

Secret Society of ALEC infiltrating Jeff City

By **DAVID COOK**
President



After the Trayvon Martin shooting in Florida, the national spotlight had finally been turned on a secretive organization that helped put in place the "shoot first" legislation that allowed the killing of an unarmed youth.

And they are among our lawmakers in Jefferson City.

After years of working behind the scenes, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) had its cloak of secrecy blown and working men and women are angry to think their vote might have put an easily-swayed official into office.

ALEC is the voice of corporate special interests in state legislatures across the country. Whether it's an anti-union, anti-environment, anti-immigrant or anti-consumer issue, you can bet ALEC has pushed its pre-written, far-right legislation.

ALEC is funded by huge corporations and mega-money conservative activists to woo conservative state lawmakers with fine wines and Kobe beef at annual conferences.

In return, the lawmakers promote ALEC's 'model legislation,' bills aimed at things like stripping workers of protections and requiring photo identification to vote.

A new report released two weeks ago by Progress Missouri says more than 60 of our own Missouri legislators have been identified as having ties to ALEC, and the number may be much higher. Identifying the list of ALEC legislators is nearly impossible, because ALEC operates largely in secret.

Even though they claim to be a legislative membership organization, there is no full

list of members made public. Missouri legislators with ALEC ties, however, include Speaker Tim Jones, Majority Leader John Diehl, Lt. Governor Peter Kinder and State Senator John Lamping. Former Sen. Jane Cunningham, also named, now serves on the Monarch Fire Department Board and is heading a team to break their union.

The votes go to 'model bills' to change our rights to most often benefit the corporations' bottom line at public expense.

Progress Missouri identified more than two dozen corporation-friendly bills introduced in the Missouri General Assembly that echo ALEC model bills.

But think about it...

There have been no outcries from business begging the legislatures to crush unions. The financial support to hurt labor laws comes from outside groups.

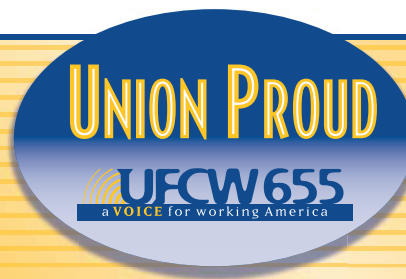
Republican legislators are willing to poison relationships and demean their states' teachers, public safety workers and others in order to please their out-of-state sugar-daddies like the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation and National Tax Limitation Committee, both of which sent operatives to Jefferson City to visit Republican lawmakers last session.

Basically, if it's good for Corporate America, it's good for ALEC.

It's time politicians in Missouri are reminded that each vote counts. If your state and local representatives aren't working to pass laws in your best interest, tell them straight up that they will not get your vote. Tell them you detest ALEC influence.

Speak out by calling or writing letters. Email is acceptable, but every state senator and state representative I know tells me letters are noticed the most. For a list of state senators and representatives visit www.house.gov or call (202) 224-3121.

AN EXCLUSIVE
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The TRUTH About **RIGHT TO WORK "FOR LESS"**

AFL-CIO enlists former GOP Speaker Tilley in 'right-to-work' fight

After opposing efforts to move a 'right-to-work' bill in the legislature while serving as Speaker of the House, Steven Tilley is back at it again – this time, joining the AFL-CIO as a lobbyist as it revs up for a potentially big fight over the issue.

"There are so many things we can do for this state to make it a better place to work and live, that both labor and business can agree on," he said. "There is no reason to start that discussion with the most divisive issue possible," Tilley stated.

See full story on page

Feds charge Walmart with breaking labor laws in Black Friday protests

In January, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) filed a formal complaint against Walmart saying the company violated the rights of nearly 70 workers rallying on Black Friday to try to improve their wages and working conditions.

Representatives of the NLRB said they tried but failed to reach an agreement with Walmart that would have avoided legal action. They said after talking with Walmart that they saw no option but to issue the formal complaint accusing Walmart of breaking labor laws during strikes by its store workers. The complaints stem from Black Friday protests that began in 2012; filings represent workers in 14 states, including Missouri.

The workers are backed by the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, including Local 655; the UFCW's non-union affiliate, OUR Walmart; and Jobs With Justice, which have coordinated the walkouts and blasted the retailer for its treatment of employees.

"Retaliation against any employee who fights for better working conditions and living wages is wrong and illegal," said Local 655 President David Cook.

The National Labor Relations Act guarantees the right of private sector employees to act together to try to improve their wages and working conditions with or without a union.

In at least one of the charges, the NLRB accuses Walmart of illegally threatening workers through statements made by one of its own spokespeople on television. During an interview that Walmart spokesperson David Tovar gave to CBS Evening News ahead of the strikes, he said "there could be consequences" for workers who are expected to show up for work and don't."

Workers in several states filed complaints with the board after the walkouts, and the board's counsel eventually "found merit" in many of the accusations while dismissing others. The consolidated complaint involves more than 60 employees, 19 that were fired

despite being protected by the National Labor Relations Act. More than 60 Walmart supervisors and one corporate officer are named in the NLRB complaint.

"Now the federal government is confirming what we already knew: Workers have the right to speak out. Walmart wants people to believe it's for union recognition rather than being forced to obey the law and respect their right to speak up," Cook said.

The complaint reads: "At stores in California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and Washington, Walmart unlawfully threatened, disciplined and/or terminated employees for having engaged in legally protected strikes and protests. At stores in California, Florida, Missouri and Texas, Walmart unlawfully threatened, covertly watched, disciplined and/or terminated employees in anticipation of or in response to employees' other protected concerted activities."

This low-wage retail workers' campaign began after the Occupy Wall St. Movement emerged, opposing an economic system that feeds the top one percent, and harms the bottom 99 percent. The Occupy movement's daring protests gave wind to the sails of OUR Walmart's demands for better jobs. OUR Walmart was commended by Jobs With Justice, a national labor-community group with local chapters.

"This global company personifies the worst of corporate America and what seems to be a pattern of trying to grow on the backs of working men and women," said Cook.

Cases were consolidated to avoid unnecessary costs or delay. Walmart was told to respond to the complaint by January 28, 2014. Their response has not been made public. No hearing date has been set. The Office of General Counsel has authorized or issued complaints in other Walmart cases and additional charges remain under investigation.

UFCW Launches GOLD Internship Program

UFCW is now accepting applications for its GOLD Internship Program.

The UFCW GOLD Internship Program will invite 40 members from the United States to participate in a five week summer internship. The objective of the internship program is to develop future leaders and union activists. Ideally, participants will become great assets within local unions.

All 40 participants will be committed to a one week education and training assignment. Depending upon the results of this assignment, participants will then be given a four week project within one of five areas: Legislative and Political Action, Organizing, Collective Bargaining, Civil Rights, and Health and Safety.

The GOLD internship program will be substantive and interns will be given roles on critical UFCW projects. Participants will be paid throughout the internship, and housing and travel costs will also be provided. Are you or someone you know interested in being a GOLD intern?

- Must apply online by April 1, 2014
- Rank and file members only
- 40 interns will be accepted in the first year
- All members are committed to the one week education (Phase I) portion of the program. Depending on evaluation, each member could then be invited to participate in a four week (Phase II) action project.

For more information or to apply please visit: www.goldufcw.org



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