

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

By: John A. Allison, *President and CEO of the Cato Institute* – August 8, 2013

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*An Aug. 8 letter from John A. Allison, president and CEO of the Cato Institute, replying to one of more than 300 letters sent by Sen. Dick Durbin (D., Ill.) to companies and other organizations asking about their relationship with the American Legislative Exchange Council:*

Dear Senator Durbin:

Your letter of August 6, 2013 is an obvious effort to intimidate those organizations and individuals who may have been involved in any way with the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

While Cato is not intimidated because we are a think tank—whose express mission is to speak publicly to influence the climate of ideas—from my experience as a private-sector CEO, I know that business leaders will now hesitate to exercise their constitutional rights for fear of regulatory retribution.

Your letter thus represents a blatant violation of our First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. It is a continuation of the trend of the current administration and congressional leaders, such as yourself, to menace those who do not share your political beliefs—as evidenced by the multiple IRS abuses which have recently been exposed.

Your actions are a subtle but powerful form of government coercion.

We would be glad to provide a Cato scholar to testify at your hearing to discuss the unconstitutional abuse of power that your letter symbolizes.

Sincerely,

John A. Allison