

BACKGROUND MEMO – THE FREEDOM FOUNDATION

The Freedom Foundation – www.freedomfoundation.com:

The Olympia, Washington based Freedom Foundation is trying to wage war on public-sector unions in the Pacific Northwest. **To this point they have failed to deliver, even after spending more than \$20 million over the last five years, as labor has beaten back every futile effort, but they are well funded and therefore pro-labor forces should remain vigilant.**

The Freedom Foundation CEO is Tom McCabe, who prior to joining the organization was a long-time Republican operative leading the Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW). There, McCabe got into hot water from his members which are predominantly builders and contractors, by spending millions on failed conservative candidates and causes, moving the organization to the extreme right and violating state campaign finance laws. He lost so many times battling the left that he seems to have built a grudge against organized labor in the state.

In many ways, McCabe is a perfect fit for a State Policy Network organization like the Freedom Foundation where he can attempt to carry out his hyper-partisan grudge against unions with the backing of similarly minded funders who seem to turn a blind eye to his nefarious tactics.

Through such tactics, the Freedom Foundation has been able to obtain the names of some public workers to badger them to “opt out” of their union. This campaign is what the Freedom Foundation has sold to its out-of-state funders, but has largely been ineffective in providing a Return-On-Investment to its deep-pocketed, regressive backers.

Freedom Foundation Funders:

The Freedom Foundation is primarily funded through a national right-wing network of foundations and donors, who funnel contributions into state-based 501(c)(3) organizations affiliated with the Koch-funded State Policy Network (SPN).

The State Policy Network is a national network of ultra-conservative and libertarian “think-tanks” with connections to many secretive, uber-wealthy conservative funders, including the Koch family. The SPN has an \$83-million-dollar budget and advocates for privatizing education, eliminating workers' rights, disenfranchising minorities, slashing environmental protections, and imposing a tax system at the expense of the middle-class.

The Freedom Foundation doesn't disclose its donors. However, the Northwest Accountability Project (NWAP) conducted a thorough dive of the 990's of many of the largest right-wing funders and found large contributions to the Freedom Foundation. You can see more on [this list from the Conservative Transparency website](#), which lists many funders for the Freedom Foundation.

The Murdock Charitable Trust, based in Vancouver, WA is one of the Freedom Foundation’s largest public donors. While funding a few good community organizations, it inexplicably also funds crisis pregnancy centers, organizations **that support gay conversion therapy** as well as a wide range of anti-LGBTQ, anti-choice and anti-worker organizations including the Alliance Defending Freedom which the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated as an anti-LGBT hate group.

The Donors Capital Fund, affiliated with the Donors Trust, is a “donor-advised fund” that offers an extra layer of secrecy for its litany of right-wing benefactors that include the Bradley Family Foundation which was a big supporter of Scott Walker’s efforts to destroy unions in Wisconsin and was recently [exposed](#) in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel for funding this model nationally. The Bradley Foundation has also funded the Koch-backed Knowledge and Progress Fund and funds Charles Murray’s fellowship at the American Enterprise Institute. Charles Murray is the co-author of the controversial book “The Bell Curve” which argued that success in America could be attributed to white genes.

The Kirby Foundation is also one of the largest contributors to the anti-union National Right to Work Foundation which predominantly uses the courts to enact anti-worker laws which make it harder for workers to organize.

[View a video on the Freedom Foundation, their donors and their extremist agenda.](#)

NWAP has uncovered evidence showing McCabe and other Freedom Foundation senior staff claiming their motives are to a) destroy labor unions in order to “defund the Left” and b) advance conservative candidates and causes. (See video evidence [here](#)). We also uncovered evidence that the Freedom Foundation has contributed to Republican candidates and has directed donors to invest in Republican races. All of the above activities are in direct violation of the organization’s 501(c)(3) status. Consequently, this is the basis of a complaint, which has been filed with the IRS, the Washington state Attorney General and the Oregon Attorney General.

Present	
Organization	Amount Donated
Donors Capital Fund	\$1,920,002
Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation	\$1,210,500
Murdock Charitable Trust	\$534,018
Jacquelin Hume Foundation	\$479,405
Roe Foundation	\$475,000
Sarah Scaife Foundation	\$410,000
Walton Family Foundation	\$350,000
FM Kirby Foundation	\$300,000
State Policy Network	\$293,164
Chase Foundation of Virginia	\$210,860
Searle Freedom Trust	\$208,000
Castle Rock Foundation	\$135,000
Donors Trust	\$115,700
Source: American Bridge 21st Century, Conservative Transparency, accessed 10/10/2017; Guidestar, accessed 10/10/2017; National Center for Charitable Statistics, accessed 7/31/2017.	