

When we learned Charles Koch opposes Ayn Rand

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Yesterday, Charles Koch announced a \$200,000 ad campaign in Wichita, Kansas. The campaign is intended to advance the ideas of economic freedom and government overreach. It is not clear why Mr. Koch feels it is necessary to spend this money to promote these ideas in his hometown, and the headquarters of his family company. Surely, Wichita is well aware of the Koch definitions of capitalism and democracy. Maybe he did not learn any lessons about the effectiveness of his political spending during the 2012 election.

What is clear is that Mr. Koch is at odds with Ayn Rand.

Ms. Rand wrote "Man—every man—is an end in himself, not a means to the ends of others; he must live for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself; he must work for his rational self-interest."

Mr. Koch offers an alternative explanation for his media expenditure. "The people who are more interested in power and their own interest rather than the general interest are threatened by these ideas," Koch said.

So Charles Koch is now Captain Altruist.

When Mr. Koch says that "if people like it, he might take the campaign to other cities," it would be helpful to clarify which and how many people are required to like the company and by how much they must like it in order for the message to be spread beyond Wichita.

The Koch's are masters of asking questions that sound well-informed and innocent. The questions are spoken in a tone that says "this is an obvious question that apparently no one is asking." The structure is designed to elicit a response of "either you agree with me, or you support mass murder." "What we're saying is, we need to analyze all these additional policies, these subsidies, this cronyism, this avalanche of regulations, all these things that are creating a culture of dependency."

Which specific policies, subsidies, cronyism, regulations and dependency Mr. Koch supports and opposes is not clear from the interview. But it is not likely he opposes the policies, subsidies, cronyism and dependency relied upon by the oil and gas industry nor does he support regulations designed to mitigate potential harm to employees of the oil and gas industry or communities affected by the actions of the oil and gas industry.

In addition, this particular campaign is designed to promote "the idea that countries with economic freedom have the most wealth." OK, fine. I agree. The Heritage Foundation's 2013 Index of Economic Freedom lists the United States as tenth most economically free. Without

any additional investigation, it is clear that at least six of those countries have economic and social policies it is fair to say the Koch brothers do not support. Heritage is funded by Koch family foundations.

The Cato Institute's 2012 Economic Freedom of the World report ranks the United States lower than heritage - 18th - again behind multiple countries with social and economic policies entirely at odds with Koch positions. Cato was founded and is funded by Charles Koch.

Mr. Koch believes that his ideas will help "disadvantaged" people, through reconsideration of such policies as the minimum wage. Working for the minimum wage does put many people at a disadvantage. It isn't clear how abolishing this policy, as well as other labor and environmental regulations (such as policies that force those who spill oil to take responsibility for their actions) will help "disadvantaged" people.

What is clear is that the Koch brothers continue to believe, despite a massive defeat at a cost of millions of dollars, that spending big money to influence is still more cost-effective than any other course of action.