



## ‘He asked her to take off her bra:’ Koch-backed Cato Institute hit with sexual harassment claims

John Binder

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The Cato Institute, a think tank partially founded by the billionaire, pro-mass immigration Koch brothers, is the subject of new sexual harassment allegations revealed in a [report](#) by Politico, substantiating years-old Breitbart News reporting on the culture of sexual abuse at the think tank.

The report details how former Cato Institute President Ed Crane, now 73-years-old, allegedly sexually harassed at least three former employees of the think tank before he left the organization in 2012.

Multiple instances of Crane’s alleged sexual harassment are outlined in the report, including one allegation in which a former employee said Crane told her during lunch to go to the bathroom and take her bra off.

Politico reports:

- One former Cato employee during the late 1990s recalled visiting Crane’s office on multiple occasions and finding him viewing pornography on his computer. On one occasion, Crane told the employee she resembled a woman in one of the pictures and on another occasion **told her he would like to see how her breasts measured up to the images on his screen**. She said Crane made dozens of sexual comments to her during her time at Cato. She said she complained about Crane’s behavior to a senior Cato official, who told her he would raise the matter with Crane. Crane’s behavior didn’t change, the woman said. The senior official, now retired, did not respond to requests for comment. Crane said, “I have no idea what she’s talking about.” [Emphasis added]
- A former research assistant said that shortly after she started working at Cato in 2003, when she was 23 years old, **she received a forwarded email from Crane about breast augmentation**. Crane added a note to the email suggesting she was not in need of the breast enhancement services, the former research assistant said. Crane responded, “I don’t remember. I wouldn’t do that.” [Emphasis added]

- Another former Cato employee recalled having lunch with Crane after leaving her job at the organization for another Washington employer in 2004. During the lunch, she said, **Crane told her she should go to the bathroom and take her bra off.** Within hours, she told a close friend and colleague, who confirmed the incident to POLITICO. Crane did not respond to requests for comment on this incident. [Emphasis added]

In 2012, Crane settled a lawsuit with former Cato employee Carey Lafferty, toward whom he had allegedly made multiple sexual remarks. Another three former Cato employees said they witnessed Crane's alleged sexual harassment first-hand.

A former male Cato employee told Politico he even witnessed Crane attempting to undo the bra of a female co-worker during a boat Christmas party.

Another instance of Crane's alleged sexual harassment was when a female contractor left Cato's boardroom after presenting a project to the organization. A former male employee said after the contractor was out of the room, Crane turned to the boardroom of male colleagues and said: "Man, I'd love to have her sit on my face."

Crane told Politico that the allegations are "ridiculous."

Breitbart News was at the forefront of reporting on Crane's alleged sexual harassing behavior while at the Cato Institute:

In the latest development, perhaps emboldened by the raging shareholder dispute, former staffers of this gold-standard of libertarian think tanks have actively come forward to paint a disturbing picture of the work environment at Cato under Ed Crane's leadership – suggesting that it is, at least according to them, hostile and degrading to women.

**"It's hardly the climate you would want your daughter working or interning in,"** said one former Cato employee in an interview with Breitbart News. "Most of the scholars at Cato are fine, decent, and sincere people. But Ed Crane's dismissive and degrading attitude toward women can make them feel more like meat than equals." [Emphasis added]

**"I think it's pretty open knowledge inside of Cato that most attractive female professional staff members have been the target of unsolicited sexual advances by Ed Crane,"** another former Cato employee told Breitbart News. Asked why such behavior was tolerated, the one-time Cato employee replied: "In a place with no formal system of redress there becomes a complacent attitude of 'Oh, that's just Ed.' Or 'He's probably had too much to drink.'" [Emphasis added]

The billionaire Koch brothers and Cato, both of which support mass immigration and open borders as a pillar of libertarianism, have a long history together.

Though it is unknown whether or not the Koch brothers continue funding the Cato Institute, at least one of the Koch brothers, David Koch, was a board member at Cato up until 2013. In 1977, Crane, along with Charles Koch, founded the Cato Institute.

As Breitbart News chronicled in a series of reports in 2012, Crane allegedly planted multiple stories in the establishment media to vilify the Koch brothers as the conspirators behind the conservative movement, though the billionaires' open borders views are at deep odds with the majority of conservatives.

A separate 2012 Breitbart News report detailed the alleged treatment to which Crane subjected Cato Institute board members and donors:

“That kind of question is not appropriate for our dinner discussion this evening—save it for the board meeting tomorrow!” Ed Crane yelled at one of Cato's newest board members, Nancy Pfothauer.

“How would you ever know anything about Cato's policy priorities?!” he barked.

According to witnesses, with Crane commanding his post from the head of the table at this special March 31, 2011 board dinner—designed in part as a welcome for Cato's newest board members—the roughly two dozen Cato donors, board members, policy analysts, and senior managers in attendance sat in stunned silence.

Bill Niskanen, a longtime leader at Cato, had just invited comments from these new board members. Following up on a discussion about the future of Cato and its policy priorities, Crane had exploded as Ms. Pfothauer offered her question.

Pfothauer's question was innocent enough. Since Crane had been reporting on Cato's recent capital fund raising drive and plans for expansion of its physical space, Pfothauer asked what the future vision and plans were for Cato's policy personnel.

That's when Crane moved to end the discussion.

“I am so sorry if my question was inappropriate,” said Pfothauer. “All I wanted to do was to acknowledge the prowess of your policy team.”

Crane, his face flushing red, then rose from his seat. “Let me say something about these two new Koch operatives who have been placed on this board.”

And then, pointing his finger at Kevin Gentry, another new board member who had not yet spoken, Crane bellowed, “Kevin Gentry, seated over there, has never once — never once! — invited me or any Cato scholar to speak at the donor conferences he organizes for Charles Koch.”

Then Crane stormed out of the room, leaving the dinner he himself was hosting.

Read the full Politico report [here](#).