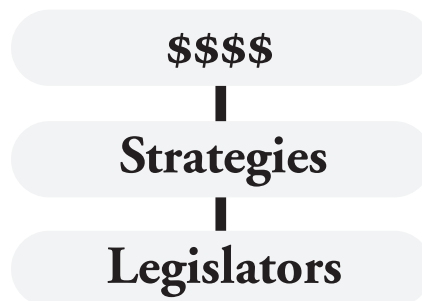


Legislation: American Legislative Exchange Council

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is the part of the Far Right network that turns ultra-conservative ideas into legislative proposals. ALEC's task forces of legislators, assisted by "experts" from think tanks and industry, draft model legislation on education, budget, environmental, labor, and other issues. ALEC members gather at least twice a year to consider and endorse these model "fill-in-the-state" bills.

Recent model bills have been designed to relax teacher certification standards, authorize funding for the online (and often for-profit) delivery of home schooling and supplemental educational services, reduce public employee benefits, require greater disclosure from unions, privatize government services, cut taxes, and impose phony education funding formulas, such as the 65 percent proposal. ALEC's model voucher bills target low-income and middle-income children, disabled children, military dependents, and "gifted" and "exceptional" students. ALEC also endorses a model bill calling for universal vouchers. Legislators are advised to promote the bill most likely to pass in their state, and then expand the program in subsequent legislative sessions.

ALEC is led by two boards: one consisting of state legislators, usually legislative leaders in their states; and the second a private enterprise board that rewards companies that help finance ALEC's work. ALEC bills reflect the priorities of these contributors. Corporate board members have included Golden Rule Insurance chairman emeritus Patrick Rooney, and executives from Pfizer, Coors Brewing Company, United Parcel Service, and Koch Industries. ALEC's corporate funders include Bayer, Wal-Mart Inc., Philip Morris, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, and numerous pharmaceutical companies. Nonprofit groups that are ALEC sponsors have included Americans for Tax Reform, Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, and the Heritage Foundation. Foundations controlled by the Coors, Koch, and Scaife families have also provided major grants.



ALEC's Education Task Force is chaired by Robert Enlow, executive director of the Friedman Foundation. Enlow is bringing smaller voucher groups and privatization organizations—including Hispanic CREO, for-profit schools, and alternative teacher certification advocates—onto the task force, which receives guidance and support from staff of the Alliance for School Choice, whose board members account for the largest contributors to political action committees supporting "pro-voucher candidates" the same legislators who sponsor the bills developed and distributed through ALEC.

Connecting the dots from the biggest funders of the education privatization movement to the most aggressive strategists in the movement to the state legislators promoting privatization legislation creates a straight line through ALEC.