

# THE HUFFINGTON POST

## Koch News Is Bad News

By: Timothy Karr – April 24, 2013

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What do you get two billionaire brothers who already have everything?

Over the years, Charles and David Koch have financed a vast organizing network, including Americans for Prosperity, that amplifies their extreme anti-environment, anti-labor and anti-democracy views.

They've bankrolled a constellation of think tanks, including the Cato Institute, the Heartland Institute and the Mercatus Center, which churn out research designed to prop up the Kochs' position that corporations should not be regulated.

But that isn't enough for the Koch brothers. According to the *New York Times*, the Kochs want a national media presence as well. The bankrupt Tribune Company is selling its eight daily newspapers, including the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and the Kochs are eyeing the purchase as part of a "10-year strategy" to expand their corporate power into politics.

"The first two pieces of the strategy -- educating grassroots activists and influencing politics -- were not surprising, given the money they have given to policy institutes and political action groups," writes the *Times*. "But the third one was: media."

The Tribune deal would put the *Allentown Morning Call*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Hartford Courant*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Newport Daily Press*, the *Orlando Sentinel* and the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* in the Koch brothers' hands.

That's especially bad news for anyone living in the communities these papers serve.

American humorist and writer Peter Finnley Dunne wrote that journalism's central purpose is "to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." But Koch-controlled media outlets would likely cover up corporate and political abuse -- not expose it.

And they'd not only cover up but also promote injustice. The Kochs are supporters of the American Legislative Exchange Council (or ALEC), which was active last year pushing legislation to disenfranchise voters. The legislation was insidiously designed to remove voters from based on race and income. While more than 40 companies have withdrawn their support from ALEC -- as a result of the pressure campaigns by groups including Center for Media and Democracy, ColorofChange.org and Common Cause -- the Kochs are holding out.

Already tens of thousands of people have called on the Tribune Company to put these influential newspapers in the hands of someone -- or, better yet, several different someones -- who will support their community and promote quality journalism. That's not the Koch brothers. And it's not Rupert Murdoch, either.

The future of newspapers should be about serving the local needs of your readership, not promoting an extreme political agenda. Charles and David Koch are only interested in the latter.

Those living in Los Angeles, Chicago, Allentown, Baltimore, Orlando, South Florida, Hartford and Newport should reject the Kochs. And the Tribune Company should listen to its readers.