

Koch-affiliated tea party group promotes 'National School Choice Week' rallies

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By **Marcos Restrepo**

The Americans for Prosperity Florida logo (Pic via americansforprosperity.org)

The Florida chapter of the Koch-affiliated tea party group Americans for Prosperity yesterday called for people to sign up for rallies affiliated with National School Choice Week, which starts next week.

Americans for Prosperity tweeted: "Americans enjoy freedom in the marketplace but not in education. This must change!" It also calls for people to sign up for events at Put Kids First, which bears the slogan "Americans for Prosperity Foundation + National School Choice Week = Restoring American Exceptionalism."

The Americans for Prosperity Foundation, funded by David and Charles Koch, defines itself as "a nationwide organization of citizen-leaders committed to advancing every individual's right to economic freedom and opportunity."

"The second-largest private company in the United States, [Koch Industries](#) is also a conglomerate, whose subsidiary businesses operate in some of the world's most profitable markets," writes Open Secrets, adding that 83 percent of Koch monetary political contributions have gone "to Republican candidates and committees."

Americans for Prosperity writes that "reducing the size and intrusiveness of government is the best way to promote individual productivity and prosperity for all Americans."

According to Open Secrets:

David Koch's Americans for Prosperity Foundation has a more detailed website, but it is unclear why Koch is seemingly uninvolved in the similar organization, Americans for Prosperity. David Koch contends that no Koch foundations have provided funding to Americans for Prosperity, the citizen advocacy group organizing Tea Party events around the country. A Washington Post article from January of this year connects the Kochs with the Tea Party movement, citing records of their foundation giving \$3.1 million to Americans for Prosperity, but according to the Kochs, this is false, as the money only went to the Americans for Prosperity Foundation.

What is clear is that both the Americans for Prosperity Foundation and Americans for Prosperity are calling on members to sign up for National School Choice Week.

Open Secrets adds that "David and Charles Koch are tied at No. 24 on Forbes top billionaires list with a personal fortunes of \$17.5 billion each."

Florida Independent articles on the ties [Koch industries](#) has to Florida include:

Virginia Chamlee wrote last week about Georgia-Pacific's role in contaminants like dioxin going into Florida rivers. Georgia-Pacific is a subsidiary of [Koch Industries](#).

Ashley Lopez reported in November 2011 about a Naples-based "free market" think tank called the Foundation for Government Accountability, which has ties to the **Cato Institute**, a large conservative think tank founded by Charles Koch of [Koch Industries](#).

The Independent also reported that Americans for Prosperity and the Eastern Orlando Tea Party brought Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, Ariz., to Orlando in November. The Department of Justice recently found "reasonable cause to believe that" that Arpaio's office "has engaged in a pattern or practice of misconduct that violates the Constitution and federal law."