12 am



I don't suppose it's a surprise that super-rich financiers and business tycoons periodically meet to determine how to best

shape the world to their ends. Actually, we had that for about a minute on the liberal side, with the Democracy Alliance; it didn't really hold up. This [Kochtopus gathering](#) seems much more robust; and the cast of characters involved certainly makes one take notice.

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, 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 Koch network meets twice a year to plan and expand its efforts — as the letter says, “to review strategies for combating the multitude of public policies that threaten to destroy America as we know it.”

Those efforts, the letter makes clear, include countering “climate change alarmism and the move to socialized health care,” as well as “the regulatory assault on energy,” and making donations to higher education and philanthropic organizations to advance the Koch agenda.

As it happens, they held the last one of these meetings in Aspen, where participants, including top hedge fund executives and major CEOs like Phil Anschutz, Steve Bechtel, Amway's Rich DeVos, and Home Depot's Kenneth Langone... watched Glenn Beck give a presentation called “Is America on the Road to Serfdom?” Beck has apparently addressed this Teddy Bear's Picnic more than once.

Think Progress [has more](#).

ThinkProgress has obtained a memo outlining the details of the last Koch gathering held in June of this year. The memo, along with an attendee list of about 210 people, shows the titans of industry — from health insurance companies, oil executives, Wall Street investors, and real estate tycoons — working together with conservative journalists and Republican operatives to plan the 2010 election, as well as ongoing conservative efforts through 2012 [...]

- Corporate “investors” at the Koch meeting included businesses with a strong profit motive in rolling back President Obama's enacted reforms. Several companies impacted by health reform, including Allan Hubbard of A & E Industries, a manufacturer of medical devices and Judson Green, a board member of health insurance conglomerate Aon, were present at the meeting. Other businessmen at the meeting, like Omaha Burger King franchiser Mike Simmonds, are owners of fast food stores which have fought efforts to provide health insurance to their employees. Many corporate attendees of the meeting represent the financial industry impacted by Wall Street reform. For instance, attendee Bill Cooper is the CEO of TCF Financial, a corporation involved in the mortgage banking industry. Cooper recently filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Wall Street reform. Other financial industry players in the meeting hail from firms ranging from Bank of America, JLM Investment, Allied Capital Corp, AMG National Trust, the Blackstone Group and Citadel Investment. Annie Dickerson, a representative of Paul Singer, a powerful hedge fund manager who also gives tens of millions to Republican causes, was present. In addition, Koch Industries itself has a hedge fund and other financial derivative products in its portfolio of interests, which include oil pipelines, coal shipping, asphalt, refineries, consumer goods, timber, ranching, and chemicals.

- Fred Malek, Karl Rove's top fundraiser for his \$56 million attack ad campaign against Democrats, attended the meeting, along with leaders of other secret attack groups. Heather Higgins, who leads the Independent Women's Forum, a shadowy group that has spent millions of dollars in attack ads on health reform, attended the meeting. So did Gretchen Hamel, a former Bush flak who now runs an attack ad group called “Public Notice,” which denounces spending programs.

The full memo is [here](#), and there's a full list of attendees at the [link](#). These events are not just about campaign spending, although [hundreds of millions have been thrown at that](#) in what some have called [as big a scandal as Watergate](#). But the Koch brothers' aims aren't so low. They have been and will continue to try and shape the dominant political culture – to make it more corporate-friendly, more conservative, and more solicitous of their ideas. From the media to Congress,

their goal is to ensure a full airing of their messages and a locking out of anyone else's. They don't play a game of election to election; they play a longer game. And even when their politicians fail and the Democrats get into power, they feel they can still win even when losing. The trajectory of what passes for "progressive" and "conservative" in the last 30 years should prove their success.

 3 Comments  Spotlight

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perris October 20th, 2010 at 9:36 am

[1](#)

I wrote about this a long time ago and we should have been focusing in on these maggots from the very beginning;

the koch brohers are the real force behind the right wing, they are responsible for rush, krystol, right wing think tanks and the libertarian movement

[the real force behind the right wing](#)

back then I linked and wrote;

**Although it is both a top campaign contributor and spends millions on direct lobbying, Koch's chief political influence tool is a web of interconnected, right-wing think tanks and advocacy groups funded by foundations controlled and supported by the two Koch brothers.**

Among those groups are some of the country's most prominent conservative and libertarian voices including **the Cato Institute, the Reason Foundation, Citizens for a Sound Economy and the Federalist Society**. All regularly beat the drum in official Washington for the causes the Koch's hold dear—minimal government, deregulation, and free market economics.

Look at that group funded, controlled and sometimes founded by "koch"...STUNNING!, and then there's THIS;