



## **Koch-Cato suit lays bare another rift on the right**

By [Laurie Bennett](#)

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FreedomWorks has gone public with its criticism of the **Koch brothers' lawsuit** against the Cato Institute.

The conservative group released a **statement** Thursday criticizing Charles and David Koch for their attempt at a "hostile takeover" of the libertarian think tank.

The statement was signed by FreedomWorks Chairman Dick Armey, former Republican congressman from Texas; Co-Chairman C. Boyden Gray and President Matt Kibbe.

"As representatives of FreedomWorks, a grassroots organization that fights for constitutionally-limited government and individual freedom, we have grave concerns regarding the potential damage to the cause of liberty that will result from the dispute that has erupted between the Board of Directors of the Cato Institute and various parties at Koch Industries," the statement said.

"While we do not pretend to know all of the particulars of the dispute over ownership shares, it is clear that this hostile takeover bid, if successful, will do irreparable harm to the credibility of Cato, and equally important, will undermine our community's intellectual defenses at a time when the progressive left seems more committed than ever in their aggressive pursuit of government control of the American economy and the most personal decisions of its individual citizens."

As the Muckety map above shows, FreedomWorks and the Cato Institute share a number of funders, including the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, Susquehanna Foundation, Donors Trust and Searle Freedom Trust.

However, the Kochs, on their **corporate web site**, make a point of saying that "neither Koch companies and foundations nor members of the Koch family have ever contributed to FreedomWorks."

The Kochs co-founded Citizens for a Sound Economy, a predecessor to FreedomWorks, in 1984. The organization separated two decades later into two groups - FreedomWorks,

headed by Dick Armev, and the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, chaired by David Koch.

The Kochs mention the split on the **KochFacts.com** web site, but don't delineate the causes, except to say, "Over time the participants in CSE and the CSE Foundation developed different visions."

Both FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity work toward limited government and individual freedoms. And both organizations helped mobilize the Tea Party movement in 2009.

Cato and Americans for Prosperity, however, are much more outspoken adherents to libertarianism.

While Cato keeps a distance from outright politicking, FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity both have PACs.

FreedomWorks is currently working against the re-election of Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT). Its major supporters include Foster Friess, best known as the Rick Santorum backer who joked about using **Bayer aspirin** as a contraceptive.

The Americans for Prosperity PAC hasn't filed any reports with the Federal Election Commission since 2010.