

Issue: Political Influence

## The Rising Power of Private Money in State Policy

**Corporations are increasingly driving policy at state and local levels, creating laws that raise their profits at public expense.**

Corporations and wealthy individuals directly influence laws by operating and funding the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). ALEC sponsors task forces and conferences where legislators and business leaders write bills. Then ALEC matches bills with legislators willing to sponsor them. Goals include increasing profits, privatizing public resources and services, and passing preemption laws that prevent cities from addressing problems locally. ALEC has nonprofit status, claiming tax exemptions, and claims to be bipartisan, but most members are Republicans. ALEC does not disclose its membership list.

### Who funds ALEC?

- Major corporations
- Wealthy individuals and their foundations, such as the Koch brothers
- Major corporations, including ExxonMobil, Pfizer, Altria and Anheuser-Busch.
- Trade associations
- 1% of funding comes from legislators' membership dues

### ALEC has helped pass laws that:

- Limit consumer and employee rights
- Weaken environmental protections
- Promote for-profit prisons and schools
- Expand voter ID laws that make it more difficult to vote
- Expand "stand-your-ground" gun laws

### ...and preemption laws that have stopped some cities from:

- Regulating pollutants and pesticides
- Raising the minimum wage
- Requiring employers to offer paid sick days
- Enacting local bans on fracking
- Protecting rights of LGBT and other marginalized groups
- Restricting tobacco use
- Enacting local gun controls
- Creating municipal broadband

### Who are ALEC's legislative members?

- One quarter of all state legislators
- One fifth of the U.S. Congress
- 7 sitting governors
- Many of these members do not publicize their affiliation

ALEC promotes the same legislation across the country, resulting in nearly identical laws in multiple states. Their vision includes privatizing education, Medicare and Social Security. To learn more, read the detailed research here: <https://localmajority.org/research-reports/> .