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Tucker Carlson's anti-Koch screed was baseless and hysterical

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Bernie Sanders is now a prime-time host on Fox News. At least, that's what it seems like some nights when you watch "Tucker Carlson Tonight."

The libertarian firebrand and Cato Institute wonk we remember from the early 2000s is long gone. The new Carlson has embraced nationalism and populism to such an extent that his rhetoric now often sounds like something straight out of a Sanders speech. The Fox New host has decried the failings of capitalism and lauded Sen. Elizabeth Warren's, D-Mass., socialist proposals — and now he's targeting the Koch Brothers.

On Wednesday night, Carlson tore into the Kochs, two well-known entrepreneurs and philanthropists who have long earned the Left's ire for their support for GOP candidates and libertarian political causes. He said:

"In the case of the Kochs, conservatives might want to pause and rethink the relationship. As it turns out, the Kochs don't have much in common with conservatives. They are totally opposed to most conservative policy goals. The Kochs are libertarian ideologues, passionate and inflexible."

Carlson attacked the Kochs for their support for "amnesty" for DACA recipients, undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children, as well as supposedly supporting the "left-wing campaign against free speech." Ultimately, he laments the fact that the Kochs "run the Republican Party."

Yet Carlson's vilification of the Koch Brothers couldn't be more baseless.

For one thing, the idea that the libertarian Kochs "run" the Republican Party is almost beyond parody. The Koch Brothers did not back President Trump in 2016, yet 9 in 10 Republicans currently support Trump nonetheless. And the Kochs ardently support free trade, fiscal restraint, and immigration. But even with Republicans largely in political power, we're living through a trade war, almost trillion-dollar deficits, and a GOP that wants to build a wall on the southern border. Does that sound like a party controlled by libertarian ideologues to you?

Additionally, the idea that the Koch Brothers are enemies of free speech is laughable. The Charles Koch Institute has ardently defended the First Amendment, donating to journalistic causes, supporting the Knight Institute's work on campus speech issues, and even funding a journalism program for college graduates. (Disclaimer: I am a current participant). Support for free and open expression is a core tenet of the Kochs' worldview, and the mere fact that they aren't on board with a Warren-style nationalization of Big Tech doesn't change this reality.

The idea that the Koch Brothers are out-of-touch because they support legal status for DACA recipients is equally absurd. The polling shows that 70% of Americans think that undocumented immigrants who came to the country at a young age deserve to be granted legal status. So supporting this mild, reasonable form of amnesty isn't the evidence of animosity toward average Americans that Carlson makes it out to be.

In fact, the Kochs have done more to help average Americans than Carlson ever has. Charles Koch has given over \$1 billion to various charitable and civic causes, including programs that fight poverty, cancer, and addiction. So Carlson needs to find a new bogeyman — oh, and maybe find his old principles while he's at it, too.