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Bet there aren't any surprises here.

December 08, 2009 06:25 PM EST

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If you have time, click on some of the links....interesting threads. (From Think Progress)

The Billionaires Behind The Hate

Billionaire brothers David and Charles Koch are the wealthiest, and [perhaps most effective](#), opponents of President Obama's progressive agenda. They have been looming in the background of every major domestic policy dispute this year. Ranked as the [9th richest men](#) in America, the Koch brothers sit at the helm of Koch Industries, a massive privately owned conglomerate of manufacturing, oil, gas, and timber interests. They are best known for their wealth, as well as for their [generous contributions](#) to the arts, cancer research, and the Smithsonian Institute. But David and Charles are also responsible for a [vicious attack](#) campaign aimed directly at obstructing and killing progressive reform. Over the years, [millions of dollars](#) in Koch money has flowed to various right-wing think tanks, front groups, and publications. At the dawn of the Obama presidency, Koch groups quickly maneuvered to try to stop his first piece of signature legislation: the stimulus. The Koch-funded group "[No Stimulus](#)" launched television and radio ads deriding the recovery package as simply "pork" spending. The [Cato Institute](#) -- founded by Charles -- as well as other Koch-funded think tanks like the [Heritage Foundation](#), produced a [blizzard of reports](#) distorting the stimulus and calling for a return to Bush-style tax cuts to combat the recession. As their fronts were battling the stimulus, David's Americans for Prosperity (AFP) spent the opening months of the Obama presidency placing calls and [helping to organize](#) the very first "tea party" protests. AFP, [founded in 1984](#) by David and managed day to day by the astroturf lobbyist [Tim Phillips](#), has spent much of the year mobilizing "tea party" opposition to health reform, clean energy legislation, and financial regulations.

STOPPING CLEAN ENERGY: David Koch presents himself as a [champion of science](#). Next year, because of his donations, a wing of the Smithsonian will be named after him. Nevertheless, Koch has done more to undermine the public's understanding of climate change science than any other person in America. The Competitive Enterprise Institute, funded in part by Koch foundations, has waged an [underhanded campaign](#) to falsely charge that a set of hacked e-mails somehow unravels the scientific consensus that global warming is occurring. Koch finances the "[Hot Air](#)" tour, a nationwide road show using a balloon to depict climate change science as "hot air." Despite the brothers' extravagant wealth, Koch's Americans for Prosperity has run populist ads mocking environmentalists as spoiled brats more concerned about their "[three homes and five cars](#)" than about economic conditions. In addition to its efforts to misinform the public, Koch Industries has spent nearly [\\$9 million dollars](#) so far on direct lobbying, much of it on climate change legislation. With a team of Koch-funded operatives going as far as [attempting to crash](#) the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen this week, the brothers may succeed in scuttling any prospect for addressing climate change.

STOPPING HEALTH REFORM: Much of the fierce opposition to health reform can be credited to Koch organizations. As the health care debate began, AFP created a front group, known as "[Patients United](#)," dedicated itself to attacking Democratic health care reform proposals. Patients United has blanketed the country with ads [distorting various](#) provisions of the health reform legislation, particularly the public option. Patients United even centered a [media campaign](#) around Shona Robertson-Holmes, claiming she had a brain tumor the Canadian system refused to treat. However, the Ottawa Citizen [reported](#) that Patients United has been [exaggerating](#) Holmes' case, and that she in fact had a benign cyst. In their quest to block health care reform, Koch-funded groups have fostered [extremism](#). A speaker with the roving Patients United bus tour repeatedly compared health reform to the [Holocaust](#) while an eight-by-five foot banner at an AFP [health care rally](#) with Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN) read, "[National Socialist Health Care](#): Dachau, Germany" superimposed over corpses from a concentration camp. Although many were surprised at the level of anger AFP [channeled](#) into Democratic [healthcare town halls](#) in August, it wasn't the first time Koch groups have helped to hijack the health reform debate. Back in 1994, Americans for Prosperity, then known as Citizens for a Sound Economy, worked closely with then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich to bring [mobs of angry men](#) to health reform rallies with then-First Lady Hillary Clinton.

A LONG HISTORY OF STOPPING PROGRESS: The Koch brothers clearly have a financial stake in blocking reform. Koch Industry oil refineries are major carbon dioxide polluters, and George-Pacific, a Koch Industries timber subsidiary, is one of the largest contributors to the loss of carbon-sink capacity. According to the EPA, Koch Industries is responsible for over [300 oil spills](#) in the U.S. and has leaked three million gallons of crude oil into fisheries and drinking waters. So there are clear [business-related reasons](#) why Koch would want to block regulatory enforcement, clean energy, labor, and other reforms. But part of their opposition stems from a long family tradition of funding conservative movements to shift the country to the far right. Fred Koch, father of Charles and David and the company's namesake, [helped to found](#) the John Birch Society in the late 1950s. The John Birch Society harnessed Cold War fears [into hate against progressives](#), warning that President Kennedy, Civil Rights activists,

and organized labor were in league with communists. By presenting progressive reform as a [capitulation to the Soviet Union](#), Fred Koch and the other industrialists bankrolling the Birch Society were able to galvanize hundreds of thousands of middle class people into supporting their narrow agenda of cutting corporate taxes and avoiding consumer regulations.

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