



A Public Education and Mobilization Project

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## Who's Behind Project 2025?

### Kingmaker Leonard Leo and his Christian Right dark money world

Leo Leonard, a right-wing Catholic lawyer, judicial activist, and Co-Chairman of the conservative legal think tank, the **Federalist Society for Law and Policy**, has emerged as a key architect and funder of **Project 2025**, backed by billions of dollars of slush fund dark money. He works closely with **Heritage Foundation** colleagues, including **Kevin D. Roberts**, lead author of Project 2025, the conservative party's **Mandate for Leadership** electoral blueprint. While Heritage is the public face of Project 2025, Leo is the shadow money king who has united the Christian nationalist movement behind its radical agenda.

In 2022, Leo received a huge infusion of fresh money from a Chicago industrialist **Barre Seid** into the **Marble Freedom Trust**; Seid then put Leo in charge of the nonprofit 501(C)4 trust (*see details below*). Seid is a longtime right-wing billionaire who has funded climate denialism, business deregulation, and fought Medicaid expansion, among his conservative priorities.<sup>1 2</sup> Leo quickly moved to vowed to expand his vision of reshaping America and our legal system to reflect arch-conservative values, policies, and law. Tax records show funds from the Seid gift were transferred into Leo-controlled nonprofits, the donor-advised **Donors Trust** and the **85 Fund**, then disbursed to a tight circle of mainly Catholic activists and right-wing groups. A majority are key Project 2025 members.

Our investigation of tax records, watchdog and media reports, shows that at least **60 of over 80 groups** listed as advisors to Project 2025 are tied to Leo and his money – most being direct recipients of funding, some indirect. In 2022, a **striking 28 of 54 Project 2025 Advisory Board members** received funds from Leo-linked **Donors Trust**, described as a “dark money ATM” for the conservative movement.<sup>3</sup> (*see list below*). A fiscal investigation by the watchdog group **Accountable US** found that Project 2025 groups received over \$16.5 million in the period after Seid multiplied Leo's coffers.

But that may prove an undercount. More conservative groups have jumped on the Project 2025 train, nearly 90 as of mid-February.<sup>4</sup> More Leo-linked and funded groups emerge when one looks at allies. There, the connections of dark money also reveal several longtime billionaire donors to right-wing causes, including **Charles Koch**, including the **Scaife, Searle, Bradley, Uihlein, DeVos**, and **Mercer** family foundations.



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Then there is newcomer **Teneo Network**, set up last year by Leo to lure Silicon Valley donors, especially younger conservatives and libertarians; tech mogul **Peter Thiel** was an early member. It's been mobilized to fund anti-“wokeism.” (*see list below*) Finally, there are anonymous donations passed through the **Schwab** and **Fidelity charitable trusts** to Leo-linked entities. The maze of dark money is rather astonishing, and it shows just how and where Leo is giving resources to a small, but growing, network behind Project 2025.

The **Heritage Foundation** has also benefited from Leo's largesse – and shared the wealth, too. Tax records show it received three infusions of money from the **Donors Trust** in 2022, including over \$400,000 for general operating funds and \$50,000 for an oversight project. Heritage gave out big grants to many Project 2025 groups that year, some for almost \$1 million. A recent *New Republic* investigation found that Heritage funding of groups behind Project 2025 made up 58 percent of its 2022 gift giving.

Leo has clearly funded groups run by his closest friends and allies, including Catholic activists and high-level GOP officials, some former Trump officials. He also serves on their boards. Several authors of Project 2025 chapters lead or play senior roles in Leo-funded nonprofits. Meanwhile, Leo himself has been paid handsomely in consultancy fees from the same nonprofits that he's funded, a neat hat trick move criticized by watchdog groups who've exposed the circular flow of Leo's dark money. Is it legal? They think not. (*see list*)

**Senator Sheldon Whitehouse** (D-RI) is among US leaders who have held Congressional hearings about Leo's dark money influence on America's politics and legal system, including the Supreme Court, warning of its corrosive impact on our democracy.<sup>5 6</sup>

### **What money will buy**

Since 2022, that money has helped fund conservative battles and issues that are central to Project 2025's agenda: deregulation, lower taxes, curbing federal government authority, increasing states' rights, voter redistricting, and the front-burner “wokeism” cultural war issues. Topping the list is fighting abortion, erasing LGBTQ, gender, and racial equality protections, and reversing climate change policies, to list conservative movement priorities.

**The other big Leo agenda is spiritual.** Project 2025 reflects a Christian Right war plan and calls for realigning US policies and rules to reflect a Christian nationalist agenda. Here, many Leo-funded groups are leading the charge to roll back transgender rights and abortion, and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) across America. Leo-linked money was also key to funding pro-life groups who helped overturn *Roe*. Come January 2025, if they win the election, the GOP plans a federal abortion ban – a long sought dream, one Leo is working hard to secure.<sup>7</sup> (*see list below*)



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*Over half of Project 2025 Advisory Board's 54 member groups  
received funds from Leo-linked Donors Trust in 2022*

### **The Christianity piece is also critical.**

Religion and faith institutions link many of the groups, people, and dark money backing Project 2025. Many are run by staunch Catholic activists. Among them, Leo and a handful of allies are members, or affiliated with, **Opus Dei**, a lay Catholic organization (*see Who is Leonard Leo?*) They include at least two Project 2025's authors and ex-Trump officials who are confirmed Opus Dei members, and other members running Leo- and Project 2025-linked nonprofits. Leo is also personally credited with placing six Supreme Court justices on the highest bench, several alleged in the media to be Opus Dei supporters, if not members. (*see Who Is Leo Leonard?*)<sup>8</sup>

All of this reveals the essential role that close spiritual and social ties appear to play in the tight-knit Leonard Leo orbit. Not all beneficiaries are Catholic or Christian, either. The **Donors Trust**, for example, lists several Jewish groups that got funded in 2022, including arch-conservative groups.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, Barre Seid, who made so much happen with his big donation to Leo, is Jewish. There, the ties that bind are a shared arch-conservative ideological agenda.

Leo was introduced to Seid by **Eugene Mayer**, director of the Federalist Society; Seid was a longtime contributor to the Society. Shortly after Seid transferred shares of his electricity company, Tripp Light, into Marble Freedom Trust, he removed himself as trustee and handwrote in Leo's name to replace him. That's how Seid managed to legally avoid paying a stiff tax penalty, and how the nonprofit did, too. The move was dubbed "attack philanthropy" by *ProPublica* and *The Lever*, who exposed Leo's role, along with *The New York Times*. Seid's is the largest known donation to a political advocacy group in US history.<sup>10 11</sup>

### **Putting dark money to work**

In the GOP, Leo is considered a master fundraiser, having raised over \$600 million between 2014 and 2020 from major donors including the **Koch family**,<sup>12</sup> Texas real estate magnate **Harlan Crow**, and hedge fund billionaire **Paul Singer**.<sup>13</sup> During that period, Leo's own worth skyrocketed: he earned \$435,000 annually as a Federalist Society employee.<sup>14</sup> Last year, the Campaign for Accountability filed a complaint with the Internal Revenue Service that accused Leo of misusing \$73 million. It called for an investigation of seven Leo-affiliated nonprofits, including big payments they made to Leo himself for consultancy services — a shadowy revolving door of funding that, the campaign stated, "demonstrates the extent to which his money-raising benefited his own bottom line."<sup>15</sup> It called for revoking the IRS nonprofit status of the Leo-funded nonprofits, arguing they served as a dark money laundromat to wash money.<sup>16</sup>



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These organizations are among the big money groups now bankrolling **Project 2025's** network, notably the **Rule of Law Trust**, **Concord Fund** (formerly the Judicial Crisis Network), the **85 Fund** (formerly the Judicial Education Project), the **Federalist Society**, the **Marble Freedom Trust**, and the **Freedom and Opportunity Fund**; the **Wellspring Committee**, also singled out, is now closed. (*see list for details*)

The heads of several Leo-funded Project 2025 groups are also members of the secretive conservative **Council for National Policy (CNP)**; Leo sits on its Board of Governors.<sup>17</sup> CNP members include the presidents of **Americans United for Life**, **Family Research Council**, **Students for Life**, the **Family Research Council**, **Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life Action**, and **Public Interest Legal Firm** – and that's a partial list.

In 2023, Leo's circle began expanding with the **Teneo Network**. It aims to be an umbrella of loosely affiliated nonprofit and for-profit entities, and seeks to "crush liberal dominance" in American society. In 2022, **Teneo** got over \$3 million from the **Donors Trust**. (*see list*)

**The fight has gone overseas, too.** Media reports show Leo's dark money is being used to oppose LGBTQ rights in Africa and elsewhere, and to block funding for US government funded HIV programs, notably the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (**PEPFAR**).<sup>18</sup> "PEPFAR should not be a major slush fund for the Biden administration's radical social policies on abortion, sexual orientation, and gender ideology overseas," argued a **Family Research Council Talking Points** position paper in May 2023. FRC called for adding strong anti-choice protections to the PEPFAR reauthorization bill "to ensure that taxpayer funding for PEPFAR does not include abortion or promotion of radical sexual ideologies." That's also Project 2025's position. Tax records show the FRC got \$11,100 from the **Donors Trust** in 2022.<sup>19</sup>

Similar inflammatory language infuses Project 2025 discussions of "wokeism." That's strategic, too. It's all part of the plan: to stoke divisionism, fear, and "us against them" thinking, while appealing to conservative voters. This strategy borrows a textbook page from an **authoritarian playbook** – labeling and criminalizing specific groups of people as dangerous to the larger social order, an enemy "Other," while seeding doubts about the credibility of government institutions, universities, and the media. Project 2025 is full of such polarizing rhetoric and animus. (See our *Readers Guide: Unpacking Project 2025's Propaganda.*)

## Who is Leonard Leo?

### Funding the legal battles



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A big piece of Project 2025's agenda relies on judicial activism. Above all, Leo is a seasoned legal strategist and, as Co-Chair of the Federalist Society, retains close social and financial ties to SCOTUS justices and conservative legal groups. Many are connected by a shared faith as evangelical Catholics or Christian nationalists. (See *Who Is Leonard Leo?*).

Leo is single-handedly credited for putting six of the current conservative justices on the Supreme Court. Several are close friends, including **Clarence Thomas**, a godfather to one of Leo's children. Leo considered the late **Antonin Scalia** "like an uncle," and socializes with **Samuel Alito** and his wife **Martha-Ann**, to the point where the justices view Leo as a "den mother," according to **George Conway**, a GOP conservative attorney and now-vocal Trump critic who used to hang out with the justices. Conway has since broken with Leo and Co. and is outspoken about his opposition to Project 2025's agenda.<sup>20</sup>

Leo's been equally focused on the lower courts, packing the federal appeals court with conservative judges recruited from the **Federalist Society** – Leo's legal tribe.<sup>21</sup> A number of Leo-linked legal firms and lawyers are leading the fight to keep the GOP's favored candidate on the ballot – Donald Trump – while advancing arch-conservative legal arguments in Supreme Court cases. This legal strategy is aimed at paving legal ground for future GOP battles discussed in Project 2025. (See "*Who's Zooming Who.*")

### Targeting Church vs. State

There is also a religious *legal* project that underlies Project 2025. The blueprint not only calls for realigning US domestic and foreign policy to reflect a "pro-family values" agenda, but to promote specific legal doctrines that reflect a traditionalist reading of the US Constitution. Project 2025 seeks to replace secular public education with conservative Christian education, and erase the Constitutional separation of church and state. But some Project 2025 authors would go further, putting church *above* state: they view divine law – God's words, or the literal words printed in the Bible – as the supreme authority in earthly matters. In a word, Project 2025 is also a blueprint for a future American theocracy – or, as some view it, a fusion of wealth and Christian nationalist ideology, a *pluto-theocracy*.

Below we have summarized our early findings about Leo's links to sixty Project 2025 advisor groups, with bulleted capsule summaries about each organization, their key leadership, Leo-linked funding, agendas, and how they may overlap or are tied to Project 2025. Our list is far from definitive, but already provides an alarming and illuminating picture of the collusion of far-right groups, dark money, and power uniting to implement the GOP's radical plan to dismantle our democracy. As we dig further, we'll update this information. Stay tuned.

– Anne-christine d'Adesky



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*Journalist and Founder, Stop The Coup 2025*

### Sources and Thank You's

Much of the information we present is the fruit of years of investigative work by dedicated teams of right-wing watchdog groups, researchers, and journalists, including these critical sources who continue to track far right groups and their influence: **SourceWatch**; **The Center for Accountability**; **Monitoring Influence**; **Open Secrets**; **Accountable US**; the **Southern Poverty Law Center**; **True North Research**; **DeSmog**; the **Center for Media and Democracy (CMD)**; the **Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (GPAHE)**, and **People for the American Way**; and investigative reporting teams at *ProPublica*, *Axios*; *The New York Times*; *The Guardian*; *The Washington Post*; *Bloomberg US*; *The National Catholic Reporter*; *Mother Jones*; and *The 19<sup>th</sup>*; as well as writers of books about the rise of Christian nationalism in America.

Researchers **David Armiak** at CMD and **Wendy Via** and **Heidi Beirich** at GPAHE are veteran experts on America's right-wing extremist movement. So is historian **Ruth Benghiat**, who writes about fascism and authoritarianism, and scholar **Andrea Butler**, who unpacks the history of racism in the Christian evangelical movement. Scholar **Jessie Daniels** is busy examining the intersection of white supremacy and gender. Among journalists, Leo watchdog True North's Executive Director and Substack reporter **Lisa Graves** is indefatigable, helped by her team, including Senior Researcher **Evan Vorpahi**.

Many excellent journalist-authors have presented detailed investigations into links to Leo's Christian Nationalist network, including **Katherine Stewart**, **Melissa Clark Grant**, **Jeff Sharlet**, **Jane Mayer**, and **Ann Nelson**, and investigative journalists **Heidi Przybyla**, **Andy Kroll**, **Andrea Bernstein** and **Justin Elliott** at *Politico*, **Nick Surgy** at *Documented*, **David Corn** at *Mother Jones*, and **Kathryn Joyce** at *In These Times*. Many more journos deserve thanks, too many to name.

Our special thanks go to **Tom Carter**, former Media Relations Director at the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, who worked under Leo, and who urged our campaign to engage in this deep-dive-connect-the-docs investigation and mapping of the dark money and Christian nationalist network behind Project 2025, with Leo Leonard at its center. – **ACD**





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*Below are sixty Project 2025 advisory nonprofits with direct and indirect ties to. (Sources in italics.)*

**1. CRC Advisors (Creative Responsive Concepts Advisors, formerly CRC Strategies).**

- President: **Keith Appell**. Leo and his business partner **Greg Mueller** rebranded the advocacy organization CRC Strategies in 2020, led then by Mueller, and launched a \$10 million advocacy campaign targeting judges.
- CRC Advisors serves as Leo's for-profit lobbying firm; he contracts services to the **85 Fund, Concord Fund**, and other entities he created and passes money through. (*CRC Advisors; SourceWatch*)
- Victory highlights: Then-CRC Strategies helped **Swift Boat Veterans for Truth**, an advocacy organization formed in 2004, to oppose John Kerry's US presidential campaign. In 2018, it helped conservative legal activist **Ed Whelan** to exonerate SCOTUS nominee **Brett Kavanaugh** from accusations of sexual assault.

**2. The Marble Freedom Trust**

- Administrative Trustee: **Tyler Green**. Leo formed and leads the **Marble Freedom Trust** as a 501(c)(4) "social welfare organization." Longtime Leo associate **Neil Corkery** keeps Marble's books.
- Trust administrator **Tyler Green** is a **Federalist Society** member, former Utah Solicitor General and member of the **Consovoy McCarthy** legal firm that represented Trump in his attempts to shield tax records from New York prosecutors and Congressional investigators; Green also defended **Utah Governor Gary Herbert's** 2015 decision to cut federal funding to **Planned Parenthood**. (*Utah Attorney General web page; NYT 8.22.22; Above The Law 11.17.21*)
- The Trust has provided a quarter of a billion dollars to conservative groups, often passed to Leo-managed entities, notably **The Concord Fund** and the donor-advised **85 Fund** and **Schwab Charitable Trust** in 2022. The Trust gave \$153 million to **Rule of Law Trust** to push the appointments of conservative judges.
- Leo has used the Trust to fund groups pushing voter suppression efforts and abortion bans. Bookkeeper Corkery is a former President of the **Catholic Association Foundation; CAF** got big funds routed through The Concord Fund and Schwab Charitable that funded post-*Dobbs* advocacy to ban the abortion pill, mifepristone.
- The Trust also paid Leo \$350,000 for his consulting services in the year after its launch. (*The Guardian 9.4.22; NYT 10.22.22; The 19<sup>th</sup> 2.4.24 and 1.4.24*)

**3. The Concord Fund (replacing Judicial Crisis Network – JCN – in 2019)\***

*(Note: The Judicial Crisis Network still houses a "fictitious" entity retaining the JCN name)*

- President: **Carrie Severino**, former clerk to Justice **Clarence Thomas** and married to **Greg Severino, a Project 2025 author**. Set up by Leonard Leo and Greg Mueller in 2020 as a rebranding of the JCN. The Fund has paid millions to Leo's CRC Advisors for its for-profit consulting services. It uses **One Message Inc.** for federal lobbying.
- An unnamed tech mogul donated \$1.6 billion to the Fund in 2021. (*Politico 10.19.23*). The **Marble Freedom Trust** provided another \$28.9 million in 2022.
- It gave a \$1 million grant to the **Foundation for Fair Courts** (linked to far-right **Restoration for America**, funded by billionaire conservatives **Richard** and **Elizabeth**



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**Uihlein of Uline shipping)** to install a conservative majority in South Carolina’s legislature. Richard is a Schlitz beer heir and major donor to **Liberty Principles PAC**. (*NYT* 3.3.20; *Illinois Sunshine*). The Fund is a top contributor to the **Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA)**; **Koch Industries** is too. RAGA’s 501(c)(4) affiliate is the **Rule of Law Defense Fund**; its 501(c)(3) affiliate is the **Center for Law and Policy**. (*Center for Media and Democracy*. 8.1.23; *Open Secrets* 5.27.20; *Accountable US*)

### 4. The 85 Fund (formerly Judicial Education Project - JEP)

- Director: **Carrie Severino** (see *The Concord Fund*). Leo and Greg Mueller rebranded the JEP in 2020. It channeled \$20 million to various conservative groups that year, including **Charlie Kirk’s Turning Point Campus Project** (see below).
- The bulk of its funds since 2011 have been from **The Donors Trust** and **Donors Capital Fund**. It has worked with the **Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust**; the latter is a dark money fund linked to former Trump acting Attorney General **Matthew Whitaker**. In 2022, the **85 Fund** routed \$200,000 to the **Honest Elections Project** (see below) (*Donors Trust* 990 for FY 2022)
- Staffers include: **Ann Corkery**; **Oramel Skinner** (also executive director of **Alliance for Consumers**, an **85 Fund** affiliate); and **Trent England** (also with **Save Our States**). (*Axios* 1.7.20; *CNBC* 1.18.21, *Accountable US* 11.28.23)
- Leo’s for-profit consulting firm, **CRC Advisors**, was the **85 Fund**’s highest paid contractor. Leo was paid \$33.8 million over two years starting in 2020. DC Attorney General **Brian Schwalb** began investigating the **85 Fund** and Leo’s role after reports alleged that Leo arranged gifts to SCOTUS Justice **Samuel Alito**. (*Politico* 3.2.23; *Accountable US* 11.28.23)

### 5. Donors Trust (DT) (rebranded from *America Engaged*) and Donors Capital Fund (DTF)

- President and CEO: **Lawson Bader**, an evangelical Christian and ex-employee of the **Mercatus Center** and **Competitive Enterprise Institute**; he is linked to anti-regulatory and climate change denial policy positions. (*Donors Trust*; *DeSmog*)
- DT is a 501(c)(3) donor-advised fund described as a “dark money ATM” for the US conservative movement; it took in \$1 billion in 2021 (*DeSmog*; *Politico*).
- DT provided \$17.1 million to the **85 Fund** and spent \$192 million in 2021. It provided an estimated \$16.5 million to Project 2025-linked groups in 2022.
- Tax records identify **Koch**, **DeVos**, and **Bradley** family foundations as major donors.
- DT gave the **Federalist Society** \$3.7 million in 2021 and \$3.8 million to the **Constitutionalist Defense Fund**, set up to fight abortion.
- Other recipients: **Fair Lines Redistricting Trust** (pro-GOP gerrymandering); the **Foundation for Government Accountability** (“election integrity efforts”); **True the Vote**, pushing voter fraud; **Consumers’ Research** (anti-woke ads); the **State Policy Network**; **Project Veritas**; **Turning Point** (*partial list*). DT gave \$28 million to entities pushing misinformation about the 2020 presidential election results. (*Politico* 11.16.22; *Mother Jones* 2.5.13, *IRS 990s for FY 2022*)

### 6. Honest Elections Project (a business alias for ex- *Judicial Education Project*, now **85 Fund**)





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- Executive Director: **Jason Snead**, ex-Heritage Foundation staffer with **Ed Meese**, a **Project 2025** author. HEP shares staff with **The Concord Fund**, including **Carrie Severino**.
- HEP formed as a tax-exempt voter restriction project in 2020 (calling voter suppression a “myth”) and has filed amicus briefs pushing state power in federal elections. (*NPR* 8.12.22)
- HEP big donors: **Donors Trust (Leo)**, **Betsy Devos**, **Koch** foundation; now defunct **Wellspring Committee**. HEP also funded the now defunct **BH Group**.
- HEP received \$50,000 from **Donors Trust** in 2022, routed via the **85 Fund**.

### 7. The Heritage Foundation Project and

#### 8. “Heritage Action for America”:

- **President: The Heritage Foundation** is a 501(c)(3), led by President **Kevin D. Roberts**, a lead author of **Project 2025**.
- **Heritage Action** was set up 2010 as a 501(c)(4) sister arm. CEO: **Jessica Anderson**. GOP mega-donor **Rebekah Mercer** is on its board. Project 2025’s **Ed Feulner** and ex-Attorney General **Ed Meese** were listed as part time employees in 2022.
- It lobbies for voter suppression, against abortion, LGBTQ, DEI issues, among other issues. (*SFOExposed*; *SourceWatch*)
- Heritage Action launched a major campaign against Obamacare in 2013; that year, the **Koch** brothers donated \$500,000 to the campaign. (*Human Events* 12.31.10; *Politico* 5.17.17).
- Heritage Action channeled over \$180 million in 2023. It works with the **American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)** and **State Policy Network** to push model conservative legislation for states. (*The Guardian* 1.13.23; *Documented*; *NYT* 3.23.21)
- In 2022, Heritage got \$407,780 and \$50,000 in two grants from Donors Trust.
- Every Tuesday, Heritage Action leads an organizing call with right-wing groups targeting swing states (**Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America**, **Tea Party Patriots**, **Freedom Works**). (*Mother Jones* 3.13.21; *990s Heritage, DT FY 2022*)

### 9. Teneo Network

- Co-founded in 2023 by **Leo** (Chairman) and tech entrepreneur **Evan Baehr**, a former employee of right-wing tech mogul **Peter Thiel**. Teneo aims to become a mega-umbrella “Silicon Valley” network for conservative donors.
- Prominent members: cofounder Senator **Josh Hawley (R-MO)**, Senator **J.D. Vance (R-OH)**; three Florida **Ron DeSantis** aides; and, states Baehr, “many, many dozens” of White House, State Department, Justice Department, and Pentagon employees.
- Teneo’s annual revenue jumped from an early \$2.3 million to \$5 million in 2021, with over \$3 million from Leo’s **Donors Trust**. In 2022, it got \$3,049,000 from **Donors Trust**.
- Other funders: **Charles Koch**, **Paul Singer**, Home Depot cofounder **Bernie Marcus**, and the **Bradley** and **DeVos** family foundations. (*Teneo Network*; *ProPublica* 3.9.23; *Open Secrets, (IRS Donors Trust 990s FY 2022)*)

### 10. First Liberty Institute



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- President, CEO: **Kelly Schackelford**; he is on the board of the **Supreme Court Historical Society** and an influencer for the **Truth and Liberty Coalition**.
- First Liberty is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2010 to litigate religious freedom and First Amendment disputes; has partnered with the **Institute for Justice**. Affiliate of **State Policy Network**.
- FLI led the infamous anti-LGBTQ wedding “Sweet Cakes” case, fought for federal funds to benefit religious private schools, and fought Covid vaccine mandates.
- Funds come from a variety of sources, some anonymously routed through **Schwab Charitable** and **Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift** funds. (*Influence Watch, NPR 8.16.23; Texas Tribune 8.16.23*)

### 11. Rule of Law Trust

- Founders: **Neil and Ann Corkery** and **Leo** in 2018 as a 501(c)(4); **Leo** is its sole employee. The **Corkerys**, open **Opus Dei** members (see *Who Is Leonard Leo?*) have served as directors and fiscal managers of several Leo-funded entities. Neil helped Leo set up and direct the JCN (now **The Concord Fund**), while Ann is a staffer at the **85 Fund** and was President of the now-defunct **Wellspring Committee**.
- The Corkerys now help run a loose network of Catholic nonprofits including **Catholic Voices USA** and help Leo manage the **National Catholic Prayer Breakfast**, an annual conservative meeting of world and business leaders. Leo is its Co-Chairman; **Pat Cippoline** is a **Founder’s Circle** member; so is **Austin Ruse** (also **Opus Dei**). (*National Catholic Prayer Breakfast; Daily Beast 4.24.17*)
- The Trust received a \$153 million grant from Leo’s **Marble Freedom Trust**, itself the recipient of \$1.6 billion in 2021 from Chicago billionaire **Barre Seid**. Before closing down, the BH Fund transferred almost \$3 million in publicly traded securities, over \$1 million in stocks to the Trust. (*Accountable US 10.28.23; BH Fund 990s FY 2022*)
- The Trust gave over \$33 million to Leo-linked groups, the bulk to the (former) JCN (now **85 Fund**), and helped SCOTUS nominee **Amy Coney Barrett** when Leo was a legal advisor to **Donald Trump**. (*Citizens for Ethics and Responsibility in Washington; Salon 3.30.21; DeSmog; Center for Responsive Politics*).

### 12. The Federalist Society

- President: **Eugene Mayer**. Co-Chairman Leo is a longtime leader and prime funder for the Society (see *Who Is Leonard Leo?*). Early donors: **Scaife** and **Olin** family foundations; the free market **Institute for Economic Affairs**, among others.
- **Donors Trust (Leo)** has channeled millions into the Society, including \$3.7 million in 2021; the **Mercer** family donated \$6 million over several years. (*The New Republic 7.11.22*)

### 13. BH Fund (now defunct) and

### 14. BH Group (now defunct):

- The nonprofit BH Fund was set up in 2016 by **Leo** and conservative legal firm **Holtzman Vogel** (along with Leo’s **Freedom and Opportunity Fund, America Engaged**). Leo partly owned the Fund and was its President; **Jonathon Bunch** was Treasurer.



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- Spinoff **BH Group** served as a private liability corporation; the two organizations raised millions. The Fund allowed Leo to receive millions in contracting services and fund other entities.
- The Fund anonymously donated \$1 million to **Trump's** inauguration. Leo transferred its funds and stock into the **Rule of Law Trust** before shuttering BH Fund and BH Group. (*Accountable US; Monitoring Influence, McClatchy DC*)

### 15. Alliance Defending Freedom

- President and CEO: Michael P. Farris; he is also founding president of **Patrick Henry College** and the **Home School Legal Defense Association**. ADF was formed in 1994 by 35 Christian Right leaders, and has a longtime anti-LGBTQ, anti-abortion agenda. **Patrick Henry** got \$85,530 from the **Donors Trust** in 2022.
- ADL is identified as an anti-LGBTQ **hate group** by the **SPLC**. It gained new prominence for its role in trying to ban mifepristone, the abortion pill, and help overturn *Roe*.
- ADL drew early support Christian anti-gay heavyweights: **James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries**; **James Dobson of Focus on the Family**; **Bill Bright**, founder of **Campus Crusade for Christ International** (now **Cru**); and **Donald Wildmon of AFA**.
- The ADF has filed amicus briefs in a number of lawsuits to block abortion, including *Dobbs* (*The New Republic* 1.18.24; *GPAHE*), and anti-LGBTQ measures, especially anti-trans bills.
- It helped author at least 134 anti-LGBTQ bills in 34 states in 2022 including the infamous “Don’t Say Gay” bill passed by **DeSantis** in Florida. GOP House Speaker **Mike Johnson** was trained by ADF. (*The New Republic* 7.22.22).
- ADL set up the **Blackstone Institute** to train young lawyers and teach them about early “Christendomic” theology, or historic Christianity. (*The New Republic* 7.22.22)
- **Leo** entities fund ADF, including three grants from **Donors Trust** in 2022 (\$124,000; \$500,000; \$10,000) (*DT 990s FY 2022*) Other major donors are: the **National Christian Foundation** in 2020; **Edgar and Elsa Prince Foundation**; **Bill and Berniece Grewcock**, **DeVos** family foundations. (*ADL; GPAHE; Accountable US; Oregon Capital Chronicle* 12.12.23; *DT 990s*)

### 16. Center for Family and Human Rights (C-FAM) (formerly Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute)

- President: **Austin Ruse**, a fervent anti-LGBTQ, anti-abortion Catholic activist and publicly visible “supernumerary” member of **Opus Dei**; journalist and Breitbart contributor; and ex-Vatican diplomatic attaché to the UN. (See “*Who’s Zooming Who?*”)
- C-FAM is a rightwing US-based 501(c)(3) group focused on UN and foreign policy. It is identified as an **anti-LGBTQ hate group** by the **SPLC**.
- C-FAM is a State Department emissary to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women status, where Ruse has worked to overturn the Human Rights Council and expressed support for Putin’s anti-gay policies and LGBTQ criminalization in Africa; C-FAM is allied with anti-LGBTQ **World Congress of Families**.



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- Ruse allied himself with **Trump**; **Steve Bannon** helped set up Breitbart's Rome bureau, with Ruse as a contributor.
- C-FAM was accused of being a front company for the scandal-ridden **Human Life International**, accused of seeking to imprison women in other countries seeking abortion and birth control.  
(*SPLC HateMap*; *SPLC* 5.29.19; *Case, "Trans Formations in the Vatican's War on Gender Ideology,"* , *Signs* 44 (3): 639-664, 2019; *Washington Post* 2.10.20; *Reuters* 3.15.17; *Princeton Alumni Weekly* 7.16.08; *Political Research Associates*; *ProLies*, a project of *Equity Forward*)

### 17. The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty ("Becket").

- A Leo-funded public interest legal outfit with an annual \$5 million budget that provides pro bono work on religious freedom, First Amendment cases, anti-abortion, and anti-LGBTQ cases (*Time* 10.4.2014; *Reckon News* 9.10.23; *Politico* 1.4.24, *NYT* 10.22.22).
- Becket helped **Hobby Lobby** deny its women employees the right to emergency contraception in 2014 (*Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*), and helped Yeshiva University try to deny recognition to an LGBTQ student group (*NYT* 9.14.22). It is often allied with the **Thomas More Society**, also working on religious liberty court cases.
- In 2017, **Leo**, a Becket board member, was awarded Becket's highest honor, the Canterbury Medal, for his role in promoting religious freedom, presented by **Eugene Scalia**, son of the late SCOTUS justice **Antonin Scalia** (*The Nation* 10.15.19; *Becket Law press release* 5.5.17).

### 18. Free to Learn and

#### 19. Free to Learn Action

- Free to Learn was set up after 2021 as a 501(c)(3) think tank to fund opposition "anti-wokeism" ad campaigns (anti-DEI, intersectionality, and critical race theory) in Florida, Texas, Ohio, and elsewhere.
- Allied with the **Claremont Institute** (funded by **Searle Freedom Trust**) and its anti-DEI Fellow, **Scott Tenora**, and with the **Manhattan Institute** (**Ryan Williams**, President) and Fellow **Christopher Rufo**, an architect of the anti-CRT movement, and Fellow **Heather MacDonald**. (*Vox* 6.17.23; *NYT* 1.20.24; *Center for Public Integrity - CPI*)
- **Free to Learn Action** is the 501(c)(4) political sister arm to Free to Learn for racist, anti-DEI/CRT campaigns. Since late 2022, dozens of anti-DEI bills were introduced across the US and became law in Texas, Florida, North Dakota, and Tennessee. (*TruthOut*; *The Hill* 4.30.23; *Insight Into Diversity*)

### 20. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI)

- President: **Robert Doar**. AEI is a powerful, well established neoconservative think tank set up in 1938 that advocates for lower taxes and cuts to welfare, and fights against consumer and environmental protections. It is a scholarly rival to **The Heritage Foundation**.
- Major corporate donors include **American Express**, **State Farm Insurance**, **Dell**.
- Of note: AEI reposted a conservative Op Ed by **James C. Capretta** and **Jack Rowling** warning *against* Trump's plan to weaponize Project 2025's proposal to use



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Schedule F to fire federal workers. (*Real Clear Policy 11.7.23; Influence Watch; see Summary of Project 2025 on our website for details on Schedule F*)

### **21. Tea Party Patriots (TPP) (refiled with IRS in 2017 as Tea Party Patriots Action).**

#### **22. Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund**

- National Coordinators: **Jenny Beth Martin, Mark Meckler**. TPP was founded in March 2009. It opposed Obamacare and immigration reform, a flat tax and election security, and later, Covid-19 lockdowns.
- Funded by **Freedom Works**, a **Koch**-funded conservative advocacy organization.
- TPP gained media attention with their “**Stop the Steal**” and **Turning Point** campaigns to push Trump’s fraudulent election claims in 2020. It was listed on the website of the Jan. 6, 2020, pro-Trump rally that led to the Capitol insurrection. (*Open Secrets; Influence Watch*)
- In 2011, a *Mother Jones* exposé revealed TPP financial mismanagement practices, leading to reorganization. The rebranded **Tea Party Patriots Action** is a spinoff tax-exempt organization..
- The **Tea Party Patriots Foundation** raises funds for training and education to Tea Party groups; the **Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund** is a TPP Super PAC. (*Tea Party Patriots; Mother Jones 2.15.21*)

### **23. Foundation for Government Accountability and Opportunity Solutions Project.**

- Director: **Tarren Bragdon**, former Maine legislator (and ex-CEO of the **Maine Heritage Policy Center**). The FGA, based in Naples, FL, is a right-wing advocacy group advocating free market policies and cutting welfare programs.
- Bragdon created the **FloridaOpenGov.org** website as an FGA project.
- The FGA has pushed to loosen labor regulations and expand child labor in several southern states, working with its lobbying arm, **Opportunity Solutions Project**
- Donors include the **Bradley** family foundation. (*Source Watch; Center for Media and Democracy*)

### **24. The Fund for American Studies**

- President: **Roger Ream**. A Georgetown University conservative educational nonprofit that promotes liberty, limited government, and free market economics
- Ream is on the board of **Donors Trust**’s sister **Donors Capital Fund**. Several staffers worked at Leo-linked **Heritage Foundation** and **Mercatus Center**.
- Major donors: **Donors Trust** (Leo), **Bradley** foundation, **Earhart** Foundation.
- It is a member of the **State Policy Network**. (*Influence Watch*)

### **25. Media Research Center**

- A conservative 501(c)(3) media advocacy group, MRC is aimed at exposing liberal bias in the media and opposing climate change policies. Affiliated with the **Business and Media Institute** (BMI).
- Both the MRC and BMI oppose mainstream media coverage of climate change, and view global warming as a “myth.”
- Major MRC donors include **Donors Trust** and **Donors Capital Fund (Leo)**; **Scaife, Mercer, Bradley, and Uihlein** family foundations; **DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative**; **Hickory Foundation**; and **Exxon Mobil**. (*DeSmog, Greenpeace*)



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### 26. ForAmerica

- Chairman: **Brent Bozell**, father of Executive Director **David Bozell**. A nonprofit Facebook “digital army” for the conservative movement, ForAmerica boasted seven million Facebook members in 2014. It led social media campaigns against Obamacare and immigration.
- Brent Bozell also set up conservative news sites **CNSNews.com** and **Newsbusters**.
- The Bozells have worked closely with tech whiz **Mike Thompson**, then senior vice-president at **CRC Public Relations**, **Leo’s** firm. CRC provided \$1.15 million to **ForAmerica** in 2012 and 2013. (*The Atlantic* 12.8.14)

### 27. Turning Point USA (TPUSA)

### 28. Turning Point Action and Turning Point UK

- Founder: **Charlie Kirk**. TPUSA is a youth MAGA wing that has worked to organize Trump supporters and TPUSA chapters on US college campuses.
- **Turning Point Action** is a spinoff 501(c)(4) political arm of TPUSA. **Turning Point UK** is a British nonprofit chapter.
- Kirk and TPUSA have been accused of racism and promotion of the “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory, and misogyny. They work to sow doubt about elections, and engage in misinformation, charge watchdog groups.
- In 2018, TPUSA had \$28 million in its coffers, versus \$10.8 million a year prior. In 2021, the **85 Fund**, via the **Donors Trust (Leo)** gave Kirk’s TP campus project \$200,000. In 2022, it got \$ 1,437,380, and \$10,000 from the **Donors Trust**.
- Bigger donors are: **Uihlein, Rauner, Bradley, Leven, Mike Miller** foundations. Also, TPUSA event sponsors **The Heritage Foundation, National Rifle Association, ADF, PragerU, The Reason Foundation**, and others. (*SPLC, GPAHE; Influence Watch; CNBC* 11.8.21).

### 29. Public Interest Legal Foundation (formerly Act Right Legal Foundation)

- Founder: **J. Christian Adams**, former DOJ attorney who litigates cases it views as threats to election integrity; also founder of the **Election Law Center**. **Cleta Mitchell**, married to **Newt Gingrich**, is PILF’s Board Chairman. **Hans Spakovsky**, a Project 2025 author (chapter on FEC) and Senior Fellow at **The Heritage Foundation**, is on PILF’s board. Adams and Mitchell are both members of the Board of Governors of the **Council for National Policy**. PILF belongs to the **State Policy Network**.
- PILF’s mission is to purge voter rolls. It’s been accused of racism by voter watch groups. (*Talking Points Memo* 1.17.19)
- Major funders include Leo’s **85 Fund** (\$400,000 in 2020) and **Sarah Scaife Foundation** (\$1,175,000 from 2016-20). Smaller donors include the **American Constitutional Rights Union, Bradley Impact Fund**, and other family foundations. (*SourceWatch; Public Interest Legal Foundation*)

### 30. Frederick Douglass Foundation (and Douglass Leadership Institute)

- Cofounders: **Rev. Dean Nelson, Troy Rolling, Dr. Timothy Johnson**. A Black-led conservative advocacy 501(c)(3) based in Washington, DC, with 20 state chapters.





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- Agenda: anti-choice, anti-feminist, free market. It has backed anti-abortion billboard campaigns and partnered with the Leo-funded **Family Research Council**.
- Cofounder Nelson is linked to the anti-choice **Human Coalition** and is on the board of the **Virginia Christian Coalition**. He founded the **Douglass Leadership Institute**, active in twenty-five states. (*Cincinnati Inquirer* 8.3.23)

### 31. American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and

#### 32. American City County Exchange, an offshoot of ALEC

- CEO: **Lisa Nelson**, a former **Newt Gingrich** aide. Founded by **Henry Hyde**, a noted abortion foe, the late **Paul Weyrich**, cofounder of **The Heritage Foundation**, and **Mark Rhoads**.
- A right-wing 501(c)(3) think tank that serves the largest voluntary membership association for state legislators; also open to private sector companies. One-quarter of state legislators are ALEC members. ALEC belongs to the **State Policy Network**. (*Influence Watch*).
- ALEC provides model conservative state legislation on issues. It is pro big oil and pro-private management of prisons, and anti-union, anti-climate protections; anti-woke capitalism (anti-DEI and anti-ESG) policies.
- An ALEC-offshoot, the **American City County Exchange**, provides a similar program for local officials.
- Key funders: **Koch brothers**, including the **Claude R. Lambe Foundation** (Charles Koch, his wife and children) and **Charles G. Koch foundation**, as well as **ExxonMobil** and pharma lobby **PhRMA**; also **Coors**, **Bradley** and **Richard Scaife** family foundations, and larger corporations on ALEC's board: **Kraft**, **Coca Cola**, **AT&T**, **GlaxoSmithKline**, **Johnson & Johnson**, and **ExxonMobil**, among them. LEO-funded entities closely allied to ALEC: **Consumers' Research**, **Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America**, the **Honest Elections Project**. (*Lisa Graves and True North Research; Center for Media and Democracy* 7.13.11; *Exposé by CMD* 7.26.23)

### 33. Consumers' Research (and offshoot Consumers Defense)

- Executive Director: **Will Hild III** (for both entities), a lawyer and former **Federalist Society** and **Philanthropy Roundtable** employee. **Hild** is a Leo protege.
- A nonprofit that has launched big campaigns against the Consumer Protection Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission, and "wokeism" (through **Consumers First Initiative**).
- It belongs to a right-wing coalition backing **The Heritage Foundation's State Pension Fiduciary Duty Act**, aimed at eliminating ESG and climate change policies in public pensions. It rolled out "woke alerts" campaign urging shoppers to avoid products from companies with "woke" agendas.
- CR set up a multibillion-dollar smear campaign against BlackRock funder and CEO Larry Fink, who has publicly embraced sustainable investing; CR set up a website **WholsLarryFink** to oppose Fink. It also launched a Wall Street campaign to oppose climate change /ESG factors in investment decisions, aimed at **Vanguard**, one of the world's top three financial asset managers; Vanguard manages a \$7 million portfolio.
- CR is one of the largest funders of the **State Financial Officers Foundation**.



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- Major donors include Leo's **Donors Trust** (\$6 million in 2021); **Donors Capital Fund**; **Bradley, Searle** and **Rowling** foundations, and **National Philanthropic Trust**.
- Wild helped cofound **Cause of Action**, a public action law firm. (*SFOF Exposed*; *Center for Media and Democracy*; *NYT 1.30.23*)

### 34. Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI)

- President, CEO: **Kent Lassman**. Director: **Daren Bakst**. A nonprofit libertarian think tank advancing free market principles with a major focus on pro-fossil fuel, anti-climate change, anti-EPA regulations.
- A **Project 2025** board member. Has offshoots **Center for Economic Freedom**; **Center for Litigation**.
- A CEI-funded subgroup, **GlobalWarming.org** works to challenge the “myth” of global warming; **SafeChemicalPolicy.org** fights chemical industry regulation.
- Major funders: **Donors Trust (Leo)** (over \$4 million as of 2013); also, **Charles Koch Institute**, **The Heartland Institute**, **Freedom Works**, **Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow**, and **Judicial Watch**; and before 2019, **Robert Murray** of **Murray Energy**. Also energy, technology, auto, alcohol, and tobacco companies. **Google**, **Amazon**, **Verizon**, **PhRMA**, **T-Mobile**, **Uber**, **Philip Morris** funded a 2019 CEI gala (*partial list*).
- In 2022, CEI received \$1,333,350 from the **Donors Trust**. (*DT 990s FY 2022*)
- (*DeSmog*; CEI website and IRS 990s; *Mother Jones 2.5.13*; *The Intercept*, *NYT and Political - all 12.17.19*)

### 35. American Juris Link

- President and Founder: **Carrie Ann Donnell**. Legal Director: **Elliott Engstrom**. A right-wing think tank that supports public litigators to advocate for First Amendment rights and has fought anti-labor cases. Allied Leo-backed groups include **The Heritage Foundation**.
- Board member **Peter Bisbee** is former Executive Director of two Leo-funded Project 2025 backers (**RAGA** and **Rule of Law Defense Fund**) and is a former **Federalist Society** employee. Another board member, **Tony Woodlief**, is Executive Vice-President of the **State Policy Network**, president of the **Bill of Rights Institute** (the Leo-funded **Mercatus Center**), and Vice-President for education projects at the **Charles G. Koch Foundation**.
- Major donors: **Koch** Foundation, Leo's **Donors Trust**, **Bradley** family foundation.
- In 2022, the group got \$200,000 from Donors Trust. (*DT IRS 990s FY 2022*) (*Influence Watch*; *Linked In for Bisbee, Graves, Woodlief*)

### 36. George Mason University Foundation (GMU's law school was renamed the Antonin Scalia School of Law)

- President: **Trishana E. Bowden**. Set up to support GMU students. **Leo** and **Charles Koch** gave GMU over \$50 million, including \$10 million to rename its law school after late justice Scalia. This transformed GMU into “the nation’s nerve center for libertarian-conservative law and policy,” said *Slate*.
- **GMU Foundation** and its **Antonin Scalia Law School** and sub-entities (Butler Chair in Law and Economics; C. Bowden Gray Center for the Study of the Administrative State) have received major funding from Leo-backed entities.



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- **Koch** was accused of directly intervening to influence GMU's internal affairs after the group **UnKoch My Campus** revealed emails of his GMU donations; Leo was accused of interfering with the law school's curriculum. (*Slate 2.2.18; Daily Beast 7.24.18; Accountable US; Unlock My Campus; George Mason University*)

### 37. Club For Growth (and Club for Growth PAC; Club for Growth Action)

- President: **David Martin MacIntosh**. Cofounders: **Harlan Crow, Steven Moore** (former **Heritage Foundation** staffer), **Thomas L. Rhodes, Richard Gilder**.
- A **Koch**-backed 501(c)(4) PAC and super PAC (**Club for Growth Action**) focused on conservative economic policy: cutting taxes, federal assistance programs; tort reform, deregulation, anti-climate change, and school choice.
- It was largest single funder of Republican House and Senate candidates in 2023 outside of the GOP. (*CNBC*)
- Main funders: Billionaire **Richard Ulhein** and libertarian **Jeff Yass** of **Susquehanna International**; Yass also funds **Protect America PAC**. (*The Guardian 1.15.21*)
- Billionaire **Harlan Crow** was exposed by a ProPublica investigative team for having paid for private jet trips for **Clarence Thomas**, who also failed to disclose he sold real estate to Crow, prompting the first SCOTUS ethics code in November 2023. A ProPublica team was awarded the USC Annenberg School of Journalism Selden Ring "Friends of the Court" Award for its series on the **Thomas** scandal. (*Club for Growth, ProPublica 2.12.24; Influence Watch*)

### 38. Foundation for Congressional Accountability

- President: **Terren Brangdon**, a former CEO of the **Maine Heritage Policy Center**.
- A conservative Florida 501(c)(3) think tank focused on reducing the welfare state and health policy reform; it's also pushed teen labor. Member of the **State Policy Network**.
- Top donors: **85 Fund** and **Donors Trust (Leo)**, **Ed Uihlein, Scaife** and **Searle** family foundations. (*Washington Post 2.27.19 and 4.27.23*)

### 39. Center for Equal Opportunity (also called Equal Opportunity Foundation)

- Founder: **Linda Chavez**; director **Devon Westhill**, a former Trump official.
- A small, right-of-center 501(c)(3) think tank opposing affirmative action, DEI, CRT, bilingual education in public schools, and immigration. It advances a "colorblind" view of society, arguing that affirmative action is actually racist and harms those it intends to help – a view **Project 2025** puts forward.
- Founder Chavez is now a "Never Trumper."
- Funders: **Koch** family's **Claude Lambe Foundation; Bradley**, and **Scaife** family foundations (and now-defunct **Olin**) (*Source Watch; Real Clear Politics 10.28.21*)

### 40. Concerned Women for America

- A **Project 2025** advisory board member. Founder: **Beverly LaHaye**, married to the late **Tim LaHaye**, author of the Christian apocalyptic book series *Left Behind*.
- CWA was established to promote traditional (Biblical) values for women and families, and is against abortion, feminism, sex education, in schools, LGBTQ equality. It works to influence elected leaders and the public.



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- CWA claims 500,000 members and 400 US chapters and is allied with the **Council for National Policy**; the anti-LGBTQ **Liberty Counsel** (set up by **Anita** and **Matthew D. Staver**); and anti-gay activists **Peter LaBarbera**, **Robert Knight**, and **Matt Barber**.  
(Sources: SPLC; GPAHE)

### 41. Independent Women’s Forum and

### 42. Independent Women’s Voice

- A Project 2025 advisory board member and 501(c)(3) anti-“radical” feminist think tank. Cofounders: the late **Rosalee Silberman**, **Barbara Olson**, **Anita K. Blair**.
- President: Writer and ex-journalist **Heather Richardson Higgins**, who is also president of the **Randolph Foundation** in NYC and vice-chair of **The Philanthropy Roundtable**. **Kellyanne Conway** is on IWF’s board.
- IWF helped back **Clarence Thomas**’s SCOTUS nomination and fight **Anita Hill**’s charges of sexual harassment against Thomas.
- The **Independent Women’s Voice (IWW)** is its sister 501(c)(4) lobby arm. Higgins has attacked the FDA and federal nutrition regulations, among public policy efforts.
- Major funders: **Donors Trust (Leo)**, **Koch Institute**, **Dick Devos** (Amway cofounder; spouse of ex-Trump Secretary of Education **Betsy DeVos**), and the **Walton** family.  
(*Business Insider* 2.2.18; *DeSmog*)

### 43. Paragon Health Institute

- President: **Brian Blase**, ex-Trump White House Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy; CEO **Anthony Mollica**. A conservative health policy institute set up in 2021 to promote free market solutions and privatization of health care.
- Paragon has helped shape health care reform proposals **promoted in Project 2025**: overhaul HHS, boost private Medicare Advantage as a default option for new enrollees, cap Medicaid funding, expand patient choice to favor more private providers. Paragon teamed with CEI to critique CDC Covid-19 policy.  
(*Paragon Health Institute*; *Axios* 8.31.23, 9.6.22)

### 44. Mercatus Center (and sister Institute for Humane Studies)

- A free market “deregulation” think tank founded in 1978 by the **Koch** brothers and given \$30 million of Koch money; its sister organization is the Koch-backed **Institute for Humane Studies**. **Charles Koch** and Koch Executive Vice-President **Charles Fink** are board members.
- The Center is housed at **George Mason University**, which also houses the **Antonin Scalia** School of Law. **Wendy Gramm**, married to **Senator Phill Gramm (R-TX)** directs its “regulatory studies program” and is chairman emeritus of the **Texas Public Policy Foundation**. (TPPF got \$ 585,000 from **Donors Trust** in 2022)
- The Center has led attacks on federal environmental regulations and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and EPA policies – also **Project 2025 targets**.
- It has ties to the corporate-funded **American Legislative Exchange Council** and **National Federation of Independent Business**.
- Big donors: **Donors Trust** and **Donors Capital Fund (Leo)**, **Koch foundation**.  
(*NYT* 8.30.10; *Clean Air Trust* 12.02; *ALEC Exposé*; *DT IRS 990s for FY 2022*)

### 45. American Commitment



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- President: **Phil Kerpen**. A Koch-led 501(c)(4) political arm nonprofit set up to fight net neutrality and the FCC in regulating disinformation and hate speech on the web – **stated Project 2025 goals**.
- Kerpen chairs the **Internet Freedom Coalition** and strongly lobbied FCC chairman and former Verizon lawyer **Ajit Pai** to overturn both FCC web policies.
- It received \$50,000 in 2016 from ally **Freedom Partners Commerce**, the financial arm of the Koch donor network. Kerpen's member organizations got \$550,000 in **National Cable and Television Association** grants. (*Open Secrets, NPR 1.21.17*)

#### 46. FreedomWorks

- **A Project 2025 board member**. A conservative free market advocacy organization long allied with **Ginni Thomas** and **Frontliners for Liberty**.
- Former Trump campaign member and conservative lawyer Cleta Mitchell chairs FreedomWorks' multimillion-dollar **National Election Protection Initiative**.
- Major donors: **Leo**. (*NBC News 11.17.23; Newsmax*)

#### 47. Napa Institute Support Foundation (and Napa Institute)

- Principal Officer, cofounder: **Timothy Bausch**, a Catholic activist who considers himself an **Opus Dei** "cooperator," or supporter. This 501(c)(3) was set up in 2016 to promote the teachings of Jesus Christ; it hosts a Napa Mirage Resort and Spa summer conference for Catholic conservatives; **Charles Koch** and **Brent Bozell** have been speakers.
- Spinoffs are the **Napa Institute** and **Napa Institute Legal Foundation**; Leo runs the latter and is on the foundation's board.
- Bausch has hosted critics of **Pope Francis** and organized a lecture series at **University of Notre Dame** with **Clarence Thomas**; **Opus Dei** centers for men and women are located near the university. Bausch is involved with **Catholic University of America**, and other Catholic entities. (*The Press Democrat 2.26.22; Opus Dei; The National Catholic Reporter 6.12.19*)

#### 48. Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America (formerly **Susan B. Anthony List**) and

#### 49. SBA Pro-Life Candidate Action Fund

- President: **Marjorie Dannenfelser**; Executive Director: **Emily Buchanan**. SBA Pro-Life America is the 501(c)(4) nonprofit successor to the Susan B. Anthony List anti-abortion organization that was rebranded after the Roe abortion ban victory.
- **SBA Pro-Life Candidate Action Fund** PAC supports anti-choice female candidates and proposes to fully ban abortion in the US and end funding for Planned Parenthood. It has also opposed the Affordable Care Act. It publishes a National Pro-Life Scorecard, tracking Congressional votes on key legislation. Post-*Dobbs*, it has expanded with state-affairs teams.
- Big funders: **Leo**-funded groups: the former **JCN** (now **The Concord Fund**), **85 Fund**, now-defunct **America Engaged** and now-defunct **Wellspring Committee** (closed in 2018). SBA has promoted research by Leo's **CRC Advisors** consulting firm. In 2022, it invested \$1.3 million to educate Kansas voters about a state abortion amendment. (*National Review 6.1.22; Influence Watch; Kansas Reflector 7.19.22*)



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### 50. Ethics and Public Policy Center

- President: **M. Edward Whelan**, a former law clerk for the late **Antonin Scalia**, and a general counsel in the former Trump Department of Justice. **Leo** is on EPPC's board.
- A right-of-center nonprofit 501(c)(3) advocacy group that promotes Judeo-Christian family values in public policy and religious freedom, and opposes LGBTQ rights, gender ideology, and the Equality Act.
- EPPC led a push to censor big tech on the web and change Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, arguing that Big Tech's products and web access harm children, with a focus on exposure to LGBTQ content. **Project 2025** makes similar arguments.
- Major Donors: **Donors Trust (Leo)**, the **Bradley** family foundation, and **John Templeton Foundation**. (*Influence Watch*)
- In 2022, EPPC received \$235,000 from **Donors Watch**. (*DT IRS 990s FY 2022*)

### 51. America Engaged (*now defunct*)

- President: **Leonard Leo**. Tied to now defunct **BH Fund** and **Freedom and Opportunity Fund**. Created in 2016, closed in 2022.
- Rebranded in 2020 by Leo, business partner **Mueller**, and prominent Republican operatives to give dark money to conservative fights. The fund paid Leo's **Creative Response Concepts** PR firm \$100,000 in 2017.
- Funded **Susan B. Anthony List** (now **SBA Pro-Life Action Fund**), **Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce**, **NRA Institute for Legislative Action** (\$2.7 million), **Americans for Limited Government**. (*partial list*).  
(*Source Watch; America Engaged 990s; Washington Post 3.21.19; Open Secrets 2.27.19*)

### 52. Liberty Central (also Liberty Consulting)

- A private consulting firm established in 2009 by **Virginia ("Ginni") Thomas**, an attorney and wife of **Clarence Thomas**, affiliated in 2012 with the now defunct **Judicial Education Project (now 85 Fund)**. Ginni was paid up to \$80,000 over 12 months.
- Liberty filed an amicus brief in a critical voting rights case, *Shelby County v. Holder*. Justice Thomas issued a ruling in that case and was later critiqued for his failure to recuse himself given his wife's role and financial benefit.
- The firm was a Tea Party affiliate that organized a 2011 petition drive to successfully oppose an Islamic center near the site of the 9/11 attacks in New York.
- Donors: **Leo, Harlan Crow**.  
(*Daily Beast 7.24.18; The Legal Times 2.23.10; Washington Post 4.4.23; Politico 2.4.11; NYT 6.18.11*)

### 53. Freedom and Opportunity Fund (*closed in 2018*)

- A Leo-helmed dark money fund started in 2016 with an anonymous \$2 million donation. The Fund later gave \$4 million to the **Independent Women's Fund** that year – half its then revenue – to back Brett Kavanaugh as a SCOTUS nominee and defend him against sexual assault allegations by **Christine Blasey Ford**.





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- The Fund gave \$600,000 to **Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)**; \$500,000 to Trump's **Making America Great** campaign, led by **Rebekah Mercer**; \$325,000 to Koch-backed **Center for Individual Freedom**; \$100,000 to **FreedomWorks**; and \$60,000 to the **60 Percent Association** (*Washington Post* 5.21.19; *Open Secrets* 2.27.19; *Center for Responsive Politics*; *MapLight*)

### 54. Reclaim New York (RNY) and Reclaim New York Initiative

- A 501(c)(3) nonprofit **Leo** set up in 2013 with **Steve Bannon** and **Rebekah Mercer** to advance conservative grassroots public policies about New York's future.
- RNY Initiative is RNY's political arm.
- Former Trump attorney **Rudolph Giuliani** helped set RNY up; **Leo** served as Vice-President; Trump campaign manager **Kellyanne Conway** was its founding director; **Lawrence Mone**, President of the **Manhattan Institute**, was on the founding team.
- Media reports tied RNY to **Cambridge Analytica**, also funded by the **Mercer** family; the groups shared an office floor in Manhattan.
- Funders: **Leo, Koch brothers, Mercer family**. (*SourceWatch*; *Center for Media and Democracy* June 2018; *State Policy Network*; *WNYC* 2.12.18)

### 55. The Claremont Institute

- President: **Ryan Williams**. A 501(c)(3) arch-rich nonprofit conservative Catholic think tank that has heavily backed Donald Trump and is leading the anti-DEI charge.
- Former president **Larry P. Arnn** is also president of **Hillsdale College**. It is a member of the **Council for National Policy (CNP)**.
- Claremont has played a major role as an influential think tank that has funded and employed virulently anti-LGBTQ scholars and legal activists. Many of their view are mirrored in **Project 2025's** "anti-wokeism" agenda. (*NYT* 9.3.22)
- The institute's online *American Mind* magazine trumpets alt-right, far-right, and anti-wokeism perspectives. Contributors include many former Trump officials.
- It also publishes the *Claremont Review of Books*, edited by Senior Fellow **Charles R. Kesler**, a member of Trump's **1776 Commission**.
- **John Eastman**, a well-known conservative legal scholar and Catholic activist, is director of its **Center for Constitutional Jurisprudence**. He is a proponent of "originalism," a legal doctrine that insists on the original meaning of the Constitution.
- **Eastman** is under Congressional investigation for his role in backing Trump's effort to deny and overturn his defeat in the 2020 presidential election. He was reportedly the person who urged Mike Pence to overturn the result (which Pence refused to do). (*New Statesman* 10.4.22; *The American Conservative* 5.20.22)
- Right-wing Claremont Fellow **Christopher Rufo** also gained notoriety for his activism against Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the teaching of gender-related classes in schools. Senior Fellow Micheal Anton
- The institute has garnered more controversy with its Sheriff's Fellowship, which recruits law enforcement members and advances the notion that the law should be enforced for some, but not others – such as militia members. (*New Statesman* 10.4.22)



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- **Leo** has long ties with **Claremont** and **Eastman**. In 2022, Claremont received \$105,000 from the **Donors Trust**. (*NCR online 5.19.23; DT 990s FY 2022*)
- (*New Statesman 10.4.22, Claremont Institute; Public Accuracy 9.25.20; NYT 9.3.22*).

### 56. Catholic University

- President: **Peter Kilpatrick**. A private Catholic research university in Washington, DC, founded by the **US Conference of Catholic Bishops**. It is long allied with the **Knights of Columbus** and is committed to financially supporting the Knights.
- **Leo** is a lay board member; most are clerics. **Leo** directed a \$4.25 million anonymous gift to the university to set up the Project on Constitutional Originalism and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition at its **Columbus School of Law**. SCOTUS judge **Alito** gave its inaugural lecture.
- **Leo** facilitated another anonymous \$4 million donation for an endowed chair there, in partnership with the **Knights of Columbus**. (*Columbus School of Law alumni magazine Fall 2022; National Catholic Reporter 12.15.22*)
- **Leo** secured \$13 million from an anonymous donor for the university's Business School, where **Leo** sits on the board; the school has also received over \$10 million from **Charles Koch Foundation** over the years. (*National Catholic Reporter 12.15.22*)

### 57. Family Research Council and

### 58. Family Policy Councils

- President: **Anthony (Tony) Perkins**; also past president of the **Council for National Policy**; former chair of the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom**. FRC has also funded the CNP. (*Shadow Network book, by Ann Nelson*)
- FRC is an influential right-wing think tank that focused on traditional family values and led anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQ and anti-“wokeism” activism, particularly anti-trans advocacy.
- FRC has been labeled an anti-LGBTQ **hate group** by the **SPLC**. FRC is a leader in the anti-LGBTQ movement, and allied with **Focus on the Family** and **FreedomWorks**.
- FRC publishes *The Washington Stand* and produces the *Outstanding!* podcast; Perkins also hosts a syndicated TV and radio program, *Washington Watch with Tony Perkins*.
- FRC has led opposition to reauthorization of the US HIV global AIDS program, PEPFAR, arguing it funds groups that have pro-LGBTQ and abortion positions. FRC is pushing to insist that no new money be given to PEPFAR until it adds “pro-life” protections – namely elimination of any funding for abortion or LGBTQ programs.
- Major donors include: **Donors Trust, Donors Capital Fund; Bradley, Fidelity and Schwab Charitable Investments; Hills Bank** donor-advised fund; **It Takes A Family; Heinz; Harrington; Natan; Vanguard Charitable** foundations.
- FRC got \$11,100 from the **Donors Trust** in 2022 (*DT IRS 99* FY 2022).
- FRC teamed with the Frederick Douglass Foundation on an anti-abortion billboard campaign. (*Family Research Council; Open Secrets; IRS 990s; Influence Watch; SourceWatch; Washington Watch with Tony Perkins*)



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- **Family Policy Councils** are independent entities with not corporate or financial relationship to one another, but a shared pro-marriage, anti-abortion ideology.
- **FRC** has 39 FPC affiliates, as of February 2024.

**59. American Center for Law and Justice Action (ACLJA)** is the 501(c)(4) political arm of the anti-LGBTQ ACLJA run by **Jay Sekulow**, a longtime Trump attorney. It was founded by the late **Pat Robertson**, founder of the **Christian Coalition of America**, the **Christian Broadcasting Network**, and **Regent University**. The ACLJA is among US groups promoting conservative Christian anti-gay legislation in Africa, including Uganda; it is also anti-Muslim, according to GPAHE. (Source: GPAHE)

**60. American Family Association (Formerly National Federation for Decency)**. Founder: the late **Donald Wildmon**. Director: **Tim Wildmon**, his son. Director of Issues Analysis: **Bryan Fisher**, former **Idaho Values Alliance** Executive Director. A pro-life 501(c)(3) media nonprofit promoting “a Biblical worldview training for cultural transformation,” and linked to Protestant fundamentalist evangelism.

- It launched **One Million Moms** and **One Million Dads** websites and campaigns to mobilize parents to limit their children’s access to the media.
- The AFA is identified as an **anti-gay hate group** by the **SPLC**. It focuses on anti-LGBTQ activities, equating homosexuality with pedophilia, opposing gay people in the military, and is anti-pornography. It has initiated anti-gay letter-writing campaigns, boycotts, anti-gay and anti-DEI lawsuits in federal courts, while advocating for early voting in presidential elections.
- AFA has many active state chapters. **Scott Lively** of the anti-gay **hate group Abiding Truth Ministries** was trained in an AFA chapter; Lively helped lead US evangelical support for anti-gay legislation in Uganda.
- The AFA owns 200 AFA Family Radio stations in 33 states, seven affiliates, and one affiliate television station, KAZQ, in New Mexico, and has a **Journal**, and **One News Now** news division.
- In 2015, Fisher was officially repudiated by AFA for his racist, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, and virulent anti-LGTBQ views and remarks.  
(*American Family Association; Wayback Machine 3.7.12; National Journal 12.4.04; SPLC Extremist Files; Right Wing Watch - People for the American Way 1.29.15; SPLC News 1.29.15; GPAHE*)

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<sup>1</sup> Vogel, Kenneth P; Goldmacher, Shane. “An Unusual \$1.6 Billion Donation Bolsters Conservatives,” *The New York Times*, August 22, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Senator Sheldon Whitehouse office. Whitehouse has held multiple hearings looking into Leo’s dark money and its impact on the US judicial system. See also: “Whitehouse, Durbin Ask Leo Leonard and Right-Wing Billionaires for Full Accounting of Gifts to Supreme Court Justices,” US Senate Committee on the Judiciary news release, July 12, 2023

<sup>3</sup> “Leo Network Nonprofit Filings Reveal More Self-Enrichment, Continued Circular Profit Scheme,” Accountable US press release. November 28, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Heritage Foundation Project 2025 website. [www.project2025.org](http://www.project2025.org)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Note 2.



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<sup>7</sup> Grant, Melissa Gira. “Conservatives Plan to Ban Abortion and Cut LGBT Rights Starting Next January,” *The New Republic*, February 8, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Michaelson, Jay. “The Secrets of Leonard Leo, the Man Behind Trump’s Supreme Court Pick,” *Daily Beast*, July 24, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Donor’s Trust IRS 990 for FY 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Elliott, Justin; Kroll, Andrew (*ProPublica*); Perez, Andrew (*The Lever*). “How A Secretive Billionaire Handed His Fortune To The Architect of the Right-Wing Takeover of the Courts,” jointly published by *ProPublica* and *The Lever*, August 22, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Tsai, Robert; Zeigler, Mary. “Why The Supreme Court Really Killed Roe v. Wade,” *Politico*, June 25, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> It’s worth noting that mega-donor Charles Koch is not Catholic, and is viewed as pro-choice, but he’s often funded anti-choice groups and conservative groups, including Leo-linked entities. For Koch, conservative economic issues are paramount: he’s a big free market capitalist.

<sup>13</sup> Roberts, Tom. “‘Playing God’ traces the history of Catholic conservatism gone extreme,” *National Catholic Reporter | NCR online*, May 19, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Przybyla, Heidi. “Leonard Leo used Federalist Society contact for obtain \$1.6B donation,” *Politico*, May 2, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, David. “Rightwing legal activist accused of misusing \$73m from non-profit groups,” *The Guardian*, April 6, 2023.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Notes 1, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Vorpahi, Evan. “Leonard Leo’s Court Capture Web Raised Nearly \$600 Billion Before Biden Won: Now It’s Spending Untold Millions from Secret Sources to Attack Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson,” *True North Research*, March 2, 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Grant, Melissa Gira. “Leonard Leo’s Dark Money Groups Are Targeting AIDS Relief,” *The New Republic*, January 18, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* Note 3.

<sup>20</sup> Kroll, Andy. *ProPublica*. Twitter thread, October 14, 2023.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* Notes 1, 2, 10.