

The ‘Kochtopus’ and Open Borders

By JULIAN BRADFORD

There are no two bigger names in conservative fundraising than Charles and David Koch — better known simply as the Koch Brothers.

If you asked any of your liberal friends to explain who the Koch Brothers are, you’d likely get a response that they were two evil men who may or may not be human and have the powers previously limited only to the great lizard people that conspiracy nuts think control the world.

Numerous documentaries and hit pieces have been written about the insidious power of the Koch Brothers from a left-wing angle, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has taken so much of an interest in their activities that the two brothers have become his favorite subject for Senate floor haranguings.

To the left, the network of conservative non-profits, PACs, and other entities that are funded by the Kochs represent one great big octopus (or Kochtopus) that is ruining America.

If only half the things the left has said about the Kochs were true, it might be imaginable to call their operation right wing. But the reality is they merely fight for fewer regulations on the free market and lower taxes. In other words, they’re libertarians.

And like a lot of libertarians (and “conservatives” for that matter), they are naturally supportive of granting amnesty to illegal immigrants because they believe it will be good for business. As Dave Weigel of *Slate* has noted, “the libertarian brothers have always put their money behind immigration reform.”

While the primary impetus of the Kochtopus is to fight programs that they perceive as intrusive on the omnipotent free market (thus, explaining their heavy involvement in the quixotic quest to defund Obamacare), a significant part of their network is dedicated to promoting mass immigration to America and supporting measures that would grant permanent residency to immigrants who came to our country illegally.

The primary nonprofit for these efforts is the Hispanic outreach group Libre Initiative. The organization is designed to spread “free-market values” to Hispanic communities in an attempt to win over low-skilled migrants to the cause to tax cuts for the wealthy and cutting government programs that they depend on for subsistence.

This is one of the many “outreach” scams that conservative and libertarian donors like to fund in the vain belief that they can somehow convince poor non-whites into accepting ideas that are not in the interests of poor non-whites (or most whites for that matter).

According to the *Washington Post*, Libre is one of the primary groups affiliated with the Koch network and has received nearly \$4 million in funding from the Kochtopus alone.

Seeing as how few Hispanics have been swayed by GOP outreach focusing solely on libertarian economic issues that are not in their interest to sign onto, Libre has taken up the cause of “immigration reform” as their calling card for winning over the Hispanic demographic.

Here’s Libre’s opinion on immigration:

We believe the best path forward to reform the broken immigration system in the United States is through a streamlined, market-based and employment-driven policy.

They go on to endorse amnesty, the DREAM act, granting more work visas, and granting more H-1B visas that creates more competition for American college graduates entering the workforce.

Essentially, they endorse an immigration policy that causes more native-born Americans to lose their jobs and have more foreign workers to compete with in the workforce. All in the name of helping out the interests of big business and believing these policies attract more Hispanics towards the GOP’s cause.

In an article titled “Immigration Bill’s Time in the Crucible Has Arrived,” Libre President Daniel Garza argues that the lawmakers behind the latest attempt at amnesty are heroic figures who will be rewarded politically:

I’m certain, when all is said and done, Republicans Senators Marco Rubio, Lindsey Graham, and John McCain, who are receiv-

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ing intense criticism for their stance, will be justly rewarded politically. That's because they are determined to get the policy right. Similarly, on a personal note, although I may disagree with Democrat U.S. Congressman, Luis Gutierrez on much more than I agree with him, he has been an impressive figure, standing tall and firm on immigration. Justly, his time in the sun is here.

Garza also believes that amnesty serves to increase "freedom" in America and that we need to have an immigration policy that solely serves market demands, rather than the needs of our native-born workers.

This is the type of immigration policy that the Kochs pay nearly \$4 million dollars to promote to the American public and drape with the increasingly meaningless label of conservative.

The Koch Brothers also paid for and heavily promoted an event with the left-leaning media site *Buzzfeed* that endorsed amnesty and was solely intended for that purpose. *Buzzfeed* is an odd site for any self-proclaimed conservatives to do business with, as its articles and listicles parrot politically correct dogmas and are not shy about promoting liberalism.

Billing itself as an open discussion of immigration reform, the Charles Koch Institute-sponsored event's choice of panelists leaves little doubt what it means by

"immigration reform." The panelists included a former governor of Puerto Rico; Joaquin Castro, a Democratic Congressman from a predominantly Hispanic district; Cato Institute's Immigration Policy Expert (who is fervently supportive of mass immigration); and an economic policy "expert" from the Heritage Foundation who is also a fan of increasing immigration.

The event even had the benefit of having America's best-known illegal immigrant, Jose Antonio Vargas, live-tweeting the proceedings in support of it.

A spokesman for the Koch Institute had this to say in reply to questions surrounding an event that leaned heavily pro-amnesty:

"The Charles Koch Institute believes that advancing progress in our communities and the world around us begins by exchanging knowledge and ideas," said Richard Fink, Director of the Charles Koch Institute. "The importance and timeliness of the immigration debate make the need for such thoughtful dialogue imperative. Sponsoring a productive dialogue on this issue is a natural extension of our commitment to advance a free and prosperous society."

Yes, by advancing amnesty.

While Democrats may love to demonize the Koch Brothers for their political donations, they should take a step back and realize that they have more in common than they might realize. ■

KOCH DYNASTY BIO CONTAINS LITTLE ON IMMIGRATION

Daniel Schulman's new biography of the Koch brothers, *Sons of Wichita*, explores the public, private, and political realm of twins David and William, and their siblings Charles and Frederick. Schulman notes that their father Fred Koch, a staunch anti-communist, was one of the founders of the John Birch Society. Charles and David run the family business, Koch Industries, which is the second largest privately held company in the U.S. with annual revenue of \$115 billion. Charles and David are long-time supporters of libertarian causes and have bankrolled organizations such as the CATO Institute.

Schulman briefly mentions Charles and David's views on immigration. He notes that after Mitt Romney's defeat in the 2012 presidential election, Charles and David concluded that "strategic recalibration" would require future GOP nominees to reach "the right people with the right message," including "Hispanic, women, and youth engagement." According to Schulman, in May 2013, "as the immigration debate heated up on Capitol Hill, the Charles Koch Institute partnered with the website *BuzzFeed* to hold a 'BuzzFeed Brews' forum on the topic, featuring a number of pro-reform panelists." ■

SONS OF WICHITA

How the Koch Brothers Became America's Most Powerful and Private Dynasty

By Daniel Schulman

Grand Central Publishing, illustrated, 424 pp., \$30

