

For immediate release

Watchdog Groups Criticize Philanthropy Award Given to Billionaire Charles G. Koch

Call the award contrary to the “history and spirit of philanthropic giving” in the U.S.

Washington, D.C. (10/27/2011) – Two groups active in philanthropy and government accountability today criticized a trade organization for giving billionaire Charles G. Koch of Koch Industries an award for his charitable giving, noting that most of it is tainted because it supports Koch’s political and business agenda.

Aaron Dorfman, executive director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (www.ncrp.org), and Bob Edgar, president and CEO of Common Cause (www.commoncause.org), said Koch was “an odd choice to become philanthropy’s poster boy.” Koch is being honored in Scottsdale, Ariz., this week by Philanthropy Roundtable, a national trade association for charitable giving organizations.

“It says a lot about the Philanthropy Roundtable that they chose Koch over the many other outstanding philanthropists in the country to receive this year’s award,” write Dorfman and Edgar, in an essay published by Huffington Post.

In their commentary, “[Koch ‘Philanthropy’ Advances Koch Business, Political Agendas](#),” Dorfman and Edgar note that “Charles Koch’s philanthropy is mostly about influencing our political systems to promote and strengthen domestic policies that favor Koch Industries, while at the same time, hurting the rest of us.”

Among the recipients of Koch’s philanthropic giving are a network of think tanks, elected officials and “front groups” that promote deregulation and lobby against government oversight of industry on issues such as environmental protection, energy independence and health care, they wrote.

For example, Dorfman and Edgar note a Charles G. Koch Foundation grant to the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, founded by Koch's brother David and closely associated with the Tea Party political movement. They also cite multimillion-dollar giving to the Institute for Humane Studies, which Koch himself chairs, and to the Mercatus Center, which heavily influenced government deregulation efforts of the Bush Administration.

"Philanthropy, at its best, involves selfless giving by individuals and foundations to advance equity and democracy, and promote the common good," write Dorfman and Edgar. "Paying for policy reform that harms the public good and benefits one's own economic interests isn't consistent with the spirit and history of philanthropic giving in this nation."

Read "Koch ['Philanthropy' Advances Koch Business, Political Agendas](#) ."

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) in Washington, D.C., is a national watchdog, research and advocacy organization that promotes philanthropy that serves the public good, is responsive to people and communities with the least wealth and opportunity, and is held accountable to the highest standards of integrity and openness.

Common Cause is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to restoring the core values of American democracy, reinventing an open, honest and accountable government that works for the public interest, and empowering ordinary people to make their voices heard.

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