

## Some of ALEC's Corporate Agenda Has Been Introduced in Wisconsin

### Opposing Federal Health Insurance Reform



In 2011, Wisconsin Sen. Joe Leibham (R) and Rep. Robin Vos (R) introduced ALEC's "Freedom of Choice in Health Care" constitutional amendment to thwart federal health care reforms. For decades, ALEC has been fighting to protect the health care industry from regulations that control costs, ensure basic services, and protect consumers. As the universal health care debate began in late 2008, Blue Cross Blue Shield [helped craft](#) a model state constitutional amendment to frustrate federal efforts towards an individual health insurance mandate or public option, and ALEC's Board of Directors approved the amendment on January 14, 2009. [According to ALEC](#), "in the 2010 session, 42 states either introduced or announced ALEC's Freedom of Choice in Health Care Act. Eight states (Virginia, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri and Tennessee) passed the ALEC model as a statute, and two states (Arizona and Oklahoma) passed the ALEC model as a constitutional amendment." The three private sector members of the ALEC Health and Human Services Task Force (which passed the [model amendment](#)) were executives from Blue Cross Blue Shield, Johnson & Johnson, and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

### Undermining State Insurance Mandates

Wisconsin Senator Leah Vukmir, who was named a 2009 ALEC "Legislator of the Year," is seeking to implement the ALEC ["Health Care Choice Act for States"](#) in Wisconsin. Vukmir is currently seeking co-sponsors for a similar bill, [LRB 0373](#), and co-sponsored the comparable "Out-of-state Health Insurance Providers (Across State Lines)" bill (LRB 0921/1) in 2009. This bill would permit the purchase of health insurance across state lines from insurers not licensed in the state of the purchaser, which allows insurers to avoid state mandates for coverage. This would permit insurers to sell sub-standard health insurance policies, most likely at a lower price than policies sold by in-state insurers, crowding out more comprehensive policies and making it more difficult for persons with certain conditions to find inexpensive health care. Senator Vukmir is the ALEC "Health and Human Services" Task Force co-chair for 2011. In 2010, according to the ALEC "State Legislators Guide to Repealing Obama Care," nineteen states introduced such legislation, and Wyoming enacted it.

*Click [here](#) to read more.*

### Promoting Medicaid Block Grants



ALEC has issued two resolutions calling on Congress to amend Medicaid to replace the current funding program -- in which the federal government matches a percentage of state costs -- with block grants. (See [here](#) and [here](#).) Medicaid block grants are unlikely to provide adequate funds for states to meet growing Medicaid costs, particularly for persons with disabilities who rely on Medicaid for day-to-day life. If implemented, this change would reduce the total amount of funds available, resulting in either reduced coverage in Medicaid programs or restricted eligibility. While supporters say block grants give states "more flexibility," disability rights activists [say](#) "that's like saying Jim Crow laws give states more flexibility to decide who gets to drink at their drinking fountains. Flexibility is basically a code word for abandonment." Medicaid block grants were part of Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan's much-criticized 2011 budget plan.

For an updated look at ALEC's education agenda in Wisconsin, see the Center for Media and Democracy's in-depth report, ["ALEC Exposed in Wisconsin: The Hijacking of a State."](#)