



Turning State Legislatures into Brothels

By Bob Sloan – 12/19/12

The Corrosive Effect of the Koch/ALEC Cabal on [U.S.](#) and [World Governments](#)

In a perfect world, we as citizens in a representative democracy would elect those who best represent our views on issues critically important in our lives. In the context of that perfect world, our elected representatives would work tirelessly pursuing legislation that would benefit their constituents and thus earn the respect of voters and ensure their re-election. In America, this IS the basis that formed the foundation of our government. Unfortunately, we do not have a “perfect world” with regard to those who represent us, far from it. Today, we elect those who will take office and then essentially sell their votes to corporations and special interests which are not allowed to vote for elected officials in our democracy, wealthy or powerful entities in whose interest it is to keep these captured legislators in office, term after term. Many elected officials take office and ignore the needs of their constituents in favor of the desires of corporations or special interests, and often ignore requests for legislation beneficial to the community they are supposed to represent– until those constituents are needed in subsequent elections, and sometimes even then officials count on voters not being aware how they’ve been sold out.

Some ask: how this has come to pass? Who is responsible for undermining our democracy and corrupting our elected representatives?

Nearly forty years ago, a group of wealthy elites dedicated to expanding the power of corporations and so-called conservative ideologues, whose ideas were at the fringes of the political spectrum, met and formed what became the American Legislative Exchange Council, or as it is now known worldwide, “ALEC.” In addition to the wealthy corporatists, ALEC was launched with influential state and federal lawmakers and advisors who also shared the conservative ideology. Together, these businessmen and policy makers have

systematically changed the fabric and face of the American political stage, operating primarily out of the public's view.

Back then, opponents of the conservative agenda laughed at the attempts of that small group of individuals breaking away from the mainstream political machinery in an attempt to advance their brand of government by and for the corporate elite. ALEC wasn't taken seriously in the mid '70's – just as the Tea Party wasn't taken seriously when it was launched in 2009. In this regard, history has shown that it can and will repeat itself when society does not learn from past events.

Today, after nearly four decades of growth and development, ALEC has become the most effective tool in the arsenal of those seeking to usurp the power from and control of our state governments, and it has also been playing an increasing role in Congressional policies along with the corporations that bankroll it. Without ALEC's unique access to lawmakers, conservative ideologues would be limited to espousing rhetoric, complaining and fighting continuously for small wins at the ballot box and within legislatures nationwide.

It is not by accident that the last three GOP Speakers of the U.S. House are/were ALEC members ([Hastert, Gingrich and Boehner](#)). Nor is it coincidental that several Republican House majority leaders are/were also ALEC alum or supporters ([Cantor, Arme](#)y and [Delay](#)) and GOP Senate leaders or staff of a Senate Leader ([Brian Kelly working in Bill Frist's Senate office](#)). GOP leadership in states is likewise heavy with ALEC influence. [In 2001 ALEC members held more than thirty House and 20 Senate leadership positions, Governorships, Cabinet positions and more:](#)

*“Among the leadership of America's state legislatures, ALEC members hold an impressive presence: **32 Speakers and Speakers Pro Tem; 22 Senate Presidents and Senate Presidents Pro Tem; 22 Senate Majority and Minority Leaders; 30 House Majority and Minority Leaders. ALEC alumni include 8 sitting governors, 3 lieutenant governors, 2 senior cabinet-level positions, and more than 80 members of Congress.**”*

ALEC provides the pathway to the creation, presentation and passage of laws, resolutions, and constitutional amendments that benefit the minority conservative

factions in the U.S. – and of late – internationally. With nearly one hundred sitting U.S. Congressional members and just under two thousand state legislative members, ALEC honestly claims to be the most influential and private political/legislative organization in the United States, helping to write and pass hundreds of state laws annually. These new or revised laws reflect their conservative ideology and benefit the nearly three hundred corporate sponsors that fund ALEC's operations.

Articles and exposes over the past two years have identified many of the wealthy industrialists, manufacturers and individuals involved in creating what can only be called a "cabal" that includes ALEC, dozens of think tanks (Heritage, Heartland, Mackinac, CATO, Goldwater Institute and the Pacific Legal Foundation), organizations such as David Koch's Americans for Prosperity (AFP) and Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform (ATR). At the pinnacle of the funding source for the cabal sits David and his brother Charles Koch and their multi-million dollar family foundations. Other wealthy families that have helped fund the cabal are families such as the Coors, DeVos, Scaifes, Bradleys and other lesser known billionaires or millionaires. Together, they have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to advancing a conservative ideology and agenda worldwide, not just through ALEC. Many of these elites fund multiple groups to advance their ideological agenda. For example, the Kochs fund AFP, which in turn funds efforts to posture that there is grassroots support for things on the corporate wish list, as with the Right To Work battle in Michigan this month. Membership in ALEC is not required of all Cabal members, only that they help fund, support and advance the legislation put forth by ALEC, as is shown below.

The methodology used to accomplish what can only be called a "quiet coup" by this cabal was simplistic and effective. It included revising U.S. history to claim that Thomas Jefferson would support the ALEC model of corporate involvement in government, using Orwellian phraseology to confuse and confound the public. Terminology such as "patriotic", "liberty," "free markets," "limited government" and "individual freedom" has been adopted by the cabal, although they have an entirely different connotation and meaning to them than they do to us as citizens. The ALEC cabal defines "free markets" as the ability of private companies to operate free of government intervention; "limited government" means opposition to crucial reforms to protect against another Wall Street

meltdown and a government unable to provide adequate protections for workers' long-standing rights; and "individual freedom" is defined in a way that elevates corporate freedom over citizens' freedoms. In order for the cabal's agenda to work fully, we as a society must relinquish our protected freedoms and liberties so the corporate elite get their way.

In order to succeed, the cabal needed a way to influence the public, to change established concepts about American culture, politics and government – and to advocate for the corporate legislative wish list approved through ALEC. To do this they needed to misinform the masses and do so in such a way that they controlled the delivery system as well as the message.

The cabal and their corporate affiliates have acquired control over major media outlets in the U.S. and the UK: broadcast, print, investigative and digital. Men with names like Murdoch and Ailes and companies they owned or controlled, such as Bain Capital-acquired corporate media outlets through purchase, merger or acquisition. An example of this is [Clear Channel Communications owned by Bain Capital and Thomas H. Lee Partners](#) (Bain Capital is not an ALEC member though Clear Channel uses Fox broadcasting to advance the ultra-conservative rhetoric):

"Company Overview: *These private equity firms own Clear Channel, the largest radio station owner in the country. Approximately half of the company's revenue is generated from radio broadcasting. The remaining half comes from advertising companies and other investments.*

"Radio: *866 radio stations and Premiere Radio Networks (a national radio network that produces, distributes or represents approximately 90 syndicated radio programs, serves nearly 5,800 radio station affiliates and has over 213 million weekly listeners. Programs include the Rush Limbaugh Show, Glenn Beck and the Sean Hannity Show); Fox Sports Radio; Fox News Radio; Australian Radio Network*

"Other: *Katz Media (radio advertising broker); American Outdoor Advertising."*

Then there's Murdoch's "News Corp.":

2011 Revenue: \$33.4 billion

Company Overview: News Corporation's media holdings include the FOX Broadcasting Company; television and cable networks such as Fox, Fox Business Channel, National Geographic and FX; print publications including the Wall Street Journal, the New York Post and TV Guide; the magazines Barron's and SmartMoney; book publisher HarperCollins; film production companies 20th Century Fox, Fox Searchlight Pictures and Blue Sky Studios; numerous websites including MarketWatch.com; and non-media holdings including the National Rugby League.

TV: Twenty-seven television stations and FOX Broadcasting Company (FOX Network, MyNetworkTV); FOX News; FOX Business; FOX News Radio Network; FOX News Talk Channel; FSN (12 regional sports networks); FX; SPEED; FUEL TV; Fox College Sports; Fox Movie Channel; Fox Soccer Channel; Fox Soccer Plus; Fox Pan American Sports; Fox Deportes; Big Ten Network; National Geographic U.S.; Nat Geo Adventure; Nat Geo Music; Nat Geo Wild; Fox International Channels; Utilisima; Fox Crime; NEXT; FOX History & Entertainment; the Voyage Channel; STAR World; STAR Movies; NGC Network International; NGC Network Latin America; LAPT; Movie City; City Mix; City Family; City Stars; City Vibe; the Film Zone; Cinecanal; Elite Sports Limited; BabyTV; STAR India; STAR Taiwan; ESPN STAR Sports; Shine Limited

Online Holdings: Hulu.com (32 percent minority share)

Print: HarperCollins Publishers; the New York Post; the Daily News; News International (the Times; the Sunday Times; the Sun); News Limited (146 newspapers in Australia); Dow Jones (Wall Street Journal, Barron's, SmartMoney, Factiva, Dow Jones Newswires, Dow Jones Local Media, Dow Jones VentureSource)

Telecom: Satellite: BSkyB (39 percent minority share); SKY Italia

Entertainment: Fox Filmed Entertainment; Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment; Twentieth Century Fox Television; Twentieth Television; Fox Television Studios

Other: Marketing/advertising: News America Marketing Group; News Outdoor; Fox Library; IGN Entertainment, Inc.; Making Fun, Inc.; Wireless Generation.

With control of the media accomplished, the cabal used an innovative “internship” program to recruit and educate a new cadre of “philosophically” appropriate college students and place them with media outlets under cabal control. Those that qualified were given internships provided by the [Institute for Humane Studies](#) (IHS) [funded by Charles Koch](#) through a [journalism program](#) located at the George Mason University (which is [also heavily funded by the Koch brothers](#)). IHS’ mission is given as:

*“[T]o support the achievement of a **free society** by discovering and facilitating the development of talented, productive students, scholars and other intellectuals who share a commitment to liberty and who demonstrate the potential to change significantly the current climate of opinion to one more congenial to the principles and practices of freedom.” The Institute for Humane Studies provides \$600,000 in scholarships each year.*

*“According to SourceWatch, the IHS acts as “a libertarian talent scout, identifying, developing, and supporting the brightest young libertarians it can find who are intent on a **leveraged** scholarly, or intellectual, career path.” In addition to the funding it receives from the Koch Family Foundations, the Institute for Humane Studies also receives donations from conservative foundations such as the **Carthage Foundation**, the **Sarah Scaife Foundation**, and the **Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation**.”*

Through their controlled media outlets, the cabal has been able to dispense huge doses of propaganda to the general public. Philosophy and agenda-critical initiatives originating within the cabal hierarchy are handed over to think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation, the Mackinac Center, the CATO Institute the

Heartland Institute, and operations like Americans For Prosperity. The think tanks and organizations produce videos, articles, studies and reports favorable to the cabal's position that are often then amplified by their controlled media outlets. Opposition views are downplayed by the same media or not reported at all except via "alternative media" sources with smaller readership and viewer audiences. In this manner, the cabal is able to sway the opinion of the general public who too often only get one side of an issue and a distorted side at that.

Initiatives to eliminate Unions "Right To Work" or "Paycheck Protection Act," "Public Employee Freedom Act," and "Employee Rights Reform Act;" initiatives to expand privatization of public services now called "Competitive Contracting of Public Services Act," the "Private Correctional Facilities Act," and the "Council on Efficient Government Act," are all forms of legislative proposals that have benign titles – but do not accurately reflect the substance of the proposed laws.

An early key initiative of the cabal was the exploitation of prison labor. They wrote and urged passage of model legislation called the "Prison Industries Act" that allowed private companies to partner with state prison industry operations to use inmate labor to manufacture consumer goods. Jobs that paid American workers fair wages disappeared as more and more companies moved entire operations behind prison fences where inmates worked for minimum wage or less producing millions of products for sale to the public. Using the phraseology that by doing this they were "providing valuable training that would allow prisoners to return to their communities with skills and experience to secure good jobs and thus not return to prison," advocates were able to get public support for such programs, support predicated on the public not being fully informed of the consequence for other businesses or prisoners.

However, training was not the motivating goal of the corporations – rather it was reducing the costs of operations to manufacturers through; low wages, no vacations, no health or medical insurance costs, no matching of social security deductions and no unemployment insurance premiums required for prisoner work forces. Since 1990, tens of thousands of private and public sector jobs have been lost to inmate labor through the use of ALEC's Prison Industries Act. By providing factually false information to the taxpayer about the use of prisoner labor, the cabal has been able to divert jobs, depress wages, and replace private and public sector employees with prisoners. The cabal also pressed for new

criminal laws and revised dozens more to incarcerate more and more Americans for longer. The war on drugs, three strike laws, minimum mandatory sentencing, so-called “truth-in-sentencing” laws, and limits on the chance for parole have all led to mass incarceration in the U.S. Taxpayers bear the brunt of paying the incarceration costs to keep the prison workforce in place, healthy, clothed, fed and available for years of work in prison factories. There is no reduction in the costs of incarceration, little or no reimbursement to the public for their part in providing this workforce, product costs to the consumer are not dramatically lowered – but corporate profits soar.

Today, the Department of Justice has transferred oversight of the prison industry program to a private “association” (the National Correctional Industries Association – NCIA) to run and have full control over this program (Prison Industries Enhancement Certification Program – PIECP). This was accomplished by a Texas state lawmaker and ALEC member (sitting as Chairman of the Criminal Justice Task Force) lobbying on behalf of the NCIA for DOJ to relinquish control to the special interest group representing prison industries and their vendors. This is simply one example that has transferred millions of tax dollars to private companies.

All of these ALEC legislative “acts” were drafted within ALEC’s task force working groups, secretly voted upon by corporate and legislative members, and once adopted as “model legislation” they were provided to lawmakers in every state, submitted as proposed state laws in each legislature. ALEC claims a 17% to 20% success rate of bills ultimately passed and becoming law. This was clearly exposed over the past year with the cabal’s pursuit of “Voter’s Rights Act” and “Voter ID Act.” These ALEC legislative bills would make it harder for American citizens to vote and disproportionately and adversely affect students, the elderly, Hispanics and African-Americans, those considered predominantly Democratic voters—based on exaggerated claims of voter fraud.

What all the bills, and terminologies used have as a commonality is the fact that each proposed law proposed by ALEC are/were to the benefit of their ideology and/or to increase profits or reduce liabilities to their corporate sponsors. None were written to primarily benefit the public in general – for example, the tax bills cutting various taxes theoretically benefit all taxpayers but disproportionately benefit the wealthiest few while making it harder for government to provide basic

services to all Americans and crucial services to the most vulnerable among us. They were not written or intended to benefit the rights of American workers to negotiate with powerful corporate managers or help make it easier for all Americans to vote, aid small businesses as opposed to some of the biggest corporations in the world, which fund ALEC. They were not written to improve a citizen's role in local democracy, such as in zoning laws that would limit factory farms or nuclear plants in one's backyard. No, each proposed or model bill spilling out of ALEC is required to have the approval of the corporate membership of ALEC on a given ALEC task force – and that approval is withheld if a specific bill does not benefit the corporate bottom line or the ideological interests of billionaires like the Kochs in some manner. ALEC's public bylaws specifically require ALEC state Chairmen to ensure introduction of the organization's model legislation in their state legislatures (ALEC bylaw section 10.03)

Through the efforts of the likes of Charles and David Koch, our elected officials are no longer "ours." Once elected to office they are pursued by ALEC and the cabal, plied with trips to resorts with corporate lobbyists and other perks, introduced to corporate lobbyists to help the legislators advance their interests, and indoctrinated with propaganda to back up the corporate or ideological agenda of ALEC's private sector members, such as the notion that increased CO2 is "good for you." In reality our State legislatures or General Assemblies have become brothels – home to dozens or what can only be described as "Koch Whores" owned by the Koch cabal and doing their bidding. Conservative lawmakers holding membership in ALEC have a loyalty to the cabal, their ideologies, the corporate sponsors, and the corporate lobbyists or CEOs who dump money into campaign accounts or outside groups that run ads against the legislators' opponents. No longer do these elected officials do much to serve their constituents or communities. Instead, they serve the will of those with the money and influence that can advance the individual lawmaker's career

Over the past decade, the cabal has expanded, exporting the ALEC agenda to Congress and beyond to foreign nations and their governments as well. The Cabal's philosophy and ideology is now being pursued with so-called fellow conservatives in the EU, as well as individual nation-states like the UK, Poland, New Zealand, and Australia. This is not limited to export of *their* agenda; it also includes import of *foreign* initiatives succeeding in other countries and allowing

foreign representatives to take their places as full members of the ALEC organization, where they push for adoption of foreign initiatives in the U.S. These foreign members now help craft and propose laws submitted to individual U.S. states and to our Congress as proposed new federal laws – for Americans to live under – supported by global corporations with foreign headquarters.

Expansion into the UK was accomplished through a partnership with a registered UK “charity” called the “Atlantic Bridge, Inc.”(AB). From 2005 through late 2011, this partnership was mostly hidden and used to provide travel to U.S. and UK lawmakers and VIP’s around the world to advance the ALEC corporate and ideological agenda. AB chose ALEC members as advisors in the UK organization and sent former high level conservative British government staffers to the U.S. to work from within ALEC. The UK government took the unprecedented step of ordering the closure of Atlantic Bridge, finding their activities were anything but charitable and advanced a specific political ideology. So far our IRS has failed to take a similar look at ALEC or their non-charitable activities.

Many still refuse to believe the described agenda, ideology, and activities are “political,” believing instead that these are activities advanced by a private organization separate from any political party or philosophy. They are entirely and dangerously incorrect. [98% of the ALEC’s leadership](#) and their Congressional Alum ([Senate](#) and [House](#)) are Republicans.

In the atmosphere of full exposure that has been ongoing for nearly two years now, the cabal refuses to temper key activities even as they fight to continue to exist as a viable organization. To get a clear example of the vast and varied influences available to the cabal, and how they work to misinform the public in order to advance their agenda...take a few hours and research the ongoing national battle to privatize public education. Tons of materials are available on this topic and woven throughout this argument is ALEC model legislation, written by corporate members that own Charter schools or for-profit virtual “schools,” and the rights to software used for “Long Distance Learning.” And some are even determined to replace public school teachers with instructors that will “teach” creationism, that the earth is 6,000 years old and that the climate is not changing. [Here is a link to the seventy-five legislative “Acts and](#)

[Resolutions](#)” adopted by ALEC regarding charter schools and privatization of public education.

Here is the agenda and list of attendees at the [2011 Philanthropy Roundtable](#). A reading of the participants and speakers reveals that most of The Cabal members were in attendance and advocating ALEC’s education initiatives. At that meeting they set the agenda for 2012 and beyond regarding education.

As blogger “2old2care wrote just the other day, “[ALEC is to Blame!](#)” Yes, they bear much of the blame because without their ability to write and pass such partisan and corporately beneficial legislation, most of what has happened to corrupt our assemblies and Congress would not have been possible. But the blame doesn’t stop there...it has to be recognized that none of ALEC’s accomplishments – indeed their very existence – would be possible without the huge funding and support of cabal members headed by the Koch brothers and their allied corporate owners and the foundations controlled by them.

This isn’t a Europe of centuries ago where citizens taking up pitchforks, torches and charging castles was needed to oust the oligarchs. This is the 21st Century U.S. where what is needed is an **informed** constituency willing to go to the polls in every election and vote to replace those serving corporate masters instead of their communities. It is TIME...time to take to the streets and identify each member of the cabal...time to vote every ALEC member from your state legislature and remove the Kochs’ influence and their legislative mistresses from our midst.