

ALEC EXPOSED

"ALEC" has long been a secretive collaboration between Big Business and "conservative" politicians. Behind closed doors, they ghostwrite "model" bills to be introduced in state capitols across the country. This agenda-underwritten by global corporations--includes major tax loopholes for big industries and the super rich, proposals to offshore U.S. jobs and gut minimum wage, and efforts to weaken public health, safety, and environmental protections. Although many of these bills have become law, until now, their origin has been largely unknown. With **ALEC EXPOSED**, the Center for Media and Democracy hopes more Americans will study the bills to understand the depth and breadth of how big corporations are changing the legal rules and undermining democracy across the nation.

DID YOU KNOW? Corporations VOTED to adopt this. Through ALEC, global companies work as "equals" in "unison" with politicians to write laws to govern your life. Big Business has "a VOICE and a VOTE," according to newly exposed documents. **DO YOU?**

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The Transparency and Government Accountability Act

Did you know that the Evergreen Freedom Foundation--which is connected to the Kochs--was the corporate co-chair in 2011?

Summary

"Transparency" is government's obligation to share information with citizens that is needed to make informed decisions and hold officials accountable for the conduct of the people's business.

Transparency exists on government websites largely at the munificence of officials. The burden of negotiating complex and costly Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) petitions rests squarely on the shoulders of citizens and journalists. Despite "sunshine" laws and much pro-transparency rhetoric, information requests by journalists and citizens are routinely ignored, given the bureaucratic "slow roll" and discouraged by inflated price tags for staff time and copying.

FOIAs and official goodwill are insufficient in securing citizens and journalists information they need and have a right to review.

Therefore, this act affirms that the government of the state of **{insert state}** has a duty to affirmatively disclose certain information, in a timely manner, and to shift the burden from citizens and journalists to the state, to share all information necessary, so that citizens may hold their elected officials accountable.

Legislation

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF **{insert state}** DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1.

The State of **{insert state}** shall maintain an official, searchable website accessible to all citizens that affirmatively discloses all appropriate information as described in subsections (a through i). The state website shall use a consistent website domain and present all information in "plain English". The state website shall have an easy-to-understand interface and shall be well organized, easy to navigate and without tedious plug-in downloads.

The state website shall post all open meetings laws, notices about public meetings, committees and boards, minutes of past meetings, a schedule, and meeting agendas for future and past meetings, and

(A) Budget information, including:

1. All budgets, current and historic
 1. Graphs showing spending and revenue over time
2. A check register including:
 1. The amount of the payment
 2. Date
 3. Check number
 4. To whom the payment was made (including the address)
 5. What it was for

ALEC's Corporate Board --in recent past or present

- AT&T Services, Inc.
- centerpoint360
- UPS
- Bayer Corporation
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Energy Future Holdings
- Johnson & Johnson
- Coca-Cola Company
- PhRMA
- Kraft Foods, Inc.
- Coca-Cola Co.
- Pfizer Inc.
- Reed Elsevier, Inc.
- DIAGEO
- Peabody Energy
- Intuit, Inc.
- Koch Industries, Inc.
- ExxonMobil
- Verizon
- Reynolds American Inc.
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- Salt River Project
- Altria Client Services, Inc.
- American Bail Coalition
- State Farm Insurance

For more on these corporations, search at www.SourceWatch.org.

6. Budgetary authority for the expenditure
7. Functional expenditure category
8. Sources of funds
9. Links to the relevant contracts under which the payment was made

(B) Elected officials information, including:

1. Contact information for all elected officials
2. Terms of office and date of next election
3. Voting record
4. Party affiliation
5. Conflict of interest rules
6. Committee appointments

(C) Administrative official information, including:

1. Contact information for all appointed administrators
2. Terms of office
3. Governing boards and by laws for agencies
4. Party Affiliation
5. Conflict of interest rules

(D) Ethics information, including:

1. Ethics commission and guidelines for ethical behavior of state officials
2. Process for reporting ethics violations
3. Status of current investigations and results of investigations

(E) Audit information, including:

1. Status of regular audits of state agencies and departments, including the Governor and the Assembly
2. Audit results
3. Schedule of all financial audits
4. Performance audits for state programs

(D) Contract information, including:

1. Rules governing contracts
2. Bids and contracts for purchases over \$10,000
3. Vendor campaign contributions and the vendor contract

(E) Lobbying information, including:

1. Disclosure of state-paid lobbying activity
2. Database of registered lobbyists
3. Agency lobbying contracts
4. All grants given to non-profit organizations, reason for the grant and a contact in the organization responsible for oversight

(F) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) information, including:

1. FOIA contact for every state agency/department in one central location
2. Department/Agency FOIA officer posted on Department homepage
3. Annual compliance survey performed measuring, number of FOIAs submitted, number fulfilled, average time for compliance and reasons for denials

(G) Tax information, including:

1. Central location for all tax information, including state "fees" such as drivers' licenses.
2. Agency disclosure of all sources of revenue

Center for Media and Democracy's quick summary

This model statute "affirms" that the state government "has a duty to affirmatively disclose certain information," rather than expecting citizens and journalists to use Freedom of information Act requests to turn up the information. The information would be posted on a searchable website that includes notices about public meetings, minutes of meetings, and a wide array of other information on topics such as: budgets and taxes, government officials, ethics laws and procedures, audit schedules and results, contracts, and lobbying.

About Us and ALEC EXPOSED. The Center for Media and Democracy reports on corporate spin and government propaganda. We are located in Madison, Wisconsin, and publish www.PRWatch.org, www.SourceWatch.org, and now www.ALECexposed.org. For more information contact: editor@prwatch.org or 608-260-9713.