



# The Koch Brothers

What You Need to Know About the Financiers of the Radical Right

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Tony Carrk April 2011

# Introduction and summary

Any attempt to understand the modern conservative movement will eventually lead to billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch. Using their vast wealth and connections, the Koch brothers are key players in bankrolling right-wing political action groups, think tanks, and individual politicians, using this array of political power to advance their ideological agenda of limited government and less regulation. Chances are they are part of any recent right-wing attack you have seen lately.

The Koch brothers, leaders of a vast family oil-and-gas conglomerate, use this political network to pursue their right-wing agenda at nearly every level of government. Whether they are contributing millions in campaign contributions, spending millions on lobbying, or investing millions in right-wing think tank and advocacy groups, the Koch brothers' influence is pervasive.

Charles and David Koch would prefer to keep their influence behind the scenes but recent reporting by the Center for American Progress Action Fund's Think Progress and a variety of media and advocacy organizations shed light on the enormous breadth and reach of their network. This report will showcase the players involved in the Koch network, where they operate, and the vast amounts of money involved. The report also exposes the Koch right-wing ideological agenda that often protects their business interests at the expense of everyone else.

But cutting to the chase, here is a brief summary of the report's findings:

- The Koch brothers, whose wealth, when combined, is the fourth highest in the nation, run one of the largest private companies in the country. Koch Industries is involved in industries ranging from oil and gas, refining and chemicals, minerals, fertilizers, forestry, consumer products, polymers and fibers, and ranching. They have operations in 45 states.

- The Koch brothers use their considerable wealth to bankroll the right wing, including the Tea Party. This serves the purpose of furthering not only their right-wing ideology but also their bottom line. Koch Industries has a lot to gain from gutting government oversight and electing candidates who oppose government regulation, especially in the oil-and-gas industry.
- Chances are the Koch brothers are part of any recent right-wing attack as of late as they have fought health reform, Wall Street reform, collective bargaining rights, and efforts to curb climate change, to name just a few.
- We have identified at least \$85 million the Koch brothers have given to at least 85 right-wing think tanks and advocacy groups over the past decade and a half.
- Their main advocacy group, Americans for Prosperity, has chapters in 32 states and spent \$45 million in the last election, predominantly to help elect Republicans.
- The Kochs donated directly to 62 of the 87 members of the House GOP freshman class.
- The Koch brothers are active at the state level, spending \$5.2 million on candidates and ballot measures in 34 states since 2003. They donated directly to 13 governors that won election last year.
- The Kochs are not going away. In fact, they have already pledged to raise \$88 million for the 2012 election and have started scheduling events for potential Republican presidential candidates.

As this report will demonstrate, the Koch brothers' network works hard to advance a right-wing ideological agenda that helps their businesses reap more profits at the expense of our environment, our economy, and the American middle class. Understanding how they operate is the first step in countering their efforts to reshape our nation's laws to benefit the wealthy even more than they do today.

## The Koch brothers' issue agenda

A list of the top policy issues in which the Koch brothers are engaged

| Issue                                    | Koch brothers fighting? |
|--|-------------------------|
| Repealing health reform                  | <u>Yes</u>              |
| Denying climate change                   | <u>Yes</u>              |
| Fighting Wall Street reform              | <u>Yes</u>              |
| Dismantling collective bargaining rights | <u>Yes</u>              |
| Fighting reductions in carbon emissions  | <u>Yes</u>              |
| Keeping corporate money in elections     | <u>Yes</u>              |
| Fighting Internet neutrality             | <u>Yes</u>              |

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