



## **Viewpoint: Jeanne Dietsch – Targeted from inside and out**

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*Third of three parts.*

The Jan. 6 coup attempt fails. Meanwhile, libertarians continue their covert takeover. New Hampshire is targeted from inside and out.

For the Kochs have allies in both places. In 2016, Chris Sununu follows in his father's footsteps to become governor. As such, he vetoes bill after bill that would cut fossil-fuel demand.

Remember Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy, the New Hampshire think tank with a trustee from the Michigan Koch subsidiary? Over the next five years, Chris Sununu appoints executives of JBC to key positions in his administration. JBC President Drew Cline becomes chair of the New Hampshire Board of Education.

Sununu appoints Frank Edelblut commissioner of education. Edelblut has a master's in divinity but no educational credentials or experience in school administration. Edelblut's sons Jonathon and Stephen go to Hillsdale College. Stephen serves as secretary to Hillsdale's Federalist Society.

Edelblut raises controversy for the Sununu administration. Like Hillsdale's Larry Arnn, Edelblut disparages educators and public schools. He steers COVID funding toward religious and private schools. He hands a DOE contract to a Sununu donor who is highest bidder with the lowest rating.

Matters come to a head in 2021. Edelblut supports the most-expansive education voucher bill in the nation. The bill is promoted by 150 Republican House members who belong to the "Freedom Caucus." Over 3,000 members of the public turn out in opposition, only 600 in support, at the bill's hearing. Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity promotes the bill with postcards. Its members even canvass door-to-door in Bedford in support of public voucher funding for religious schools.

Sununu negotiates for this and other controversial Freedom Caucus bills to be tabled. But these bills will rise again, with the help of Rep. Jason Osborne, a Hillsdale College graduate who moved to New Hampshire as part of the Free State Project. The Free State Project was a plan by another Jason, Jason Sorens, for thousands of libertarians to move to New Hampshire and run for office. The Free State Project's explicit goal was to turn the state into a libertarian utopia.

Before the 2020 election, Osborne donates \$50,000 to help other state representative candidates on the Republican ticket. They then elect him House Majority Leader. Osborne and others negotiate with Sununu to fold the tabled extremist bills into a budget compromise. Sununu claims he must support the radical measures in order to pass the budget. Edelblut proudly rolls out their voucher program.

Next, Edelblut approves Hillsdale College opening Lionheart Academy in Peterborough. The state Department of Education directs \$1.5 million in federal funds to the Hillsdale charter. It will teach religion and Arnn's "1776" rewrite of history.

Free Staters in Croydon convince voters to halve the public-school budget. Massive protests overturn the cuts, but Free Stater intent to end public education is clear.

Then Sununu travels to the Koch-founded Cato Institute in Washington, D.C. There he celebrates New Hampshire being named "freest state" by Will Ruger and Jason Sorens. Ruger is vice president of the Charles Koch Institute and the Charles Koch Foundation.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., the Supreme Court's Federalist Society majority swells to six justices. In swift 6-3 decisions, they legalize open carry of firearms, overturn *Roe v. Wade*, expand prayer to public school activities and remove authority from the Environmental Protection Agency and most other federal regulatory agencies. The Kochs' 40-year-old agenda is advancing at an accelerating pace. Almost as rapidly as the fires, floods, wars and famines it fuels.

### **The status of the coup**

David Koch has passed away, but the conservative front organizations he and his brother funded live on. They will be working to elect candidates to Congress and to state and county offices. They will support candidates dedicated to fighting climate action, repealing Social Security and Medicare, finishing off the Post Office, public schools and achieving David Koch's other goals from 1980.

Their candidates may obfuscate if you ask them, just as their last four Supreme Court justices did at their confirmation hearings. But it is easy to identify them. They have taken over the Republican Party. That's just a sad fact. They are all Republicans. And even the handful of traditional Republicans remaining are holding their noses and almost always voting with the radical reactionaries. It's true in Washington, D.C., as well as New Hampshire.

The coup is happening.