



Charles Koch Now Calls Partisanship a Mistake

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Billionaire Charles Koch, who spent decades and millions of dollars backing causes championed by Republicans, now says he is not interested in more division and wants to turn his efforts to find answers to society's problems.

Koch, at 85, is the 15th richest man in the United States and has a new book "Believe in People: Bottom-Up Solutions for a Top-Down World" coming out on Nov. 17 that outlines his plans for a more libertarian America and suggests he wants to turn his goals to becoming a unifier, reports The Wall Street Journal.

"Boy, did we screw up!" he writes in his new book. "What a mess!"

Koch is now trying to work with Democrats and liberals and has partnered with organizations like the LeBron James Family Foundation, the American Civil Liberties Union and some Democratic state legislative campaigns. Last year, he renamed the Koch network of about 700 donors as Stand Together.

But still, the Koch Industries PAC and employees donated \$2.8 million in the 2020 cycle to Republican candidates and \$221,000 to Democratic candidates, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Even just before the election, Koch would not answer if he'd vote for President Donald Trump or Joe Biden, calling the question "very divisive" and saying he would "upset a bunch of people" no matter how he answered.

He said he now wants to "unite a diversity of people behind a common goal," including finding answers to issues such as addiction, poverty, gang violence and homelessness.

Koch still oversees Koch Industries and its 130,000 employees and says he does not want to be known forever for partisan actions. His brand of libertarianism has often put him at odds with Trump.

Koch says billions of people have had the freedom to try to fail, invent and succeed and have ended uplifting society, but that freedom is under attack from those who want to take control away and create systems that stifle innovation.

And after Koch Industries spent more than \$100 million in lobbying over the past 10 years, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, Koch is calling out against unnecessary government lobbying and licensing.

Ventures aligned with Koch and his late brother, David, over the years funded think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute and the Cato Institute and supported the American Legislative

Exchange Council that writes bills introduced and backed by Republican state lawmakers nationwide.

His influence grew after a Supreme Court ruling in 2010 that allowed that corporations were exempt from political spending restrictions, and the brothers' organization raised and spent. But Koch disagrees with critics who say he and his brother had rigged public debate to enrich themselves further.