



Rita LaMoreaux <rita@mirsnews.com>

ALEC Summer Meeting in New Orleans and Michigan Legislators

1 message

Zack Pohl <zack@wearethepeoplemichigan.com>
To: Zack Pohl <zack@wearethepeoplemichigan.com>
Bcc: release@mirsnews.com

Thu, Jul 28, 2011 at 11:09 AM

Good Morning-

Next week, the [American Legislative Exchange Council \(ALEC\)](#) will host its 38th annual meeting in New Orleans. A number of our state legislators are expected to attend.

What is ALEC?

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is a vehicle through which global corporations and state politicians collaborate and vote behind closed doors to design legislation to benefit the huge corporations funding ALEC. These so-called "model bills" reach into almost every area of American life and include things like [imposing voting restrictions](#), [undermining environmental protections](#), [scapegoating immigrants to profit the private prison industry](#) and [defunding public education](#). *Learn more [here](#).*

How do corporations benefit from ALEC-drafted state laws?

Well, in a number of ways. For example:

- [Altria/Philip Morris USA](#) benefits from ALEC's newest tobacco legislation -- an extremely narrow tax break for moist tobacco that would make fruit flavored tobacco products cheaper and more attractive to youngsters.
- Health insurance companies such as [Humana](#) and Golden Rule Insurance ([United Healthcare](#)), benefit directly from ALEC model bills, such as the [Health Savings Account bill](#) that just passed in Wisconsin.
- [Corrections Corporation of America](#) (CCA) benefits directly from the anti-immigrant legislation introduced in Arizona and other states that requires expanded incarceration and housing of immigrants, along with other bills from ALEC's crime task force.
- [Connections Academy](#), a large online education corporation and co-chair of the [Education Task Force](#), benefits from ALEC measures to privatize public education and promote private on-line schools.

Why would our legislators help global firms located outside of their district?

ALEC's appeal rests largely on the fact that legislators receive an all-expenses-paid trip that provides many part-time legislators with vacations that they could not afford on their own, along with the opportunity to rub shoulders with wealthy captains of industry (major prospective out-of-state donors to their political campaigns). For a few hours of work on a task force and a couple of indoctrination sessions by ALEC experts, part-time legislators can bring the whole family to ALEC's annual convention, work for a few hours, then stay in swank hotels, attend cool parties -- even [strip clubs](#)-- and raise funds for the campaign coffer, all heavily subsidized by the corporate till. In 2009, ALEC spent \$251,873 on childcare so mom and dad could have fun.

Questions to ask state legislators before the next session:

- Did you attend the August 2011 ALEC conference in New Orleans, and if so, what model legislation did you bring back?
- What bills do you plan to introduce or co-sponsor this session?
- Have any corporations weighed in on the drafting of this legislation or helped draft it, and if so, in what ways do they benefit?

A number of identified ALEC members or allies currently serve in the Michigan Legislature, including:

- State Senator Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba)
- State Rep. Tom McMillan (R-Rochester) [[Rochester Citizen, 3/30/11](#)]
- State Rep. Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton) [[Nesbitt bio](#)]
- State Senator Tonya Schuitmaker (R-Lawton) [[American Legislative Exchange Council](#)]

The [ALEC Database](#) is available to reporters. In July 2011, the Center for Media and Democracy created the first of its kind database containing 800 pages of leaked documents from an ALEC whistleblower. The ALEC database is intended to help journalists, bloggers and the public better understand the web of connections between legislation introduced—and passed—in state houses, the legislators who introduce it, and ALEC.

Save the Date: on Wednesday, August 3, there will be a live-streaming press conference you can participate in by phone or the web with real people who have been negatively impacted by ALEC-drafted legislation.

--

Zack Pohl
Communications Director
We Are the People Coalition
[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)
[517-980-6190](#) (cell)

