



Surprise: the Koch brothers are not conservatives

By [Cliff Kincaid](#)

Conservative radio host Laura Ingraham acted surprised that David Koch would give an interview to Barbara Walters and talk about his radical "libertarian" views. Koch appeared in Walters' ABC special program on "[The 10 Most Fascinating People Of 2014](#)." The interview was featured in various stories highlighting Koch's personal views as a "social liberal." He's for abortion and homosexual rights. But that's not all. He's also a major supporter of the Cato Institute, which recently featured NSA defector Edward Snowden at its "[Surveillance Conference](#)."

David Koch's foreign policy views are very far to the left as well – a fact that many conservatives may not realize.

We have heard it from the left so many times that Koch is an extreme "conservative" or right-winger that we have taken this claim for granted. It is definitely not the case. He's sinking a lot of money into Republican and some conservative groups, but that doesn't make him a conservative. In fact, as the Walters special showed, he doesn't accept the conservative label. However, he does emphasize his free market views on economic and fiscal issues.

I am trying to get some comment from David Koch about Cato's embrace of Snowden. The Koch brothers have an extensive public relations apparatus that includes the major Koch spokesman, Philip Ellender, a [registered Democrat](#) in Louisiana who serves as the President and COO of the Government & Public Affairs department of Koch Companies Public Sector. I have asked Robert A. Tappan, Director of External Relations for Koch Companies Public Sector, to provide an explanation of the Koch Brothers support for Cato and Snowden.

David and Charles Koch were two "shareholders" in the Cato Institute, and were involved in a lawsuit that resulted in John Allison (the former CEO of BB&T) replacing Ed Crane, who retired as Cato's CEO. According to a [press release](#), "For Charles Koch and David Koch, the agreement helps ensure

that Cato will be a principled organization that is effective in advancing a free society."

What this means in terms of Cato's embrace of Snowden is a matter of discussion. Snowden is a captive of Vladimir Putin's Russia, which is definitely not a free society but is a place where Koch Industries does business. (Koch Industries also does business in Communist China.) Do the Kochs approve of Cato's embrace of Snowden? David Koch, who served as the Executive Vice President of Koch Industries, Inc., continues to [serve](#) on Cato's board. Cato's 2013 [annual report](#) lists the Charles Koch Foundation as a financial backer.

As we have reported in the past, the Cato Institute published a three-page interview with Snowden mouthpiece Glenn Greenwald in the July/August 2014 issue of the Cato Policy Report. Cato called Greenwald's NSA disclosures "explosive," which is true in the sense that the communications intelligence agencies of free countries like the U.S. and Israel have been hobbled by the publicity given to the stolen documents he received and publicized. National security experts also say Snowden's disclosures facilitated Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the rise of ISIS.

Robert A. Levy, chairman of the Cato Institute's board of directors, has [written](#) that if a deal is worked out, Snowden could return to the U.S. and "be held accountable for other actions, not yet disclosed, that amount to espionage – traditionally defined as transmitting national defense information with intent or reason to believe that it will be used to the injury of the United States or the advantage of a foreign nation."

In view of these comments, not knowing the full extent of the damage he has done, why would Cato give Snowden a platform? His video appearance at the Cato Surveillance Conference had to have been arranged with the help of the Russian security agents who guard Snowden and regulate access to him. Why would Cato participate in such an arrangement?

David Koch also serves on the [board](#) of the Reason Foundation, which sponsors Reason magazine. It, too, is pro-Snowden, having published such articles as, "[Thank You, Edward Snowden](#)." The author called Snowden a "whistleblower," which is a falsehood.

Martin Edwin Andersen, the first national security whistleblower to be given the "Public Servant Award" by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, strongly disputes the idea that Snowden is a whistleblower. He calls Snowden a national security leaker who engaged in theft, fled the country to escape justice, and is now "in the protective embraces of Olympic Russian police-state champion Vladimir Putin."

By the way, Cato also supports Obama's policy of appeasing the Castro regime in Cuba. It ran an

[article](#) when Chuck Hagel was nominated as Obama's Secretary of Defense, saying the former senator was correct in calling the idea "goofy" that the Havana regime constitutes a terrorist threat to the United States. Cato said nothing about the American terrorists who fled to Cuba and are being protected by the Castro regime. One, Joanne Chesimard, is a convicted cop-killer. The other major American terrorist in Cuba, William Morales, was a bomb-maker for the FALN, which killed four Americans in the 1975 Fraunces Tavern bombing in New York City.

Obama's scheme to normalize relations with Cuba does not include the return of these terrorists to face justice in the U.S.

Hagel has since left the administration, but the Koch-funded Cato Institute is still around, exercising its influence on Washington policy makers. Cato hailed the release of the Senate Democrats' so-called "torture report," calling it "long overdue."

The Kochs' support for this group may prove to be more surprising than the "news" to some conservatives that David Koch is a liberal on social issues. The Koch Brothers are very liberal on foreign policy, too. We previously commented on a [Charles Koch Institute forum](#) featuring a foreign policy talking head who has no problem with Iran acquiring nuclear weapons.

So why are the Kochs sinking money into Republican-oriented and even some conservative groups? It's time for traditional conservatives to examine what appears to be a Koch plan to move the Republican Party to the left on social and foreign policy issues.