**Money, Power, Politics, and Influence in and around the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute**

Laurence A Toenjes

Abstract

There are two conservative think tanks in Austin which have substantial impact on policy considerations of Texas government. The Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) has the greater public presence of the two, but the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (TCCRI) may have the greater political clout, if only due to the makeup of its board of directors. The two organizations appear to support each other both politically and financially. Members of the TCCRI’s board of directors receive substantial political contributions from board members of TPPF. A majority of the board members of TCCRI are members or participants with the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and many employees of TPPF are also ALEC members.

The board of directors of TCCRI includes Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, Railroad Commissioner Christi Craddick, Texas Comptroller Glen Hegar, 9 state senators and 10 state representatives. In addition, 13 members of TCCRI’s board are registered lobbyists, including such powerhouses as Mike Toomey, Lara Keel, and Bill Oswald. Mr. Oswald represents the interests of Koch Industries in Texas, and is the registered lobbyist for 9 Koch Industries’ Texas subsidiaries. Tax returns show that the Charles Koch Foundation contributed $1.8 million to TPPF in 2018 and another $1.5 million in 2019. In turn, records at the Texas Ethics Commission indicate that the members of TPPF’s board of directors made campaign contributions to board members of TCCRI totaling $485,705 during the years 2019-2021. Approximately two-thirds of that amount went to Lt. Gov. Patrick.

TCCRI reports on its tax returns that it expends nothing for lobbying activities, thus maintaining its tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status. However, the very structure of the organization belies this claim. It provides a forum for the deliberations and mutual influence of state officials, legislators, and registered lobbyists who represent the interests of some 110 specific client firms and the more general goals of Texas businesses of low taxes and minimal regulations.

Money, Power, Politics, and Influence in and around the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute

Laurence A. Toenjes[[1]](#footnote-1)\*

**Introduction**

The interplay between politics, campaign money, lobbyists, and economic power is impressively at work within the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (TCCRI). Looking inside TCCRI is like turning over that proverbial rock that has been lying undisturbed in a wet field. Lots of interesting creatures are sheltered there.

The main purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the numerous linkages and mutual support systems that exist among many of the most influential players in Texas governance within the confines of the TCCRI. Being a non-profit corporation, specifically a 501(c)(3), TCCRI is obliged to make available to the public very little of its internal operations and communications, and specifically is not required to make public its revenue sources. However, when one notices how many very significant state officials, members of the legislature and highly influential lobbyists are all on its board of directors, curiosity is unavoidable.

**The Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (TCCRI)**

If you use or go to the following link to TCCRI’s website—<https://www.txccri.org> -- and then click on About/Board of Directors, a list of all 38 board members will be displayed, divided into three groups: officers, public sector board members, and private sector board members. The current list of directors of TCCRI includes 3 Texas statewide elected officials, namely Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Texas Comptroller Glen Hegar, and Railroad Commissioner Christi Craddick. Craddick is one of three members of the board of the Railroad Commission.[[2]](#endnote-1) This commission is especially relevant to petroleum and mineral interests in Texas, and to the lobbyists who work for them, some of whom are actually directors of TCCRI, as noted below. In addition, at least 8 of the 9 Senators who are listed as directors are chair persons of standing committees in the Senate, making them a very important group.[[3]](#endnote-2)

TCCRI also has six full-time employees (as of this writing).[[4]](#endnote-3) The makeup of the membership of TCCRI, broken down into several categories, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Members of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | Number |
| Directors |  |
| Statewide Elected Officials | 3 |
| State Senators | 9 |
| State Representatives | 10 |
| Registered Lobbyists | 13 |
| Other | 3 |
| Employees | 6 |
| Total | 44 |

Of the 44 individuals who comprise the TCCRI, 38 of them are listed as directors, 7 as employees. It is noted that 13 of the directors are listed as registered lobbyists with the Texas Ethics Commission (see Table 2 below). In addition, all 6 of the employees are also registered as lobbyists with the Texas Ethics Commission, for a total of 19 lobbyists who are either directors or employees of TCCRI.[[5]](#endnote-4) It is noted that two of the lobbyist members of TCCRI received extremely high Texas Lobby Power Rankings by Capitol Inside[[6]](#endnote-5). Mike Toomey was ranked number 1; Lara Keel was ranked number 5.[[7]](#endnote-6) Therefore, not only does TCCRI have as directors many of the most powerful elected members of Texas government, several of its directors are among the most influential lobbyists in Texas as well.

Table 2 contains a list of all members of TCCRI’s Board of Directors, their position within TCCRI, their office or function, and three columns indicating their status as (a) members of the Senate Finance Committee, (b) membership on the Legislative Budget Board (LBB), and (c) participants or members in the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 2. Members of Board of Directors of Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute[[8]](#endnote-7) | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L NAME | F NAME | POSITION | OFFICE | SEN FIN | LBB | ALEC\* |
| TAYLOR | LARRY | CHAIR | SEN | Y | Y | Y |
| PATRICK | DAN | VICE CHAIR | LT GOV |  | Y | Y |
| CRADDICK | CHRISTI | VICE CHAIR | RR COMM |  |  |  |
| KOLKHORST | LOIS | VICE CHAIR | SEN | Y |  | Y |
| KING | PHIL | VICE CHAIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| MORRISON | GEANIE | VICE CHAIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| OSWALD | BILL | VICE CHAIR | LOBBYIST |  |  | Y |
| HANCOCK | KELLY | SECRETARY | SEN | Y |  | Y |
| KEEL | LARA | TREASURER | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| HARPER-BROWN | LINDA | PAST CHAIR |  |  |  |  |
| HEGAR | GLEN | DIR | STATE COMPT |  |  | Y |
| BETTENCOURT | PAUL | DIR | SEN | Y |  | Y |
| CAMPBELL | DONNA | DIR | SEN | Y |  | Y |
| HUFFMAN | JOAN | DIR | SEN | Y | Y |  |
| NELSON | JANE | DIR | SEN | Y | Y | Y |
| NICHOLS | ROBERT | DIR | SEN | Y |  |  |
| PERRY | CHARLES | DIR | SEN | Y |  | Y |
| ANDERSON | CHARLES | DIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| CRADDICK | TOM | DIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| FRANK | JAMES | DIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| GOLDMAN | CRAIG | DIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| KLICK | STEPHANIE | DIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| LEACH | JEFF | DIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| NOBLE | CANDY | DIR | REP |  |  | Y |
| PARKER | TAN | DIR | REP |  |  |  |
| BLACK | ROBERT | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| BONHAM | JEFF | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  | Y |
| DUDENSING | JAMIE | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| GLENN | ERIC | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| HINKLE | RON | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| JEWELL | MICHAEL | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| JORDAN | WALT | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| LAINE | DALE | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| RATH | DIANE | DIR | EXEC DIR ALAMO AREA COUNCIL GOVTS | | | |
| SALAZAR | ROSSANNA | DIR | CH, BD OF REGENTS TSU SYSTEM | | | |
| SULLIVAN | RAY | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| TOOMEY | MIKE | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
| WARD | LESLIE | DIR | LOBBYIST |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| \*Assumes ALEC affiliation if evidence of travel expense, signed letter or gave speech at ALEC meeting.[[9]](#endnote-8) | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | |

The fact that 4 TCCRI directors are also members of LBB is important to note, inasmuch as LBB is a central and powerful body within Texas government. LBB actually drafts the biennium state budget which is submitted to the Legislature. LBB also has authority to monitor the State budget during the time when the Legislature is not in session. The Lt. Governor, who is a director of TCCRI, is also one of the members of LBB, as well as the presiding officer of the Texas State Senate. Consequently, agreement among the 4 members of TCCRI who are also members of LBB, while not necessarily dictating decisions by LBB, is nonetheless an enormously influential subset of that body.

Comptroller Hegar, a member and director of TCCRI, is also a very significant part of Texas government. Apart from the more routine duties of accounting and oversight of property valuations, the Comptroller has the responsibility to prepare and present to the Legislature the estimate of revenues that will be received over the succeeding biennium, and the Legislature is bound to keep approved appropriations for expenditures within the limits set by the Comptroller’s estimate.

The significance of the large number of the directors of TCCRI who are also members or participants in the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) will be discussed below.

In addition to relationships among members of TCCRI due solely to mutual interests in particular policy goals there are other relationships that arise due to some of the structural aspects of the membership. Such structural aspects of the membership include:

* The unique powers associated with the office of the Texas Lieutenant Governor;
* The status of other members who are elected officials;
* The status of other members as being registered lobbyists whose clients have interests within the areas of responsibilities of the elected members;
* The employment relationship of one member, Bill Oswald, with Koch Industries and Koch foundations.

As will be described below, these structural aspects of the membership of TCCRI’s board of directors have important consequences.

**Campaign contributions within TCCRI: lobbyists to state officeholders**

Even though the 13 registered lobbyists who are directors of TCCRI might have an equal say in the operation of the organization, some of them apparently still feel more secure by making campaign contributions to other board members who are elected officials. Seven of the director-lobbyists made such contributions. Even Lara Keel, who is designated as the Treasurer of TCCRI, made one such political contribution, to Senator Kelly Hancock’s committee, in the amount of $1,000. While the total amount of such contributions was not particularly large, totaling just $26,250, apparently it’s the thought that counts. About two-thirds of that total was due to contributions from Raymond Sullivan to 13 elected members.

The individual amounts are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Contributions from Lobbyist Members of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute to State Office Holder Members of TCCRI**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CAND. | OFFICIAL | CONTR. | MEMBER LOBBYISTS | |
| FILER ID | TCCRI MEMBER | AMOUNT | LNAME | FNAME |
|  |  | ($) |  |  |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 2,000 | Bonham | Jeff |
| 67719 | Texans for Kelly Hancock SPAC | 1,000 | Jewell | Michael |
| 67719 | Texans for Kelly Hancock SPAC | 1,000 | Keel | Lara |
| 51862 | Friends of Larry Taylor | 500 | Laine | Dale |
| 32386 | Morrison, Geanie W. (The Honor | 250 | LAINE | DALE E. |
| 30098 | Craddick, Christi L. (The Hono | 250 | Rath | Diane |
| 68678 | Friends of Donna Campbell | 1,500 | Rath | Diane |
| 67748 | Frank, James B. (The Honorable | 500 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 68678 | Friends of Donna Campbell | 500 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 51862 | Friends of Larry Taylor | 2,500 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 62004 | Goldman, Craig (The Honorable) | 2,500 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 51286 | Hegar Jr., Glenn A. (The Honor | 1,000 | Sullivan | Ray |
| 36483 | King, Phillip S. (The Honorabl | 500 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 57431 | Klick, Stephanie D. (The Honor | 500 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 41354 | Kolkhorst, Lois W. (The Honora | 1,000 | Sullivan | Raymond C. |
| 67738 | Leach, Jeff C. (The Honorable) | 1,250 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 20673 | Nelson, Jane (The Honorable) | 3,500 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 35962 | Nichols, Robert Lee (The Honor | 2,000 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 58399 | Parker IV, Nathaniel W. (The H | 500 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 1,000 | Sullivan | Raymond |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 2,500 | Toomey | Michael |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | TOTAL | $26,250 |  |  |

Data Source: Data were obtained from information downloaded from the website of the Texas Ethics Comission.[[10]](#endnote-9)

**Campaign contributions to state office-holder board members of TCCRI from members of organizations that are clients of the 13 TCCRI board members who are registered lobbyists**

The 13 directors of TCCRI who are also registered lobbyists have, among them, some 110 individual client firms. A client firm hires lobbyists to lobby, i.e., to promote its interests, such as reducing taxes or regulations affecting it. It is sometimes commonly assumed that campaign contributions play a role in this process. Therefore, it was attempted to identify the sum total of campaign contributions made by those 110 firms’ employees and their PACs to the elected members of TCCRI.[[11]](#endnote-10)

The Appendix to this paper contains two tables that demonstrate the extent of the lobbying interests of those directors of TCCRI who are also lobbyists registered with the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) and of the seven employees of TCCRI who are also registered lobbyists. Table A1 lists the names of the client companies or other entities associated with each of the 13 TCCRI lobbyist-directors as indicated on their filings with the TEC. Table A2 shows the 39 topics for which at least 5 of these lobbyists have registered to be of interest to them. These include the topics Business and Commerce (11), Health and Health Care (10), Taxation (10), Energy (8), Education (7), and Environment (7). Multiple TCCRI director-lobbyists registered to lobby for most of the important areas of interest which are addressed each legislative session.

The political action committees (PACs) or employees of 27 of the 110 client organizations of TCCRI directors who are registered lobbyists made political campaign contributions to 22 public office holders who were also directors of TCCRI. These contributions occurred during the time period 1-2-2020 to 7-15-2021, roughly an eighteen-month period. The identified contributions made by individuals and PACs associated with each organization were added together to form the totals for each client organization. The amounts from all 27 organizations totaled $2,850,683.

Total contributions from individuals or PACs representing the 27 client organizations to one or more of the public members of TCCRI are displayed in Table 4, ranked in descending order based on total contributions. As can be seen, by far the largest amount, $1,660,233, came from Texans For Lawsuit Reform, representing 58 percent of the total. However, a number of the amounts from other organizations are substantial, such as the $230,500 from AT&Texas PAC and the $145,000 from Silver Eagle Beverages.

**Table 4. Total contributions from employees and PACs associated with firms that are clients of director-lobbyists of Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Row | Lobbying Client Organization | Amount ($) |
| 1 | Texans For Lawsuit Reform | 1,660,233 |
| 2 | AT&T Texas PAC | 230,500 |
| 3 | Silver Eagle Beverages | 145,000 |
| 4 | Oncor Electric | 139,100 |
| 5 | Texas Land Title Association PAC | 100,000 |
| 6 | CenterPoint Energy | 84,100 |
| 7 | Centene Corp PAC | 52,750 |
| 8 | Hunton Andrews Kurth Texas PAC | 52,500 |
| 9 | Insperity | 47,750 |
| 10 | UnitedHealth Group Inc. PAC | 47,000 |
| 11 | Copart | 39,000 |
| 12 | American Electric Power | 39,000 |
| 13 | TMX Finance | 38,500 |
| 14 | Texas Association of Health Plans PAC | 27,000 |
| 15 | KOCH PAC | 26,000 |
| 16 | Calpine Corporation | 23,000 |
| 17 | Sanderson Farms | 20,000 |
| 18 | American Property Casualty Insurance | 15,500 |
| 19 | HEB STORES | 12,500 |
| 20 | Liberty Mutual Insurance Co PAC | 12,000 |
| 21 | Allied Consultants Inc. | 10,000 |
| 22 | Associated Builders and Contractors of Texas PAC | 10,000 |
| 23 | Texas Association of Business PAC | 7,750 |
| 24 | Sempra Energy Employee PAC | 6,000 |
| 25 | Verus Analytics LLC | 2,500 |
| 26 | Cintra | 2,000 |
| 27 | The Real Estate Council of Austin | 1,000 |
|  | Total | 2,850,683 |

Note: Data obtained from the Texas Ethics Commission website for contributions occurring between 01-02-2020 to 7-15-2021.

When the same contributions are aggregated for the 22 public members of TCCRI who received some amounts, the distribution is still highly skewed (see Table 5). Nearly 44 percent of the total was contributed to Rep. Jeff Leach ($1,240,950). Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick received over a half million dollars, Rep. Craig Goldman over a quarter million dollars, decreasing in amounts down to Senator Larry Taylor, in 6th place, with $94,500.

**Table 5. Political contributions to public officials of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute from employees and PACs of firms which are lobby clients of director-members of TCCRI**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Row | Recipient Name | Amount ($) |
| 1 | Leach, Jeff C. (The Honorable) | 1,240,950 |
| 2 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 521,350 |
| 3 | Goldman, Craig (The Honorable) | 261,446 |
| 4 | Texans for Kelly Hancock SPAC | 156,500 |
| 5 | Hegar Jr., Glenn A. (The Honorable) | 119,500 |
| 6 | Friends of Larry Taylor | 94,500 |
| 7 | Nelson, Jane (The Honorable) | 62,500 |
| 8 | Nichols, Robert Lee (The Honorable) | 50,000 |
| 9 | King, Phillip S. (The Honorable) | 42,500 |
| 10 | Morrison, Geanie W. (The Honorable) | 41,587 |
| 11 | Texans for Joan Huffman | 38,500 |
| 12 | Perry, Charles L. (The Honorable) | 36,500 |
| 13 | Kolkhorst, Lois W. (The Honorable) | 35,500 |
| 14 | Friends of Donna Campbell | 28,000 |
| 15 | Friends of Paul Bettencourt | 25,500 |
| 16 | Craddick, Tom (The Honorable) | 23,000 |
| 17 | Frank, James B. (The Honorable) | 17,000 |
| 18 | Klick, Stephanie D. (The Honorable) | 17,000 |
| 19 | Parker IV, Nathaniel W. (The Honorable) | 14,500 |
| 20 | Craddick, Christi L. (The Honorable) | 14,000 |
| 21 | Noble, Candace T. (The Honorable) | 6,350 |
| 22 | Anderson, Charles (The Honorable) | 4,000 |
|  |  |  |

Note: Data obtained from the Texas Ethics Commission website for contributions occurring between 01-02-2020 to 7-15-2921

Arraying the contributions based on amounts given by individual client organizations to individual members of TCCRI gives additional insight into the contribution patterns. The largest 20 such amounts are presented in Table 6. The overwhelming amounts from Texans For Lawsuit Reform went to Rep. Jeff Leach ($1,194,45) and to Rep. Craig Goldman ($238,196). Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick follows with large amounts from nine different organizations, ranging from $125,000 from Silver Eagle Beverages to $20,000 from Sanderson Farms.

**Table 6. Political contributions from client firms of director-lobbyist members of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute to public members of TCCRI, largest 20**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Row | Recipient Name | Lobby Client Name | Amount ($) |
| 1 | Leach, Jeff C. (The Honorable) | Texans For Lawsuit Reform | 1,194,450 |
| 2 | Goldman, Craig (The Honorable) | Texans For Lawsuit Reform | 238,196 |
| 3 | Texans for Dan Patrick | Silver Eagle Beverages | 125,000 |
| 4 | Texans for Dan Patrick | Oncor Electric | 80,000 |
| 5 | Texans for Dan Patrick | AT&T Texas PAC | 50,000 |
| 6 | Texans for Dan Patrick | Hunton Andrews Kurth Texas PAC | 50,000 |
| 7 | Texans for Dan Patrick | Insperity | 47,750 |
| 8 | Hegar Jr., Glenn A. (The Honorable) | AT&T Texas PAC | 45,000 |
| 9 | Texans for Kelly Hancock SPAC | AT&T Texas PAC | 40,000 |
| 10 | Texans for Kelly Hancock SPAC | Oncor Electric | 40,000 |
| 11 | Friends of Larry Taylor | Texans For Lawsuit Reform | 36,500 |
| 12 | Texans for Dan Patrick | Copart | 35,000 |
| 13 | Morrison, Geanie W. (The Honorable) | Texans For Lawsuit Reform | 26,087 |
| 14 | Texans for Dan Patrick | Centene Corp PAC | 25,000 |
| 15 | Texans for Dan Patrick | TMX Finance | 25,000 |
| 16 | Hegar Jr., Glenn A. (The Honorable) | Silver Eagle Beverages | 20,000 |
| 17 | Nelson, Jane (The Honorable) | Texans For Lawsuit Reform | 20,000 |
| 18 | Texans for Dan Patrick | Sanderson Farms | 20,000 |
| 19 | Texans for Joan Huffman | Texans For Lawsuit Reform | 20,000 |
| 20 | Nichols, Robert Lee (The Honorable) | AT&T Texas PAC | 17,000 |

Note: Data obtained from the Texas Ethics Commission website for contributions occurring between 01-02-2020 to 7-15-2921

One final way to array the contribution amounts from client organizations to the public members of TCCRI is to associate the contributions with the member-lobbyists for whom the organizations are their clients. These are shown in Table 7, arrayed in descending order of subtotals for each lobbyist member. Since Mike Toomey represents Texans For Lawsuit Reform, his total is by far the largest. Toomey and Ward are both registered as representing AT&T Texas PAC, which accounts for $230,500 of contributions by itself. Sullivan ranks second in these tallies, Keel is in third place and Ward is number 4, due solely to her association with AT&T, which is also represented by Mike Toomey. These four lobbyist-members of TCCRI represent firms that account for 87 percent of the contributions deriving from the clients of 10 of the 13 lobbyist-directors of TCCRI.

**Table 7. Political contributions by employees and PACs associated with the client firms of lobbyist-directors of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rank | Lobbyist | Lobbying Client Organization | Amount ($) |
|  | Toomey | Texans For Lawsuit Reform | 1,660,233 |
|  | Toomey | AT&T Texas PAC | 230,500 |
|  | Toomey | HEB STORES | 12,500 |
|  | Toomey | Liberty Mutual Insurance Co PAC | 12,000 |
|  | Toomey | Associated Builders and Contractors of Texas PAC | 10,000 |
|  | Toomey | Verus Analytics LLC | 2,500 |
|  | Toomey | Cintra | 2,000 |
| 1 |  | Toomey subtotal | 1,929,733 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Sullivan | Silver Eagle Beverages | 145,000 |
|  | Sullivan | Hunton Andrews Kurth Texas PAC | 52,500 |
|  | Sullivan | Copart | 39,000 |
|  | Sullivan | Calpine Corporation | 23,000 |
|  | Sullivan | Sanderson Farms | 20,000 |
|  | Sullivan | American Property Casualty Insurance | 15,500 |
|  | Sullivan | Texas Association of Business PAC | 7,750 |
|  | Sullivan | Sempra Energy Employee PAC | 6,000 |
| 2 |  | Sullivan subtotal | 308,750 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Keel | Texas Land Title Association PAC | 100,000 |
|  | Keel | Insperity | 47,750 |
|  | Keel | UnitedHealth Group Inc. PAC | 47,000 |
|  | Keel | TMX Finance | 38,500 |
|  | Keel | Allied Consultants Inc. | 10,000 |
|  | Keel | The Real Estate Council of Austin | 1,000 |
| 3 |  | Keel subtotal | 244,250 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Ward | AT&T Texas PAC | 230,500 |
| 5 | Jordan | Oncor Electric | 139,100 |
| 6 | Bonham | CenterPoint Energy | 84,100 |
| 7 | Glenn | Centene Corp PAC | 52,750 |
| 8 | Black | American Electric Power | 39,000 |
| 9 | Dudensing | Texas Association of Health Plans PAC | 27,000 |
| 10 | Oswald | KOCH PAC | 26,000 |

Note: Data obtained from the Texas Ethics Commission website for contributions occurring between 01-02-2020 to 7-15-2921.

It is of course not possible to make any definitive statements regarding the relative influence the various lobbyist-members of TCCRI might have based only on these contribution data. However, it is emphasized that the contributions being discussed are from employees and PACs of firms that are clients of the lobbyist-members of TCCRI, the contributions going to other members of TCCRI who are elected statewide officials and members of the Texas Legislature. As noted above, employees and PACs of companies represented by 10 lobbyists-directors of TCCRI made political contributions totaling $2,850,683 to 22 public members of TCCRI during an eighteen-month period. Also, although lobbyist-member Bill Oswald ranks last among those shown in Table 7, this does not diminish his importance within TCCRI in cementing its relationship to such affiliated organizations as ALEC and TPPF (see below). It was also noted above that lobbyist-directors Toomey and Keel are ranked numbers 1 and 5 by Capitol Inside in terms of their relative influence as lobbyists upon State of Texas legislative affairs. The contributions associated with clients of Toomey and Keel reported here are consistent with those rankings.

TCCRI public members are among the most influential policy makers and wielders of power in Texas government, and the lobbyist members of TCCRI are also among the most influential lobbyists in Texas. Within TCCRI’s membership these relationships result, in part, in channeling nearly $3 million in campaign contributions from private interests to public officials.

**Campaign contributions from board members of the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) to state officials within TCCRI**

The fact was noted above, under structural aspects of TCCRI, that director-lobbyist Bill Oswald is an employee of Koch Industries. In fact, Oswald is a registered lobbyist for 9 subsidiary organizations of Koch Industries which have locations in Texas. A leaked document from 2012 shows that Koch Industries, Inc., represented by J. William (Bill) Oswald, donated $159,834 to the Texas Public Policy Foundation. In addition, that same document shows that the Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundation, also controlled by Charles Koch, gave $69,781 to TPPF that year.[[12]](#endnote-11) While these data came from a leaked document describing TPPF’s funding sources, federal tax returns submitted by Koch-related foundations show that Charles Koch Foundation gave $6.6 million to TPPF during the years 2015-2019 (see below).

Whether the Bill Oswald-Koch Industries connection plays an important role in the relationship between TPPF and TCCRI, it is a fact that board members of TPPF make substantial campaign contributions to the public board members of TCCRI. Using data downloaded from the Texas Ethics Commission, it was found that members of the board of directors of TPPF made campaign contributions to members of the board of directors of TCCRI who are state officials or legislators, totaling $485,705 during the years 2019-2021. While roughly two-thirds of the TPPF member contributions went to Lt. Gov. Patrick, this merely demonstrates the out-sized influence his presence gives to the TCCRI. The Office of the Lt. Governor is widely considered to be the most powerful office in Texas government, though Gov. Greg Abbot has caused a reconsideration of that claim.[[13]](#endnote-12) The contributions to each TCCRI director from board members of TPPF are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Campaign Contributions from Members of the Board of Directors of the Texas Public Policy Foundation to Members of the Board of Directors of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (2019-2021)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TEC NBR | TCCRI BOARD MEMBER | CONT. AMT. | TPPF BOARD MEMBER | |
|  |  | ($) | LNAME | FNAME |
| 30098 | Craddick, Christi L. (The Hono | 75,000 | Campbell | Cody C. |
| 30098 | Craddick, Christi L. (The Hono | 10,000 | Dunn | Timothy M. |
| 30098 | Craddick, Christi L. (The Hono | 3,500 | Stallings | Kyle L. |
| 30098 | Craddick, Christi L. (The Hono | 650 | Strake | George W. |
| 62004 | Goldman, Craig (The Honorable) | 5,000 | Campbell | Cody |
| 62004 | Goldman, Craig (The Honorable) | 5,000 | Deason | Douglas |
| 62004 | Goldman, Craig (The Honorable) | 1,000 | Gramm | Phil and Wendy |
| 51286 | Hegar Jr., Glenn A. (The Honor | 10,000 | Deason | Douglas R. |
| 51286 | Hegar Jr., Glenn A. (The Honor | 5,000 | Hock | Stacy A. |
| 41354 | Kolkhorst, Lois W. (The Honora | 5,000 | Stallings | Kyle |
| 67738 | Leach, Jeff C. (The Honorable) | 10,000 | Deason | Doug |
| 67738 | Leach, Jeff C. (The Honorable) | 500 | Hock | Stacy |
| 20673 | Nelson, Jane (The Honorable) | 1,000 | Grimes | Windi |
| 81273 | Noble, Candace T. (The Honorab | 1,500 | Deason | Doug |
| 58399 | Parker IV, Nathaniel W. (The H | 7,000 | Deason | Doug |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 2,000 | Angelo | Ernest |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 100,000 | Campbell | Cody |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 30,000 | Deason | Doug |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 5,000 | Grimes | Windi |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 125,000 | Hassenflu | Alan |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 67,055 | Stallings | Kyle |
| 64090 | Texans for Dan Patrick | 500 | Strake | George |
| 65047 | Texans for Joan Huffman | 5,000 | DEASON | DOUG |
| 67719 | Texans for Kelly Hancock SPAC | 10,000 | Dunn | Timothy |
| 67719 | Texans for Kelly Hancock SPAC | 1,000 | Stallings | Kyle |
|  | Total | 485,705 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Data Source: Data were obtained from information downloaded from the website of the Texas Ethics Commission.[[14]](#endnote-13)

**TCCRI and TPPF members attending ALEC conference in 2017**

It was noted previously that 19 of the public members of TCCRI are also members or participants with the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). What exactly is ALEC? To start with, ALEC is a member of the State Policy Network (SPN). TPPF is also a member of SPN, and TCCRI was also a formal member, at least until fairly recently.[[15]](#endnote-14)

The State Policy Network (SPN) was established in 1992 to serve as an “umbrella organization” over the myriad Heritage clones established in virtually every state. The website of the SPN includes a list of its member organizations.[[16]](#endnote-15)  As that list shows, the SPN intentionally worked to establish what it refers to as policy think tanks in every state within the U.S. It has largely succeeded in achieving that goal, with some states hosting more than one such member.

Within the SPN family the American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC, is of paramount importance.  The purpose of ALEC is to coordinate the drafting of state-level model legislation by holding meetings that include state legislators and corporate representatives.  ALEC has divided the total scope of corporate interests into the following subject areas:[[17]](#endnote-16)

·        Civil Justice

·        Commerce, Insurance and Economic Development

·        Communications and Technology

·        Education

·        Energy, Environment, and Agriculture

·        Health and Human Services

·        International Relations

·        Justice Performance Project

·        Tax and Fiscal Policy

Until the year 2012 ALEC also had a Public Safety and Elections Task Force.  The Florida “Stand Your Ground” law, which was related to the death of Trayvon Martin, brought intense criticism to ALEC.[[18]](#endnote-17) According to Wikipedia:

“ALEC's Public Safety and Elections Task Force, which promoted stand your ground gun laws and voter identification requirements, was disbanded in April 2012. Thereafter, the [National Center for Public Policy Research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Center_for_Public_Policy_Research) announced the creation of a voter ID task force to replace the one discontinued by ALEC.”[[19]](#endnote-18)

Corporate representatives are invited to purchase membership in the ALEC sections that interest them.  At ALECS’s meetings, held several times each year, the corporate representatives meet with state legislators from the various states, and together they draft possible statutes they would like to see enacted in multiple states.  It turns out, as reported by Sourcewatch, that the motivations of state legislators to get ALEC’s model laws enacted are reinforced, in many cases, by campaign contributions to them from the corporate representatives with whom they met while drafting the proposed laws. For example, Texas Representative Tom Craddick, who at one time was the Chairman of ALEC’s Board of Directors, “received $878,000 in campaign contributions from ALEC corporate members from 2004-2011.”[[20]](#endnote-19) The same source also stated that former Governor Rick Perry received over “$2 million in campaign contributions from ALEC corporate members from 2004-2011.”[[21]](#endnote-20) This is the same Tom Craddick who is currently a member of the board of directors of TCCRI, and the same Rick Perry who was the keynote speaker at the TCCRI 2022 Policy Forum.[[22]](#endnote-21)

Some additional relationships between TCCRI, TPPF, and ALEC are revealed by a list of attendees at an ALEC meeting held in 2017. Most of the time ALEC succeeds in keeping lists of attendees from public view. This time they failed.[[23]](#endnote-22) That attendee list reveals the following:

* Twelve Texas Senators or Representatives were in attendance;
* Four of the 12 Texas legislators in attendance are now directors of TCCRI;
* TCCRI board member, lobbyist for Koch Industries, and donor to TPPF Bill Oswald attended;
* The Texas State Comptroller, who is a director of TCCRI, was represented by an employee from his office, Steve Perry;
* The Chief of Staff for Rep. Phil King, a director of TCCRI, attended, along with Rep. King himself. Rep. King is one of the persons against whom a lawsuit has been filed alleging improper campaign donations to him by ALEC;[[24]](#endnote-23)
* Sen. Kelly Hancock, another TCCRI director named in the suit brought by CMD and Common Cause of Texas, attended;
* Eight executives and other employees of TPPF, TCCRI’s sister organization within the State Policy Network, were in attendance.

**Charles Koch Foundation monies to TPPF and ALEC and their potential influence on TCCRI**

The Charles Koch Foundation and the Charles Koch Institute provide substantial funding to TPPF and ALEC. That funding helps strengthen the mutually supportive linkages between these organizations

Non-profit organizations are not required to make public the sources of their revenues. But they must report to the IRS to whom they give money. The organization Foundation Directory Online (FDO) collects the Federal IRS Form 990 from thousands of non-profit organizations nationwide.[[25]](#endnote-24) By centralizing the donations data, FDO thereby allows querying their data base and identifying those non-profits that contribute to any particular non-profit of interest.

Data representing gifts to TPPF and ALEC was downloaded from the FDO website, and then aggregated by donor for the years 2015 through 2019. It was found that during this five-year period the Charles Koch Foundation gave $6,562,173 to TPPF and $2,716,895 to ALEC, or $9,279,068 to both.[[26]](#endnote-25) Amounts of these magnitudes might be sufficient to ensure some degree of cooperation in aligning the objectives and policies of the two organizations. The $6.6 million just to TPPF might also be expected to enhance the influence of Bill Oswald within the network of affiliations described above. As pointed out previously, Mr. Oswald represents the interests of Koch Industries and its subsidiaries in Texas and is, in fact registered to lobby for them. One must assume that the $9.3 million given to TPPF and ALEC with whom legislative members of TCCRI have relationships is intended to serve some purpose. This is not to argue that the sole purpose of gifts to these organizations by the Charles Koch Foundation is to influence attitudes or actions of members of TCCRI. However, given the personal relationship of Koch Industries’ representative within TCCRI, financial flows of such magnitude are certainly noteworthy.

**Additional connections between TCCRI, TPPF, and Koch organizations**

Douglas Deason, a TPPF board member, made campaign contributions of $68,500 to board members of TCCRI (see Table 8 above). The Deason Foundation, of which Douglas Deason is the vice president, contributed $1,901,833 to TPPF during the years 2015-2019.[[27]](#endnote-26) The Deason Foundation also contributed $650,000 to the Stand Together Foundation in 2019.[[28]](#endnote-27) The Stand Together Foundation is closely affiliated with the Koch Institute. This is evidenced by the fact that the Koch Institute paid $1,385,117 towards the salary of Brian Hicks, a board member of the Stand Together Foundation, in 2019.[[29]](#endnote-28)

Thus, Douglas Deason’s campaign contributions to board members of TCCRI (see Table 8 above), the Deason Foundation’s grants to TPPF, of which he is a board member, the substantial Deason Foundation grant to the Stand Together Foundation in 2019 and that foundation’s affiliation with the Koch Institute weaves a dense network of interrelationships. In addition, as described previously, the presence of Bill Oswald on the board of directors of TCCRI, his employment by Koch Industries, his personal involvement in at least one major grant to TPPF in 2012, and his active participation in ALEC meetings along with other directors and employees of TCCRI and directors and employees of TPPF all contribute to cementing the relationships of these organizations and demonstrate the myriad opportunities to promote common objectives. In addition, Bill Oswald has been listed as a member of the board of directors of TCCRI since at least 2001. In fact, he is the only director listed in TCCRI’s tax return for that year who was also listed as a director in 2019.[[30]](#endnote-29)

**Donations by private foundations to both the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)**

It is documented above that TCCRI and TPPF are linked (a) by the role of TCCRI director Bill Oswald as both an employee of Koch Industries and a provider of funds to TPPF; (b) by the half-million dollars of political campaign contributions to public members of TCCRI by members of the board of directors of TPPF; (c) by the common membership and participation by members of both organizations in ALEC conferences and affairs; and (d) by the financial support of the Charles Koch Foundation and the Charles Koch Institute for TPPF ($6.6 million) and ALEC ($2.7 million) during the years 2015 to 2019.

The Koch-related foundations are not the only ones who have given substantial financial support to both TPPF and ALEC, further coordinating the activities of these two organizations and in doing so further solidifying their relationships with TCCRI. The amounts contributed to both TPPF and ALEC by the Koch-related Foundation and Institute and nine other foundations are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9. Grants from ten organizations which made grants to both the Texas Public Policy Foundation and to the American Legislative Exchange Council**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Donor Organization | TPPF Amount | ALEC Amount | TPPF and ALEC |
|  |  | ($) | ($) | ($) |
| 1 | Charles Koch Foundation | 6,562,173 | 2,716,895 | 9,279,068 |
| 2 | The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation Inc. | 450,000 | 3,182,000 | 3,632,000 |
| 3 | Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund | 994,847 | 96,465 | 1,091,312 |
| 4 | Searle Freedom Trust | 150,000 | 730,000 | 880,000 |
| 5 | The Jaquish & Kenninger Foundation | 432,500 | 82,000 | 514,500 |
| 6 | Adolph Coors Foundation | 200,000 | 240,000 | 440,000 |
| 7 | Thomas W Smith Foundation Inc | 200,000 | 225,000 | 425,000 |
| 8 | Schwab Charitable | 96,767 | 128,775 | 225,542 |
| 9 | The Armstrong Foundation | 125,000 | 32,500 | 157,500 |
| 10 | Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program | 130,000 | 21,000 | 151,000 |
| 11 | Sum of Above Foundations to TPPF, ALEC | 9,341,287 | 7,454,635 | 16,795,922 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Sum of all non-profit donors to TPPF, ALEC | 25,968,205 | 9,760,098 | 35,728,303 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | Total revenues, per IRS 990's | 72,617,854 | 48,226,885 | 120,844,739 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Notes: Charles Koch Institute added in with Charles Koch Foundation | | |  |
|  | Data from Foundation Directory Online, Federal IRS Forms 990, years 2015-2019. | | | |

These organizations are the top ten measured by the total amounts given to both TPPF and ALEC. Together, these ten organizations provided $16.8 million to the two, with 56 percent going to TPPF and 44 percent to ALEC. These amounts, from the set of 10 foundations which made substantial grants to both ALEC and TPPF certainly are evidence of strong support for the activities of each of them, and shows strong encouragement that the two, ALEC and TPPF, work in unison for common goals. These data provide further evidence that ties between members of TCCRI and TPPF, and between those same members and ALEC, also represent substantial mutual interest in cooperation between TPPF and ALEC.

Line 12 in Table 9 shows the total amounts that foundations gave to TPPF and ALEC during the years 2015-2019. These do not represent total revenues to TPPF and ALEC, however. Line 13 shows total revenue totals for the same years, the amounts taken from the actual federal tax returns. These data indicate that nearly two-thirds of TPPF’s total revenues are not reported publicly, with the comparable figure for ALEC being nearly 80 percent unidentified. In the case of TCCRI, in recent years, all of its approximately $1.4 million in total revenues are from unidentified sources.

**Tax breaks for Koch Industries and others**

One final observation on the relationship between politics, money and economic power in Texas is offered. As stated previously, TCCRI board member Bill Oswald represents Koch Industries.[[31]](#endnote-30) On the Texas Ethics Commission list of lobbyists and firms represented, Oswald is listed as a lobbyist for the following subsidiaries of Koch Industries:[[32]](#endnote-31)

* Flint Hills Resources LLC
* Georgia-Pacific LLC
* Guardian Industries LLC
* INVISTA S.a r.l
* John Zink Company LLC
* Koch Ag & Energy Solutions LLC
* Koch Heat Transfer GP LLC
* Koch Supply & Trading LP
* Matador Cattle Company LLC

In December of 2018 I estimated the value of the real estate holdings of these Koch subsidiaries in Texas, by consulting the on-line tax appraisal information available for the 14 counties in which the Koch Industry subsidiaries held significant property.[[33]](#endnote-32)

The resulting total value of the listed real and personal property for these Koch entities was $4,045,588,958. No attempt has been made to update these data to reflect changes in valuations during the intervening years.

Given the magnitude of real property holdings in Texas it is natural to assume that Koch Industries, represented by Bill Oswald sitting on the board of TCCRI, would have an interest in keeping property taxes as low as possible. It is therefore not surprising to note Koch Industries’ substantial payments to TPPF, or to observe the substantial campaign contributions from TPPF board members to the state officials and legislators who comprise much of TCCRI’s board. It has long been TPPF’s goal to replace the bulk of property taxes going to Texas school districts with sales tax revenues.[[34]](#endnote-33)

In line with this, in 2019 the Texas Legislature included in its school reform and finance bill, HB 3, a provision that reduced the maintenance and operations (M&O) tax rate used by school districts by approximately 7 percent, which translated into a reduction of school districts’ M&O tax rates of approximately 7 cents, described as “7 cents per $100 of assessed valuation)[[35]](#endnote-34). In practical terms for Koch Industries in Texas, accepting the estimate of total property valuations calculated by this author of $4 billion, this would translate into property tax savings of approximately $2.8 million per year, without termination. It is pointed out that the tax reductions to school districts are replaced with state general funds revenues, which reduces the amount of those funds for other purposes.

Two years later, in one of the special sessions held in 2021, the Texas Senate attempted to engineer another, similar reduction in school districts’ tax rates of 6.5 cents, which would have given Koch Industries an additional $2.6 million reduction in property taxes. The sponsors of this bill, SB91, included Senators Kolkhorst, Hancock, Bettencourt, Huffman, Nelson, Nichols, and Perry, all directors of TCCRI.[[36]](#endnote-35) Two other members of TCCRI voted in favor of SB91, Senators Taylor and Campbell. Whether this legislation was ever discussed within the confines of a TCCRI meeting, with Mr. Oswald and other lobbyists present, is not known. Neither is it known if any such meeting would have included the Senate members of TCCRI, all of whom voted for SB91. SB91 was not acted upon by the Texas House, however, and therefore did not become law.

This example of the benefits of reductions in property taxes illustrates the magnitude of the stakes involved in matters presumably considered by members of the TCCRI and their effects upon Texas schools, taxpayers, the fortunes of Texas officials, and lobbyists and their clients.

There are numerous other business entities that are represented on TCCRI’s board of directors which pay large amounts of property taxes to Texas school districts and other taxing jurisdictions that would benefit from reductions in property taxes. Among these are American Electric Power, AT&T, Center Point Energy, Oncor Electric Delivery Company, and Koch Industries. In addition, several major property tax paying companies, which do not appear to be represented on TCCRI’s board, made significant monetary contributions to TCCRI at their annual fundraiser on March 31, 2022[[37]](#endnote-36). These include Chevron, Dow Chemical, ExxonMobil, Toyota, Walmart, and Phillips 66.

All of these businesses, along with many others who are represented by lobbyists who are members of TCCRI’s board, or which made cash donations to TCCRI, would benefit from TCCRI’s major policy objective of major reductions in property taxes.

Numerous articles have appeared on TCCRI’s website which emphasize that Texans are more reliant on property taxes than citizens of most other states in the U.S.[[38]](#endnote-37) The reason for this, of course, is the absence of an income tax in Texas. But TCCRI uses the fact of greater reliance on the property tax as a reason why property taxes in Texas should be reduced, ignoring the fact that the overall tax burden in Texas, including all taxes, is among the lowest of any state in the U.S.[[39]](#endnote-38) The plan most frequently pushed by TCCRI, and also by TPPF, is to phase out the M&O tax for schools and replace it with some combination of savings from other program areas and an expanded state sales tax. However, it should be pointed out that less than half of all property taxes in Texas are paid by the owners of single-family residences. The figure is 47 percent. Another 7 percent of property taxes are paid for by the owners of multifamily housing, such as apartments.[[40]](#endnote-39) The likelihood that tax reductions to the owners of rental housing would be passed on to renters is virtually nil. Therefore, over half of any reduction in property taxes would benefit businesses of various types. The large companies mentioned above, who either have lobbyist-representatives on TCCRI’s board of directors, or which make cash contributions to TCCRI, would benefit greatly from the elimination of the M&O property taxes for school districts. In promoting this change, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and the other board members of TCCRI know exactly who would benefit.

It is likely that the overall tax burden would increase for low- and middle-income Texans. Renters, in particular, would see little if any reduction in rental payments due to the reduction in school property taxes. And any expansion in the sales tax, especially if it were put on food, would almost certainly be more burdensome to low income families.

The elimination of school districts’ M&O taxes would mean that all operations revenues for them would be from the State of Texas. This change would clear the way for transforming state assistance to public schools into vouchers paid directly to parents, who would have the option of using those vouchers at any school of their choice, whether public, charter, private or parochial. Assuming children who had previously been attending private schools would also be eligible, an additional 2 -3 billion dollars would have to be directed to students who previously had not been funded by the state education finance system. This would make it even more difficult to ensure that the public school system would not be short-changed by the introduction of a voucher system.

**Additional information about the members of the board of directors of Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute who are also registered lobbyists**

Lists of all of the client firms of each of the thirteen lobbyist board members of TCCRI are presented in Table A1 of the Appendix. Some additional information about each of those members is included in the following comments and tabulations.

Several of the director-lobbyists are actually employees of the firms they represent. These include:

* Robert Black of American Electric Power
* Jeff Bonham of CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
* Walt Jordan of Oncor Electric Delivery Company LLC
* Bill Oswald of Koch Industries
* Leslie Ward of AT&T Texas
* Jamie Dudensing of Texas Association of Health Plans
* Eric Glenn of Superior Health Plan in Texas/Centene Corporation

Note that the corporate power rankings assigned by Capitol Inside of the corporations represented by Black, Bonham, Jordan, Oswald and Ward are 6, 2, 4, 9, and 1, respectively (including Koch Industries, although it is not a corporation). Incidentally, the firms represented by these high-power lobbyists happen to be among the largest property tax payers in Texas. In addition, the personal lobbyist power rankings assigned by Capitol Inside are number 1 for Mike Toomey and number 5 for Lara Keel (see below). That is a pretty impressive cast of characters to be included on the board of directors of TCCRI.

This arrangement, whereby corporate employees gather with members of the Texas Legislature as well as statewide officials such as Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and discuss potential state policies or legislation is exactly what occurs in meetings of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). The advantage in this case is that meetings among members of the Board of Directors of TCCRI, including both state officials, legislators, and lobbyists, conveniently take place in Austin.

Based on a reading of the IRS Form 990 (year 2019) for the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce (TABCC) it appears that 4 of the lobbyist-directors of TCCRI are also on the board of directors of that organization. These include:

* Jeff Bonham—Chairman’s Council
* Eric Glenn—Chairman’s Council
* Walt Jordan—Chairman’s Council
* Lara Laneri Keel—Executive Committee at Large

The information on the lobby registration lists available on the website of the Texas Ethics Commission does not show any lobbying association between these four members and TABCC. However, it would seem safe to assume that the interests of TABCC are well represented in any meetings of the board of directors of TCCRI. TABCC is “the largest business association in Texas, representing over 2,800 businesses…Combined those business employ over 2.5 million Texans and drive the economic engine of the state. (from website of TABCC) TABCC does appear as a client of TCCRI director-lobbyist Ray Sullivan (Table 1, Appendix).

**Additional information about TCCRI’s lobbyist-directors:**

Black, Robert: Dir

Employed by: American Electric Power

Title: Vice President, External Affairs

AEP Corporate power ranking: 6

Other: Appears as a member of the “Chairman’s Council” of the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce.

Bonham, Jeff: Dir

Employed by: CenterPoint Energy, Inc.

Title: V.P. Texas State Relations

CenterPoint Corporate power ranking: 2

Dudensing, Jamie: Dir

Employed by: Texas Association of Health Plans

Title: CEO

Professional Association power ranking: 12

Glenn, Eric: Dir

Employed by: Superior Health Plan in Texas, subsidiary of Centene Corporation

Title: V.P. for Business Development

Superior HealthPlan Corporate power ranking: 23

Other: Appears as a member of the “Chairman’s Council” of the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce.

Hinkle, Ron: Dir

Employed by: Self

Title: Legislative Consultant

Texas Lobby Power Ranking: 80

Jewell, Michael: Dir

Employed by: Jewell & Associates, PLLC

Title: Managing Attorney

Texas Lobby Power Ranking: 97

Other: Notes on website that he “is a member of the Board of Directors for the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute.”

Jordan, Walt: Dir

Employed by: Oncor Electric Delivery Company LLC

Title: V.P. Governmental Affairs at Oncor Electric Delivery Company LLC

Oncor corporate power ranking: 4

Other: Appears as a member of the “Chairman’s Council” of the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce.

Keel, Lara: Treasurer of TCCRI

Employed by: LLK

Title: Principal of LLK

Texas Lobby Power Ranking: 5

Other: “Prior to founding the Texas Lobby Group, Lara served as an in-house business lobbyist with the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce (TABCC), the state’s largest business association, and continues to serve TABCC as an Executive Committee and Board Member.” (from Capitol Inside website) Keel notes in her website biography that she is a board member and the Treasurer of TCCRI.

Laine, Dale: Dir

Employed by: Laine Strategy Group

Title: Owner

Other: “Laine served Governor George W. Bush as deputy Chief of Staff…Laine spent nearly nine years as a senior aid to U.S. Senator Phil Gramm…Laine serves on the board of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (TCCRI)…” (from Laine Strategy Group’s website).

Oswald, Bill: Vice Chair

Employed by: Koch Industries

Title: Regional Manager, State Government Affairs

Koch Industries corporate power ranking: 9

Other: Bill Oswald has been a director of TCCRI going back at least to the year 2001.

Sullivan, Ray: Dir

Employed by: Sullivan Public Affairs

Title: CEO

Other: “Ray Sullivan has served on the senior staffs of two Texas Governors, and worked for three members of Congress and more than a dozen political campaigns, including three presidential races.” (from Sullivan Public Affairs website)

Toomey, Mike: Dir

Employed by: Texas Lobby Partners

Title: Partner

Texas Lobby power ranking: 1

Other: “Mike is the only person in Texas history to serve as chief of staff for two Texas Governors. Former three-term Texas House member and chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Named one of Texas top lobbyists in Capitol Inside’s power rankings since their inception.” (from Texas Lobby Partners’ website)

Ward, Leslie: Dir

Employed by: AT&T Texas

Title: President

AT&T corporate power ranking: 1

**Conclusions**

The IRS Form 990, filled out by officials of the TCCRI, asks how much is spent on lobbying activity? The TCCRI includes 22 Texas legislators and statewide officials and 20 registered lobbyists. Yet the response given by the TCCRI official to the question asking for the amount spent on lobbying activity is zero.[[41]](#endnote-40) This doesn’t pass the smell test. Money does not need to be spent on “lobbying” if the lobbyists and those being lobbied essentially live together.

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service states that:

“In general, no organization may qualify for section 501(c)(3) [tax exempt] status if a substantial part of its activities is attempting to influence legislation (commonly known as **lobbying**).  “

“An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.”[[42]](#endnote-41)

Given the scope of interests expressed on TCCRI’s website and the declared interests of the director-lobbyists of TCCRI (see Appendix), a meeting of TCCRI that includes any of its 22 public officials and any of its 13 registered lobbyists will result in “contact” with “members or employees of a legislative body”. That is, lobbying will have occurred. In addition, several of the director-lobbyists of TCCRI personally make campaign contributions to other directors of TCCRI who are either state officials or members of the legislature. Employees and PACs of firms which these director-lobbyists are registered to lobby for also make very substantial campaign contributions to the state officials and legislative members who are directors of TCCRI. Meetings or communications among the members of TCCRI results in de facto lobbying. Given the makeup of its members, and the fact that all of its employees are registered lobbyists, it is argued that lobbying comprises a “substantial” part of TCCRI’s activities, implicit in its very structure.

Similarly, if the members/directors of TCCRI meet together and discuss matters of state policy, particularly if related to state finance, such as a statewide reduction in property taxes, how could the open meetings act not be violated if the directors who are also members of the State of Texas Senate Committee on Finance are present? Eight of the nine Senators who are directors of TCCRI would, by themselves, comprise a quorum of that committee.

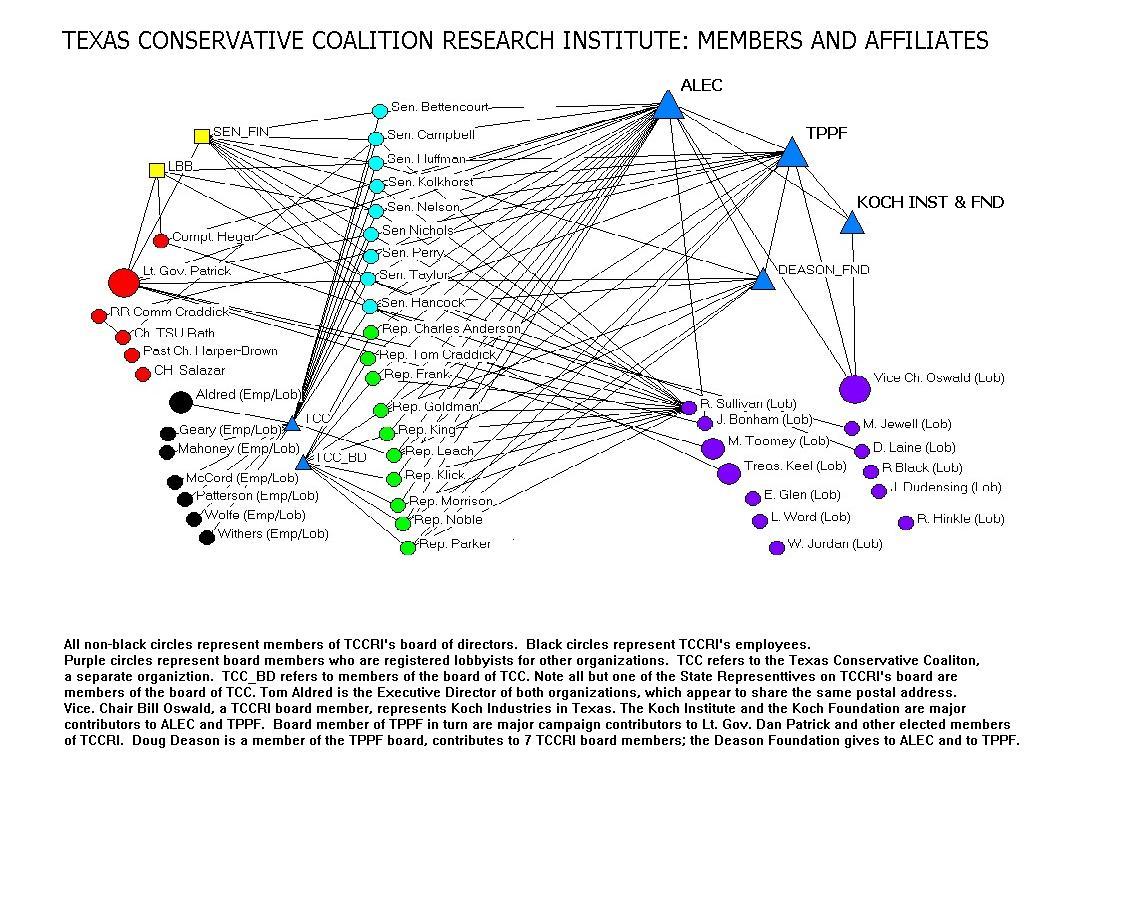
The numerous and complex relationships between legislative members of TCCRI and lobbyist members of TCCRI have been described. The participation of TCCRI and TPPF board members in meetings hosted by ALEC, and the relation between TCCRI legislative board members and campaign contributions to them from board members of TPPF is politically incestuous. Many of these relationships are summarized in Figure 1 (below).

It is likely that similar situations exist in every state that has a member of the State Policy Network located in the state capitol. This includes most states. The SPN members create linkages between state officials, ALEC, and the financial resources of corporations and their foundations, promoting the interests of what Jane Mayer described as Dark Money.[[43]](#endnote-42)

But whether such arrangements are common or not, the way in which TCCRI is structured seems to totally circumvent any restrictions against undisclosed meetings and cooperation between elected state officials, legislators, and paid lobbyists who represent very powerful interests in Texas. There is no requirement that TCCRI disclose the source of its $1.4 million in funding that supports the operations of TCCRI.[[44]](#endnote-43) The arrangement succeeds in covering the interactions of its public members and its professional lobbyist members with an impenetrable shroud that is not in the public interest.

The donor organizations who fund TCCRI and TPPF must feel they are getting their moneys’ worth since total funding for TCCRI has grown from $94,438 in year 2001 to $1,402,542 in 2019, a 16.2 percent annual growth rate. Likewise, funding for TPPF has grown from $1,018,628 in 2001 to $17,732,849 in 2019, a 17.3 percent annual rate of growth.[[45]](#endnote-44) These increases nearly double every 4 years, growing much more rapidly than the rate of population growth plus inflation these organizations advocate for state and local governments in Texas.

Figure 1. Relationships among the members of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute and their affiliates.



Appendix

Table A1. Lobbyist-members of Conservative Coalition Research Institute and names of their clients

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DIRECTOR | LOB ID | LOBBYIST NAME | CLIENT NAME | CLNT ST |
| Y | 65038 | Black, Robert (Mr.) | AEP Texas | TX |
| Y | 65038 |  | American Electric Power | TX |
| Y | 65038 |  | Electric Transmission Texas (ETT) | TX |
| Y | 65038 |  | Southwestern Electric Power (SWEPCO) | TX |
| Y | 38905 | Bonham, Jeff (Mr.) | CenterPoint Energy | TX |
| Y | 69063 | Dudensing, Jamie (Ms.) | Texas Association of Health Plans | TX |
| Y | 38847 | Glenn, Eric (Mr.) | Centene Corporation on behalf of its affiliates and subsidiaries | TX |
| Y | 50593 | Hinkle, Ron (Mr.) | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma | OK |
| Y | 50593 |  | Coalition for Apprenticeship Partners in Economic Development | TX |
| Y | 50593 |  | Quantify Health, LLC | NY |
| Y | 50593 |  | Sharity Ministries, Inc | GA |
| Y | 50593 |  | Sky Marketing Corporation | TX |
| Y | 50593 |  | Solix, Inc. | NJ |
| Y | 50593 |  | Texas Association of Campground Owners | TX |
| Y | 50593 |  | Texas Tax Group, Inc. | TX |
| Y | 50593 |  | Texas Travel Alliance | TX |
| Y | 50593 |  | Texas Vapor Coalition | TX |
| Y | 37481 | Jewell, Michael J. (Mr.) | Able Grid Infrastructure Texas, LLC | CO |
| Y | 37481 |  | Enel North America, Inc. | MA |
| Y | 37481 |  | Environmental Defense Fund | TX |
| Y | 37481 |  | Eolian, L.P. | CA |
| Y | 37481 |  | MP2 Energy, LLC | TX |
| Y | 37481 |  | Octopus Energy | TX |
| Y | 37481 |  | Pattern Energy Group 2 LP | CA |
| Y | 37481 |  | Priority Power Management, LLC | TX |
| Y | 37481 |  | Solar Energy Industries Association, Inc. | DC |
| Y | 37481 |  | Southern Cross Transmission LLC | CA |
| Y | 26519 | Jordan, Walter E. (Mr.) | Oncor Electric Delivery Company LLC | TX |
| Y | 42780 | Keel, Lara Laneri (Ms.) | Allied Consultants, Inc. | TX |
| Y | 42780 |  | Atria Senior Living Group c/o MultiState Associates, Inc. | VA |
| Y | 42780 |  | Cresco Labs, Inc. | IL |
| DIRECTOR | LOB ID | LOBBYIST NAME | CLIENT NAME | CLNT ST |
| Y | 42780 | Keel, Lara Laneri (Ms.) | Hailey Foundation 501c4 Trust | TX |
| Y | 42780 |  | Home State Insurance Group, Inc. | TX |
| Y | 42780 |  | Indivior, PLC | VA |
| Y | 42780 |  | Insperity | TX |
| Y | 42780 |  | Las Vegas Sands Corporation | NV |
| Y | 42780 |  | New Benevis, LLC | GA |
| Y | 42780 |  | PerkinElmer Health Sciences Inc. | MA |
| Y | 42780 |  | Real Estate Council of Austin | TX |
| Y | 42780 |  | Savion, LLC | TX |
| Y | 42780 |  | Texas Criminal Justice Coalition | TX |
| Y | 42780 |  | Texas Land Title Association | TX |
| Y | 42780 |  | TMX Finance | GA |
| Y | 42780 |  | UnitedHealth Group | MN |
| Y | 53827 | Laine Jr., Dale E. (Mr.) | Aon Risk Services Company, Inc. | IL |
| Y | 53827 |  | Caldwell Automotive Partners, LLC | TX |
| Y | 53827 |  | CrowdStrike, Inc. | CA |
| Y | 53827 |  | Cruise Lines International Association | DC |
| Y | 53827 |  | Las Vegas Sands Corp | NV |
| Y | 53827 |  | LivaNova | TX |
| Y | 53827 |  | MoneyGram International | TX |
| Y | 53827 |  | Mutualink, Inc. | CT |
| Y | 53827 |  | Texas Coalition for Affordable Insurance Solutions | TX |
| Y | 53827 |  | VIA Metropolitan Transit | TX |
| Y | 30456 | Oswald, J. William (Mr.) | Flint Hills Resources, LLC | KS |
| Y | 30456 |  | Georgia-Pacific LLC | GA |
| Y | 30456 |  | Guardian Industries, LLC | KS |
| Y | 30456 |  | Infor, Inc. | NY |
| Y | 30456 |  | INV Nylon Chemicals Americas, LLC | KS |
| Y | 30456 |  | John Zink Company, LLC | KS |
| Y | 30456 |  | Koch Ag & Energy Solutions, LLC | KS |
| Y | 30456 |  | Koch Engineered Solutions, LLC | KS |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DIRECTOR | LOB ID | LOBBYIST NAME | CLIENT NAME | CLNT ST |
| Y | 30456 | Oswald, J. William (Mr.) | Koch Heat Transfer GP, LLC | KS |
| Y | 30456 |  | Koch Supply & Trading, LP | KS |
| Y | 30456 |  | Matador Cattle Company, LLC | KS |
| Y | 53484 | Sullivan, Raymond C. (Mr.) | Amazon.com Inc. | DC |
| Y | 53484 |  | American Property Casualty Insurance Association | IL |
| Y | 53484 |  | ANB Cattle Company Ltd. | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | BCFS | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | Calpine Corporation | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | Copart, Inc. | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | DoorDash, Inc. | CA |
| Y | 53484 |  | HNTB Corporation | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | Horne LLP | MS |
| Y | 53484 |  | Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | Imaging Network Administrators, LLC | NY |
| Y | 53484 |  | Kohler Co | WI |
| Y | 53484 |  | Mecum Auctions, Inc. | WI |
| Y | 53484 |  | National Western Life Insurance Company | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | PC-II, LLC | MS |
| Y | 53484 |  | Quanta Services | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | Sanderson Farms | MS |
| Y | 53484 |  | Sempra Energy | CA |
| Y | 53484 |  | Silver Eagle Beverages | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | Texas Association of Business | TX |
| Y | 53484 |  | Thermon | TX |
| Y | 13686 | Toomey, Michael (Mr.) | Associated Builders and Contractors of Texas | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | AT&T | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Cintra | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | City of San Antonio | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Ferrovial Agroman US Corp | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Guidehouse, Inc. | VA |
| Y | 13686 |  | Harris County Commissioners Court | TX |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DIRECTOR | LOB ID | LOBBYIST NAME | CLIENT NAME | CLNT ST |
| Y | 13686 | Toomey, Michael (Mr.) | H-E-B LP | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Las Vegas Sands Corporation | NV |
| Y | 13686 |  | Liberty Mutual Insurance Company | MA |
| Y | 13686 |  | Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Port of Houston Authority | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Rayburn County Electric Cooperative, Inc. | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Rush Street Gaming, LLC | IL |
| Y | 13686 |  | Rush Street Interactive LP | IL |
| Y | 13686 |  | Texans for Lawsuit Reform | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Pool | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Texas Central Rail Holdings LLC | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Texas Coastal Coalition | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Texas Devil's River Foundation, LLC | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Texas Hotel and Lodging Association. | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Texas Teachers of Tomorrow | TX |
| Y | 13686 |  | Verus Analytics LLC | CT |
| Y | 14952 | Ward, Leslie L. (Ms.) | AT&T | TX |
| N | 64958 | Aldred, Tom (Mr.) | Texas Conservative Coalition | TX |
| N | 81264 | Geary, Michael Daniel (Mr.) | Texas Conservative Coalition | TX |
| N | 69176 | Mahoney, Annie (Mrs.) | Texas Conservative Coalition | TX |
| N | 70584 | McCord, Mia G. (Mrs.) | Texas Conservative Coalition | TX |
| N | 83359 | Patterson, Matthew (Mr.) | Texas Conservative Coalition | TX |
| N | 69945 | Withers, Russell Henry (Mr.) | Texas Conservative Coalition | TX |
| N | 83305 | Wolfe, Thomas (Mr.) | Texas Conservative Coalition | TX |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Data from Texas Ethics Commission for year 2021. | | | | |

Table A2. Lobbying topics indicated to be of interest by director-lobbyists of Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute, year 2021

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| LOBBYING TOPIC | NBR OF LOBBYISTS |
| Business And Commerce | 11 |
| Health And Health Care | 10 |
| Taxation | 10 |
| Economic And Industrial Development | 9 |
| State Agencies Boards And Commissions | 9 |
| Energy | 8 |
| Insurance | 8 |
| Transportation | 8 |
| City Government | 7 |
| Consumer Protection | 7 |
| Corporations And Associations | 7 |
| County Government | 7 |
| Education | 7 |
| Environment | 7 |
| Highways And Roads | 7 |
| Occupational Regulation | 7 |
| Political Subdivisions | 7 |
| Purchasing | 7 |
| State Finances | 7 |
| Utilities | 7 |
| Agriculture | 6 |
| Charitable And Nonprofit Organizations | 6 |
| Disaster Preparedness And Relief | 6 |
| Fees And Other Non-Tax Revenue | 6 |
| Property Interests | 6 |
| State Employees Officers And Symbols | 6 |
| Tort Reform | 6 |
| Vehicles And Traffic | 6 |
| Civil Remedies And Liabilities | 5 |
| Coastal Affairs And Beaches | 5 |
| Human Services | 5 |
| Labor | 5 |
| Military And Veterans | 5 |
| Oil And Gas | 5 |
| Product Liability | 5 |
| Retirement Systems | 5 |
| Safety | 5 |
| Special Districts And Authorities | 5 |
| Tourism | 5 |

Data from Texas Ethics Commission, for year 2021 [2021LobbySubjMatter.pdf (state.tx.us)](https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/data/search/lobby/2021/2021LobbySubjMatter.pdf) .

**Relation between TCCRI employees, TCC employees, and lobbyists associated with each**

The following table, Table A3, shows employees listed on the TCCRI and TCC IRS form 990s for the year 2019. The table also lists lobbyists associated with the TCC as per the Texas Ethics Commission for the year 2019. No lobbyists were listed by the TEC as associated with TCCRI.

Table A3. Employees and Registered Lobbyists for the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (TCCRI) and the Texas Conservative Coalition (TCC) for Year 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TCCRI Employees  (from IRS 990) | TCCRI Hours  Per  week | TCC Employees  (from IRS 990) | TCC Hours  Per  Week | Lobbyists Associated with TCC on TEC website | Status | Amount |
| Aldred  (Exec. Dir.) | 40 | Aldred  (Exec. Dir.) | 5 | Aldred  (Exec. Dir.) | PAID | LT10000 |
| McCord | 40 |  |  | McCord | PAID | LT10000 |
| Mahoney | 40 |  |  | Mahoney | PAID | LT10000 |
| Withers | 40 |  |  | Wither | PAID | LT10000 |
|  |  |  |  | Geary | PAID | LT10000 |
|  |  |  |  | Wolfe | PAID | LT10000 |

This second table, Table A4, also shows lobbyists registered as associated with the TCC for the years 2020. It also shows the names of those persons listed as employees of TCCRI and TCC on their current websites, as of February 15, 2022. The page on TCCRI’s website showing the names and photographs of its staff has since been removed. Again, the TEC showed no lobbyists associated with TCCRI.

Table A4. Employees or Staff Listed on Websites of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (TCCRI) and the Texas Conservative Coalition (TCC) and Registered Lobbyists Associated with the TCC, as Appearing on the Website of the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC), Year 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Staff as listed on TCCRI Website | Staff as listed on TCC Website | Lobbyists Associated with TCC on TEC website | Status | Amount  Range |
| Aldred | No  Staff  Listed | Aldred | PAID | <$18,360 |
| McCord | McCord | PAID | <$18,360 |
| Mahoney | Mahoney | PAID | <$18,360 |
| Withers | Withers | PAID | <$18,360 |
| Geary | Geary | PAID | <$18,360 |
| Wolfe | Wolfe | PAID | <$18,360 |

Table A5 shows the list of topics that the seven employee lobbyists of TCCRI indicated they have an interest in. As can be seen, this is a very comprehensive list.

Table A5. List of lobby subject areas denoted by the seven lobbyist-employees of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute, Year 2021

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Nbr | Lobbying Subject | Nbr | Lobbying Subject |
| 1 | Abortion | 43 | Hospitals |
| 2 | Aeronautics | 44 | Housing |
| 3 | Aging | 45 | Human Services |
| 4 | Agriculture | 46 | Insurance |
| 5 | Alcoholic Beverage Regulation | 47 | Labor |
| 6 | Alcoholism And Drug Abuse | 48 | Law Enforcement |
| 7 | Aliens | 49 | Lawyers |
| 8 | Amusements Games Sports | 50 | Libraries |
| 9 | Animals | 51 | Malpractice-Health Care Providers |
| 10 | Arts And Humanities | 52 | Mental Health And Cognition |
| 11 | Business And Commerce | 53 | Military And Veterans |
| 12 | Cemeteries | 54 | Mines And Mineral Resources |
| 13 | Charitable And Nonprofit Organizations | 55 | Minors |
| 14 | City Government | 56 | Nursing Homes |
| 15 | Civil Remedies And Liabilities | 57 | Occupational Regulation |
| 16 | Coastal Affairs And Beaches | 58 | Oil And Gas |
| 17 | Common Carriers | 59 | Open Records And Open Meetings |
| 18 | Communications And Press | 60 | Parks And Wildlife |
| 19 | Consumer Protection | 61 | Political Subdivisions |
| 20 | Corporations And Associations | 62 | Probate |
| 21 | Corrections | 63 | Product Liability |
| 22 | County Government | 64 | Property Interests |
| 23 | Courts | 65 | Public Lands |
| 24 | Crime | 66 | Purchasing |
| 25 | Criminal Procedures | 67 | Redistricting |
| 26 | Day Care | 68 | Religion |
| 27 | Disaster Preparedness And Relief | 69 | Retirement Systems |
| 28 | Economic And Industrial Development | 70 | Safety |
| 29 | Education | 71 | Special Districts And Authorities |
| 30 | Elections | 72 | State Agencies Boards And Commissions |
| 31 | Energy | 73 | State Employees Officers And Symbols |
| 32 | Environment | 74 | State Finances |
| 33 | Ethics | 75 | Taxation |
| 34 | Family Issues | 76 | Tort Reform |
| 35 | Fees And Other Non-Tax Revenue | 77 | Tourism |
| 36 | Financial Institutions | 78 | Transportation |
| 37 | Fire Fighters And Police | 79 | Utilities |
| 38 | Gambling | 80 | Vehicles And Traffic |
| 39 | Handicapped Persons | 81 | Water |
| 40 | Health And Health Care | 82 | Weapons |
| 41 | Highways And Roads | 83 | Women's Issues |
| 42 | Historic Preservation And Museums |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Note. Information obtained from data downloaded from Texas Ethics Commission, 2021.

**Endnotes**

1. \*Toenjes is retired, living in Clear Lake Shores, Texas. This paper has not yet been carefully reviewed by others and is therefore subject to revision. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “The Railroad Commission of Texas (Commission) is the state agency with primary regulatory jurisdiction over the oil and natural gas industry, pipeline transporters, natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline industry, natural gas utilities, the LP-gas industry, and coal and uranium surface mining operations.” Accessed at [About the Railroad Commission of Texas](https://www.rrc.texas.gov/about-us/) . [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
3. For Senate membership and committee status, see [The Texas State Senate – Members of the Texas Senate](https://www.senate.texas.gov/members.php) . Senator Nelson was listed as Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance in one entry, but that position was listed as occupied by Senator Huffman on the latter’s p­­­­­age. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
4. Until recently (2-15-2022) the names and photographs of its 7 employees appeared on the TCCRI website. That page was removed, but as of 5-19-2022 has been replaced, showing 6 current employees. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
5. Interestingly, the 6 TCCRI employees are registered lobbyists, but they are reregistered to lobby for the Texas Conservative Coalition, which is a distinct organization. See the Appendix for additional information on this relationship, especially Tables A3 and A4. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
6. Capitol Inside, 2021 Texas Lobby Power Rankings, accessed at [Texas Lobby Power 2021 (capitolinside.com)](https://capitolinside.com/lobby21-main9.html) on 1-9-2022. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
7. Lobbyist Lara Keel , the Treasurer of TCCRI, actually made a campaign contribution to another member, Sen Kelly Hancock, the Secretary of TCCRI (see Table 3). Keel apparently feels that her membership in TCCRI contributes to her appeal as a lobbyist, as both her membership and her title as Treasurer of TCCRI are noted on the website of her own lobbying firm, LLK. See [Accolades & Accomplishments – LLK LLC](https://llkllc.com/accolades) . [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
8. Obtained from the website of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute, [https://www.txccri.org/board-of-directors](https://www.txccri.org/board-of-directors%20) [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
9. Utilized information from Sourcewatch (www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Texas\_ALEC\_Politicians) [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
10. Texas Ethics Commission, [Search Campaign Finance (state.tx.us)](https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/search/cf/) . [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
11. Corporations in Texas may not make political contributions to office seekers. Employees of corporations, as individuals, can make such contributions, as can Political Action Committees set up under the auspices of corporations. Contributions form both sources were combined in data reported as coming from a single business entity. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
12. Texas Observer (2012), “Revealed: The Corporations and Billionaires That Fund the Texas Public Policy Foundation, Wilder, Forrest, [TPPF 2010 I-990\_donorlistsearchable-1.pdf (texasobserver.org)](https://www.texasobserver.org/wp-content/legacy/media/k2/attachments/TPPF%202010%20I-990_donorlistsearchable-1.pdf) . [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
13. See the story about Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick in the Texas Tribune (2-18-2022) [here.](mailto:https://www.texastribune.org/2022/02/18/dan-patrick-donald-trump-texas-rick-perry-greg-abbott/?utm_source=Texas+Tribune+Newsletters&utm_campaign=cdf3838df2-trib-newsletters-thebrief&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d9a68d8efc-cdf3838df2-102229205&mc_cid=cdf3838df2&mc_eid=d4cda62852) [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
14. Texas Ethics Commission, [Search Campaign Finance (state.tx.us)](https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/search/cf/) . [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
15. [Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute - SourceWatch](https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Texas_Conservative_Coalition_Research_Institute#Board_of_Directors) [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
16. List of all State Policy Network members: [Directory | State Policy Network (spn.org)](https://spn.org/directory/) [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
17. The list of ALEC’s subject areas was taken from a description of ALEC that may be found at  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Legislative_Exchange_Council> [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
18. Juan Williams, “Trayvon killing puts American Legislative Exchange Council in the spotlight,” (The Hill: 4-23-2012), accessed on 10-2-2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
19. Quotation taken from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Legislative_Exchange_Council>, accessed on 10-21-2016. It is noteworthy that “Voter ID Laws,” also promoted by ALEC, have been overturned in several states by federal courts, including the one passed in Texas.  [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
20. Taken from “Texas ALEC Politicians,” Sourcewatch, <http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Texas_ALEC_Politicians> , accessed on 10-21-2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
21. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
22. [Home | Texas Conservativ­­e Coalition Research Institute (txccri.org)](https://www.txccri.org/) The annual forum was held on March 31l 2022. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
23. The Center for Media and Democracy (2017), “ALEC 2017 Annual Meeting Attendees”, pp. 39-42, [ALEC 2017 Annual Meeting Attendees - SourceWatch](https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_2017_Annual_Meeting_Attendees) . [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
24. Common Cause Texas (2021), “CMD and Common Cause Texas File Complaint Against ALEC and ALEC Legislators for Illegal Campaign Scheme,” [CMD and Common Cause Texas File Complaint Against ALEC and ALEC Legislators for Illegal Campaign Scheme - Common Cause Texas](https://www.commoncause.org/texas/press-release/cmd-and-common-cause-texas-file-complaint-against-alec-and-alec-legislators-for-illegal-campaign-scheme/#:~:text=The%20Center%20for%20Media%20and%20Democracy%20%28CMD%29%20and,software%20linked%20to%20the%20Republican%20National%20Committee%20%28RNC%29.) .­­­ [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
25. [Find Grantmakers & Nonprofit Funders | Foundation Directory Online (foundationcenter.org)](https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/fdo-search/member-index/) . Accessing this website requires a subscription. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
26. Grant amounts for the Charles Koch Foundation and the Koch Institute were combined in these amounts. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
27. [Find Grantmakers & Nonprofit Funders | Foundation Directory Online (foundationcenter.org)](https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/fdo-search/member-index/) . [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
28. [Find Grantmakers & Nonprofit Funders | Foundation Directory Online (foundationcenter.org)](https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/fdo-search/member-index/) . [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
29. [Find Grantmakers & Nonprofit Funders | Foundation Directory Online (foundationcenter.org)](https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/fdo-search/member-index/) . [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
30. Tax returns for TCCRI for years 2001 to 2019 can be found at [Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute - Nonprofit Explorer - ProPublica](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/742763191) . [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
31. Refer to the 2012 list of contributors to TPPF, 2017 list of ALEC attendees (Koch Companies Public Sector, LLC) [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
32. Texas Ethics Commission, [2020LobbyGroupByLobbyist.pdf (state.tx.us)](https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/data/search/lobby/2020/2020LobbyGroupByLobbyist.pdf) , pp. 256-257. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
33. As an example, valuation data for the Koch-affiliated Flint Hills Resources LLC, in Nueces County, Texas, was found by going through the Property Search page of the Bexar County Appraisal District, searching on “Flint Hills”, ending at [Bexar CAD - Property Search Results (trueautomation.com)](http://bexar.trueautomation.com/clientdb/SearchResults.aspx?cid=110) . [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
34. Texas Public Policy Foundation (2021), Testimony. SB 91 Property Tax Reduction: Testimony before the Texas Senate Finance Committee, Rod Bordelon, [2021-08-30-T-Bordelon-RTT-SB-91-Property-Tax-Reduction.pdf (texaspolicy.com)](https://www.texaspolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021-08-30-T-Bordelon-RTT-SB-91-Property-Tax-Reduction.pdf) . It is noted that Mr. Bordelon’s testimony was presented to the Texas Senate Finance Committee, of which 9 members were then directors of TCCRI. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
35. Texas Education Agency, HB 3 Bill Summary, p. 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
36. LegiScan (2021), [TX SB91 | 2021 | 87th Legislature 2nd Special Session | LegiScan](https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/SB91/2021/X2) . [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
37. Following the annual fundraiser on March 31, 2022, TCCRI posted on its website a photograph of a placard in the dining hall that displayed the names and funding categories of the event’s supporters. This photo has since been removed from the website. A record of the names of the donors was created by the author. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
38. For example, in testimony by a TCCRI representative to the House Committee on Ways

    & Means April 21, 2022 the following was included:

    “In 2021, the Tax Foundation reported that (based on 2019 data) Texas ranked 6th in the country in terms of property taxes as a percentage of owner-occupied housing.[iii] A 2021 report by Attom Data Solutions found that, based on 2020 data, Texas’ effective property tax rate of 2.15 percent ranked third in the country.[iv]”

    This testimony can be found [here](https://www.txccri.org/single-post/testimony-house-committee-on-ways-means-april-21-2022). The charge of that committee was as follows:

    “[To] Study and consider methods of providing additional property tax relief, including the use of $3 billion in available American Rescue Plan Act funds that were held for future tax relief by the 87th Legislature, and other sources of revenue. Explore options to reduce business property tax burdens and options for limiting the growth of property tax bills” [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
39. The organization Tax Foundation keeps meticulous records of tax burdens for all 50 states. In their ranking, from low burden to high burden, Texas ranks number 6. These rankings can be found [here](https://taxfoundation.org/tax-burden-by-state-2022/), Table 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
40. Information on property tax valuations by categories was obtained from Glenn Hegar, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, *Biennial Property Tax Report: Tax Years 2018 and 2019*, December 2020, downloaded from [this address](https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax/reports/) using link for Biennial Property Tax Report found on that page. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
41. [Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute - Nonprofit Explorer - ProPublica](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/742763191) , Form 990: Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, 2019, Part IX, 11d [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
42. [Lobbying | Internal Revenue Service (irs.gov)](https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/lobbying) . [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
43. Mayer, Jane (2017), Dark Money, First Anchor Books Edition, New York. A perhaps even more relevant book on this topic just recently came to my attention, namely *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States—and the Nation*, by Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y, 2019. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
44. See endnote 36. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
45. See source referred to in endnote 40. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)