



Conservative Billionaire Gives \$35 Million to Smithsonian for New Dinosaur Hall

When billionaire businessman David Koch ran as a vice-presidential candidate on the Libertarian Party ticket, he promoted abolishing Social Security, the Federal Reserve and a number of federal agencies. He seems to have kept a soft spot in his heart for the Smithsonian, though.

Today the Smithsonian announced that Koch had donated \$35 million for the creation of a new Dinosaur Hall at the National Museum of Natural History, the single largest gift in the museum's history. According to the AP, this isn't the first time Koch has directed his vast wealth to the arts and sciences:

Koch previously gave the Smithsonian \$15 million in 2009 to build a new exhibit hall exploring human evolution over 6 million years. The museum's Hall of Human Origins also was named in his honor.

In 2006, he gave \$20 million to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City to create the David H. Koch Dinosaur Wing. And in 2008, he gave a record \$100 million to New York's Lincoln Center to renovate the former New York State Theater. The current dinosaur hall is in the same condition that it has been over the last 30 years. The renovation, expected to start in 2014 and cost \$45 million, will be the museum's largest overhaul. When it's done, the museum will be able to display its collection of 46 million fossils and ongoing research.

Koch has also given money for cancer research, and is closely associated with a number of political causes and organizations. He and brother Charles have recently been fighting for control of the Cato Institute, a libertarian organization that the two have helped bankroll.