



From the Wonk Room... Americans for Prosperity Is Part of the Koch Industries Right-Wing Machine

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Americans for Prosperity is part of the Koch Industries right-wing machine.

Koch's founder, Fred Koch, also helped found the John Birch Society, an ultraconservative organization that believed the U.S. government was controlled by a traitorous cabal of communist sympathizers. Koch Industries' charitable arm, the Koch Family Foundations, has provided over \$120 million in the past 20 years to the Cato Institute (founded by Charles Koch), [Citizens for a Sound Economy](#) (founded by David Koch, now known as Americans for Prosperity and FreedomWorks), the [Heritage Foundation](#), the [Federalist Society](#), the [Mercatus Center](#), North Carolina's [John Locke Foundation](#), and dozens of other right-wing, anti-regulatory, and global warming-denial organizations. [[Media Transparency](#)]

Koch Industries is the secret dirty energy king. With \$90 billion in annual sales, Koch Industries is the largest privately owned company in the United States. Fred Koch started the company in 1940 as an oil refining business, but his company—now controlled by sons David and Charles Koch—has diversified into “refining and chemicals; process and pollution control equipment and technologies; minerals and fertilizer; fibers and polymers; commodity and financial trading and services; and forest and consumer products”—a global warming pollution factory. [[Forbes, 2007](#)]

The Koch Companies have an atrocious safety record. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Koch Industries is responsible for over [300 oil spills](#) in the United States and has leaked 3 million gallons of crude oil into fisheries and drinking water supplies. The company was fined a record [\\$35 million dollars](#) by the EPA and an additional [\\$8 million in Minnesota](#) for discharging into streams. In Texas, the company was held liable for allowing large amounts of carcinogenic benzene to leak from a Texas refinery. In 1996, a rusty Koch [pipeline began to leak](#) butane near a Texas residential neighborhood, killing two teenagers in an explosion.

Americans for Prosperity and other Koch front groups peddle a far-right, anti-women, anti-environment agenda. AFP is currently on a nationwide tour blowing hot air about global warming and calling environmental proponents “[alarmists](#)” and pro-business anti-environmentalists “realists.” Ironically enough, AFP's image of choice is a [hot air balloon](#). On the Koch agenda:

- [Privatizing social security](#)
- [Denying global warming](#)
- [Cutting corporate taxes](#)
- [Opposing affirmative action](#)
- [Opposing Title IX](#)
- [Opposing domestic violence laws and equal pay](#)
- [Opposing any government regulations of industry](#)
- [Opposing global warming regulation](#)

For more on Koch Industries at the Wonk Room, go to: <http://www.wonkroom.org/tag/koch>

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