

Letter: Koch brothers want whole pie

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In Kathleen Parker's column Monday she said Harry Reid should apologize to the Koch brothers for calling them "un-American." Bad for America is what they are. Their Koch Industries is the second-largest privately owned company in the U.S., with more than \$100 billion in annual sales. Starting with their father, who helped found the John Birch Society, and David Koch's founding of the Cato Institute, which includes in its main goals the elimination of Social Security, the minimum wage and corporate taxes. From the late 1990's to 2008 they donated more than \$48 million to climate change denial groups. They have backed numerous innocuous-sounding front groups like Americans for Prosperity, Freedom Works (tea party initiator), even Generation Opportunity, which devised and aired that creepy anti-Affordable Care Act commercial with an evil-looking Uncle Sam getting ready to give a woman an internal exam, and held rallies encouraging young people to forgo health insurance.

They have been relentless in pursuing their agenda to do away with environmental and safety laws, distort science and orchestrate fake grass-roots campaigns. Their focus is not just the White House and Congress. They write manifestos and send them to Republican-dominated legislatures writing laws or telling them how to vote through the Legislative Exchange Council, which is also heavily involved in voter suppression. They are also investing resources in local races. Don't expect any help from the current Supreme Court. Before the Citizens United decision all of this had to be in the open or put limits on campaign contributions. Charles and David Koch don't just want a piece of the pie. They want the whole pie. Fifty two percent of Americans have never heard of the Koch brothers; maybe now a few more have.

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