



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on July 30, 2018

Koch Prepared To Back Democrats Who Share His Goals

When the CEO of Americans for Prosperity, Emily Seidel, told donors on Sunday, “If you are a Democrat and stand up to [Senator] Elizabeth Warren to corral enough votes for financial reform that breaks barriers for community banks and families, you’re darn right we will work with you,” one must wonder about the priorities of the political network bankrolled by Charles Koch (shown).



The Americans for Prosperity seminar held in Colorado Springs was entitled “Transforming the network’s effectiveness.” Koch and Seidel made it clear that if that means supporting Democrats over Republicans, they are ready to do so.

“I know this is uncomfortable,” Seidel said to a group of about 500 donors, plus guests. She made special note of the \$1.3 trillion spending bill passed in March by the Republican-majority Congress. “If you are a Republican who sits on the committee that wrote the worst spending bill in our country’s history and you voted for it, you’re darn right we will hold you accountable.”

In the past, “the Koch brothers” has been used almost as a curse word by Democrats enraged at how Charles and David Koch have given millions of dollars to conservative and libertarian causes and Republican candidates. Democrats use the Koch brothers as an example of the supposed negative influence of money in political campaigns (while ignoring the similar role played by liberal billionaires such as George Soros, Michael Bloomberg, Tom Steyer, and others).

Koch was asked if he would be willing to see Democrats win control of the House of Representatives in November. He did not answer directly, but said that he would like to see people in power who will back policies that will “move toward a society, mutual benefit, equal rights, where everybody has the opportunity to realize their full potential. I don’t care what initials are in front or after somebody’s name.”

Charles Koch clearly believes in a society with more free enterprise and limited government. Koch has praised the Austrian school of economics, saying, “They developed principles that enabled me to gain an understanding of how the world works.” He said in an interview on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe* program in 2015 that he and his brother support a “non-interventionist foreign policy.” Not only does he believe in such things, he has invested heavily to advance these goals. As the world’s 12th-richest person, with a net worth estimated at nearly \$51 billion, he used a significant part of his wealth to co-found the libertarian Cato Institute in Washington, D.C. Other groups that have been the beneficiary of his financial backing include the Institute for Human Studies (IHS) and the Ayn Rand Institute.

Koch is the principal supporter of IHS, which is dedicated to advancing the careers of aspiring educators, journalists, and policy professionals with an interest in classical liberal thought.

What is puzzling, however, is how supporting almost any of the Democrats currently sitting in Congress helps advance these commendable goals. Koch rightly opposes Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat who has a dismal [13-percent score](#) on the Freedom Index of the *New American* magazine (the Freedom



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Index rates members of Congress on their fidelity to the principles of the U.S. Constitution, as determined by their votes on key issues), but Americans for Prosperity is supporting other Democrats who are just about as left-wing as Warren.

For example, this very month, Koch's Americans for Prosperity began an advertising campaign in favor of Senator Heidi Heitkamp, a Democrat from North Dakota, who is considered to be among the more vulnerable Democrats on the ballot this Fall. The advertising campaign is specifically thanking her for her co-sponsorship of the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act, a bill that eliminates many of the stifling regulations on community banks that were created by the Dodd-Frank Act passed in the aftermath of the 2008 financial meltdown.

One can certainly sympathize with Koch's negative views on Dodd-Frank, and his being pleased with Heitkamp's authorship of a bill that drew bipartisan support. But Senator Heitkamp, if reelected, can be expected to continue her present voting record, which, the banking bill notwithstanding, is pretty poor. She has earned a [mere 20-percent score](#) on the *Freedom Index*. If she returns to the Senate, Heitkamp would be a reliable vote *against* many of the free-market, limited-government principles the Americans for Prosperity was created to advance, including many principles supported by Koch himself.

Look at her voting record:

During her tenure in the Senate, Heitkamp voted "no" on the 2017 tax cuts, and "no" on a budget-cut effort by Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.). On the other hand, she voted to spend *more* money on government-run healthcare — a proposal by Senator Bernie Sanders, the democratic socialist from Vermont. Not surprisingly, she voted against the repeal of ObamaCare. She also voted against defunding Planned Parenthood.

She is a hard-core liberal on other issues, as well. For those looking to improve the federal judiciary, don't expect any help from Senator Heitkamp. When she had the opportunity to vote for John Kenneth Bush, the chairman of the Louisville chapter of the Federalist Society, as a circuit court judge, she joined her Democratic Party colleagues in voting "no." She also voted against auditing the Federal Reserve.

And, while Koch has rightly condemned the tendency of the U.S. government to intervene in military conflicts around the globe, Heitkamp's vote to add Montenegro to NATO only increases the opportunities for the United States to become embroiled in a military conflict that has little to no vital national interest for America.

One can understand Koch's frustrations with the Republicans, but support for liberal Democrats is not the answer.

Image: screenshot from [YouTube video](#) of interview with Charles Koch



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