

ANTI-ALEC ORGANIZING PRIMER

PART 0 – INTRO TO ALEC

ALEC'S HISTORY

On August 23, 1971, Louis F. Powell, then a future Supreme Court Justice, sent the "Confidential Memorandum" to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce titled "Attack on the American Free Enterprise System." The memo was a blueprint for a new corporate-led political system that would use billions of dollars to influence politicians and squeeze the voices of the people out of politics.

The memo advocated "constant surveillance" of textbook and television content, as well as a purge of groups who were working to fight big business and wealthy manipulators of the political system. As part of the work, Powell emphasized institution building and increasing the Chamber's efforts to influence policy.

Out of that memo, ALEC was born.

WHO IS ALEC?

ALEC is not a lobby; it is not a front group – it is much more powerful than that. Through the secretive meetings of the American Legislative Exchange Council, corporate lobbyists and state legislators vote as equals on 'model bills' to change our rights that often benefit the corporations' bottom line at public expense. **ALEC is a pay-to-play operation where corporations buy a seat and a vote on 'task forces' to advance their legislative wish lists and can get a tax break for donations, effectively passing these lobbying costs on to taxpayers.**

Participating legislators, overwhelmingly reactionary Republicans, then bring those proposals home and introduce them in statehouses across the land as their own brilliant ideas and important public policy innovations—without disclosing that corporations crafted and voted on the bills. **ALEC boasts that it has over 1,000 of these 'model bills' introduced by legislative members every year, with one in every five of them enacted into law.**

Along with legislators, corporations have membership in ALEC. Corporations sit on ALEC task forces and vote with legislators to approve 'model bills'. They have their own corporate governing board which meets jointly with the legislative board. (ALEC says that corporations do not vote on the board.) **Corporations fund almost all of ALEC's operations.**

HOW ALEC WORKS

ALEC has been described as a 'dating service' between corporations and politicians. ALEC ensures that there is an open channel of communication between corporate lobbyists and politicians to write, approve of and then push legislation in the states all while socializing at five-star resorts across the country.

- I. **ALEC puts lobbyists in direct contact with politicians.** Simply put, corporations make large donations to ALEC in order to fund the organizations' operations and a "scholarship fund" that is then used to pay for legislators travel and accommodations at five star resorts across the country.
- II. **ALEC uses its "scholarship fund" to buy resort trips for politicians.** Once at the resorts, politicians participate in spa days, golf outings, cigar parties and steak dinners with corporate lobbyists where they discuss legislative agendas in your state.
- III. **These 'scholarships' are effectively legal bribes.** In many states, these scholarships are exempt from any disclosure and while at ALEC sponsored events, politicians can have their meals and entertainment paid for. **In many cases, the laws that exempt ALEC from disclosure was originally crafted by ALEC lobbyists and politicians themselves.**
- IV. **ALEC is organized into "issue task forces" – these task forces affect each and every aspect of YOUR life.** Corporations who have a specific interest in specialized rules governing their business can sit as equals with politicians on one of the organization's many task forces. These task forces are responsible for drafting new bills that govern those industries and then the lobbyists and politicians vote together to approve those bills as "ALEC model bills." Once those bills are approved by the task forces, they get presented at ALEC's annual convention and distributed to all of ALEC's politician members. **Worst of all, corporations and politicians have equal role in writing and then voting on these bills which are then taken back to YOUR state capitol, introduced, and turned into laws.**

REMEMBER: ALEC OFTEN SETS THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA IN YOUR STATE AT THEIR SECRET MEETINGS WITHOUT ANY VOTER INPUT – STOP THEM!