



April 10, 2012

Top Ten Koch Facts

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Everyone seems to be investigating Charles and David Koch lately, with exposés of their corrupt political behavior popping up in places like the *New Yorker*, *AlterNet*, *ThinkProgress*, and Brave New Foundation's film *Koch Brothers Exposed*. Naturally, the billionaire brothers don't like the attention, so they're responding to it by smearing the activists and journalists. In their panic, they have now taken out Google ads attacking me and plastered an ominous image of my eyes on their website, like so:



They made me look like Emperor Palpatine. But who's really representing the Dark Side here? The truth is that the billionaire brothers bankrolling the conservative movement are using their wealth in a way that should be terrifying to anyone who thinks democracy is about more than pulling a lever every two years and letting rich folks take care of the rest.

Accordingly, here are 10 facts that every American should know about who the Kochs are and what they're doing to our country.

1. Koch Industries, which the brothers own, is one of the [top ten polluters](#) in the United States -- which perhaps explains why the Kochs have given [\\$60 million](#) to climate denial groups between 1997 and 2010.
2. The Kochs are the oil and gas industry's biggest donors to the congressional committee with oversight of the hazardous Keystone XL oil pipeline. They and their employees gave [more than \\$300,000](#) to members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in 2010 alone.
3. From 1998-2008, Koch-controlled foundations gave more than [\\$196 million](#) to organizations that favor policies that would financially enrich the two brothers. In addition, Koch Industries spent \$50 million on lobbying and some \$8 million in PAC contributions.
4. The Koch fortune has its origins in engineering contracts with [Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union](#).
5. The Kochs are [suing to take over](#) the Cato Institute, which has accused the Kochs of attempting to destroy the group's identity as an independent, libertarian think and align it more closely with a partisan agenda.
6. A Huffington Post source who was at a three-day retreat of conservative billionaires said the [Koch brothers pledged](#) to donate \$60 million to defeat President Obama in 2012 and produce pledges of \$40 million more from others at the retreat.
7. Since 2000, the Kochs have collected [almost \\$100 million](#) in government contracts, [mostly](#) from the Department of Defense.
8. Koch Industries has an annual production capacity of [2.2 billion pounds](#) of the carcinogen formaldehyde. The company has worked to keep it from being classified as a carcinogen even though David Koch is a prostate cancer survivor.
9. The Koch brothers' combined fortune of roughly [\\$50 billion](#) is exceeded only by that of Bill Gates in the United States.
10. The Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs accused Koch Oil of scheming to steal [\\$31 million](#) of crude oil from Native Americans. Although the company claimed it was accidental, a former executive in this operation said Charles Koch had known about it and had responded to the overages by saying, ["I want my fair share, and that's all of it."](#)

That last quote -- "I want my fair share, and that's all of it" -- encapsulates the unbridled greed driving the Kochs' political activism and business dealings. Democracy cannot thrive with so much power being in the hands of men like this. If we care about democracy, we have to work to take it back.