

# Forbes

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3/05/2012 @ 9:56AM | 219 views

## Save the Cato Institute

You may have heard the news last Thursday that Charles and David Koch had [filed a lawsuit](#) seeking to take control of the Cato Institute. My friend Dave Weigel has an [in-depth look](#) at the background of the dispute. I want to [endorse the comments](#) of my colleague Gene Healy:

I can understand why so many people in the small-government movement feel conflicted and disappointed about this dispute. But while I'm disappointed, I'm not conflicted.

When it comes to this lawsuit, like Jonathan Adler, "I cannot understand how [the Kochs'] actions can, in any way, advance the cause of individual liberty to which they've devoted substantial sums and personal efforts over the years."

On Thursday, Charles G. Koch told the press, "We are not acting in a partisan manner, we seek no 'takeover' and this is not a hostile action."

With all due respect, Mr. Koch, that is not true.

As Gene explains, the Kochs have spent the last few months packing Cato's board with people loyal to the Koch brothers—including some individuals who have been explicitly hostile to libertarianism in the past. The Kochs are apparently upset that Cato has been insufficiently helpful in their political war against President Obama—seemingly oblivious to the fact that Cato's refusal to carry water for either political party is a big part of the reason people take Cato's work seriously in the first place.

If the takeover attempt succeeds, it will permanently damage Cato's reputation and will, I suspect, lead to an exodus of many of its most talented scholars and generous donors. Already, several prominent Cato employees and affiliated scholars have spoken out against the takeover,

and I've heard privately from others who feel the same way. I'm not aware of a single Cato scholar who has taken the Kochs' side.

Disclosure: I'm an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, an unpaid position. In the past I've received income from both the Cato Institute and the Koch-funded Institute for Human Studies.