



# Lawmaking Under the Influence of Very Special Interests

*Understanding the role of Florida “think tanks” in driving a Koch-fueled, ALEC-allied corporate agenda.*

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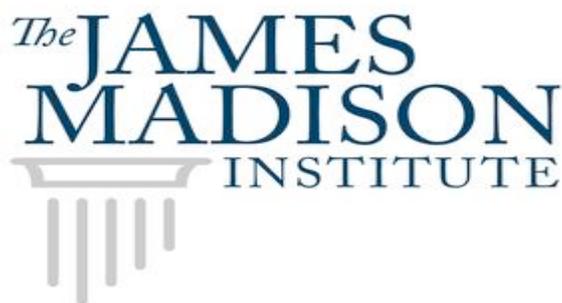
# Introduction

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This new report, “Lawmaking under the Influence of Very Special Interests – Understanding the role of Florida ‘think tanks’ in driving a Koch-fueled, ALEC-allied corporate agenda,” describes how an out-of-state agenda is peddled in Tallahassee by local special interest groups with close ties to the controversial American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), whose financial backers seek to move cookie-cutter legislation in Florida and other states.

The James Madison Institute is part of one of ALEC’s major partners, the “State Policy Network,” which helps push ALEC’s national corporate-driven agenda as “conservative” policies through the states. SPN was founded in 1991, and today it has member think tanks in all 50 states. In Florida two of the most prominent of these groups are The James Madison Institute (JMI) and the Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA).

This report follows up on a report issued last year by Progress Florida, the Center for Media and Democracy, Florida Watch, People for the American Way, and Common Cause titled [“ALEC in Florida.”](#) That report chronicled the undue influence ALEC – a shadowy out-of-state corporate front group – holds over public policy in the Sunshine State.



## Among the key findings in this report:

**JMI<sup>1</sup> and FGA<sup>2</sup> claim to be independent local voices even though they are cogs in the State Policy Network, a Koch-funded, nationally-driven, ALEC-allied network of groups that push a cookie cutter agenda in statehouses across the country. JMI, FGA and other State Policy Network member groups routinely advocate for a national agenda driven by out-of-state corporate actors.**

- **Despite claiming to focus on statewide concerns, JMI and FGA often push for the same policies as national right-wing organizations such as ALEC.**
- **The James Madison Institute has received more than \$1 million from Koch-funded organizations, and has consistently advocated for policies that protect the Kochs' bottom line rather than the best interests of Floridians.**
- **These so-called "independent" voices push ALEC's right-wing agenda regardless of the best interests of Floridians, while providing cover that helps insulate ALEC and SPN's CEO backers against public scrutiny. The coordinated agenda that JMI, FGA, and ALEC press for is resulting in devastating consequences for Florida, among them:**
  - **Attacking health care expansion despite Florida having the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest percentage (24.8%) of uninsured residents among US states, including an estimated half a million Florida children who lack coverage – the fourth highest rate of uninsured children (12.5%) in the country.<sup>3</sup>**
  - **A polluter-driven agenda that ignores scientific facts about climate change and sea level rise, even though Florida has the second most coastline in the nation<sup>4</sup> and despite scientific predictions that South Florida – and Miami in particular –**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: James Madison Institute, About Us: <http://www.jamesmadison.org/about/about.html>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Foundation for Government Accountability, About Us: <http://www.floridafga.org/about-us/>

<sup>3</sup> Source: U.S. Census Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, 2011, [https://www.census.gov/did/www/sahie/data/interactive/#view=data&utilBtn=&yLB=0&stLB=0&aLB=0&sLB=0&iLB=0&rLB=0&countyCBSselected=false&insuredRBG=pu\\_&multiYearSelected=false&multiYearAlertFlag=false](https://www.census.gov/did/www/sahie/data/interactive/#view=data&utilBtn=&yLB=0&stLB=0&aLB=0&sLB=0&iLB=0&rLB=0&countyCBSselected=false&insuredRBG=pu_&multiYearSelected=false&multiYearAlertFlag=false)

<sup>4</sup> Source: Wikipedia. List of US States by Coastline: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_U.S.\\_states\\_by\\_coastline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_coastline)

will be devastated by rising sea levels;<sup>5</sup> and pushes for expanded offshore drilling despite the need to protect Florida's tourism-driven economy and the ongoing negative consequences of the 2011 BP Gulf oil disaster.

- **Harming Florida's fiscal health by further reducing the state's corporate tax rate, which already ranks among the lowest in the country, with a flat rate at 5.5%.<sup>6</sup> As of 2011, more than 98% of Florida business paid no income taxes at all.<sup>7</sup>**
  - **Efforts to weaken the retirement security of Florida's workers by forcing them into 401k-style retirement plans that increase risks and that take fees from workers' retirement funds.**
  - **Numerous other attacks on workers and the middle class, including efforts to block minimum wage increases and deny critical employment benefits such as earned sick time, as well as attacks on the ability of workers to effectively organize in unions via ALEC's so-called "Paycheck Protection Act."**
- **FGA is part of a national network of right-wing policy organizations, was founded by conservative activists from Maine, and is only based in Florida because their corporate backers planted them here.**
  - **FGA's government affairs director helps operate a Maine-based lobbying firm, through which he has taken thousands of dollars from health care providers that accept Medicaid, stimulus, and other government funds. Meanwhile, FGA has actively pushed for a Medicaid privatization scheme that critics say boosts corporate profits at the expense of patient care.**
  - **So-called "conservative" think tanks, like JMI and FGA, promote policies that protect their wealthy right-wing donors, not middle class Floridians. For example, both JMI and FGA have strong connections to wealthy investment banker and special interest group funder William A. Dunn. Not surprisingly, these groups have pushed legislation intended to**

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Rolling Stone. Goodbye Miami: <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/why-the-city-of-miami-is-doomed-to-drown-20130620?link=mostpopular3>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Tax Policy Center. State Corporate Income Tax Rates for 2013: [http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxfacts/Content/PDF/state\\_corporate\\_income.pdf](http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxfacts/Content/PDF/state_corporate_income.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Source: Orlando Sentinel, Guess how few Florida businesses pay corporate taxes?, May 8, 2011: [http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-05-08/news/os-scott-maxwell-corp-taxes-scam-050820110507\\_1\\_corporate-taxes-income-taxes-corporate-tax-rates](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-05-08/news/os-scott-maxwell-corp-taxes-scam-050820110507_1_corporate-taxes-income-taxes-corporate-tax-rates)

**benefit Dunn's bottom line, including tax breaks for the wealthy and the deregulation of Wall Street.**

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# JMI and FGA: Tentacles of ALEC and the State Policy Network

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The James Madison Institute and the Foundation for Government Accountability are part of the State Policy Network, a [Koch-funded, ALEC-allied organization](#) whose members provide the appearance of “independent” voices advocating for ALEC’s corporate agenda. The notion that these groups are independent actors couldn’t be further from the truth.

- **JMI:** The James Madison Institute has been a member of ALEC and was introduced as a “new member” at ALEC’s [Education Task Force May 2012 meeting](#) in Charlotte, NC. JMI’s anti-public school agenda links back to ALEC and Jeb Bush’s Foundation for Excellence in Education (FEE)<sup>8</sup>, and includes increased charter school funding, unaccountable private school vouchers, parent-trigger and more. Dr. Matthew Ladner, senior advisor of policy and research at FEE recently received a “Lifetime Bunkum Award” from the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado-Boulder for promoting false and misleading information in pushing ALEC’s school choice agenda<sup>9</sup>.
- **FGA:** The Foundation for Government Accountability has been active in ALEC:
  - In December 2011, FGA’s founder Tarren Bragdon gave a presentation touting legislative changes to [ALEC’s Health and Human Services Task Force](#): “Florida’s Healthcare Reforms: Success in the Sunshine State” at the ALEC conference in Scottsdale<sup>10</sup>, Arizona, in 2011. Bragdon, a Maine politician, created FGA in 2011 because “You have to be based out of an area where you can raise money, and Naples is a very generous community. And it's also a very free-market, right-of-center politically oriented place<sup>11</sup>.”
  - In November 2012, FGA’s new addition Joyce Errecart gave a presentation on “Tangible Personal Property Business Taxes” to [ALEC’s Tax and Fiscal Policy Task Force at the November 2012 conference](#) in Washington, DC. Errecart is actually a Vermont lawyer and

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<sup>8</sup> Source: PR Watch. Taxpayer-Enriched Companies Back Jeb Bush's Foundation for Excellence in Education, its Buddy ALEC, and Their "Reforms", November 28, 2012: <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2012/11/11883/taxpayer-enriched-companies-back-jeb-bushs-foundation-excellence-education-its-bu>

<sup>9</sup> Source: Florida Times-Union. Florida education policy advisor given "Bunkum Award", May 31, 2012: <http://jacksonville.com/opinion/blog/479262/teresa-stepzinski/2012-05-31/florida-education-policy-advisor-given-bunkum-award>

<sup>10</sup> Source: PR Watch. Inside ALEC: Naked Contempt for the Press and Public in Scottsdale, January 11, 2012: <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2012/01/11230/inside-alec-naked-contempt-press-and-public-scottsdale#sthash.LCkZLYID.dpuf>

<sup>11</sup> Source: Naples Daily News. Maine man: Young political upstart from New England starts Naples-based think tank, October 17, 2011: <http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2011/oct/17/maine-man-politics-upstart-Tarren-Bragdon-florida/>

- former Vermont official who bought a home in Cocoa Beach and has pushed for tax cuts through FGA and other groups like the corporate-backed Tax Foundation.
- In its short existence, FGA has supported many ALEC policies and bills in Florida, including the “[Freedom of Choice in Health Care Act](#),” the push to end teacher tenure and ongoing efforts to expand charter schools and school vouchers. Bragdon is credited with writing the controversial health insurance law changes in Maine known as “LD 1333,” whose provisions work “a change in rate structure that gives health insurance companies more freedom to charge higher rates to Mainers who are older, sicker and live in rural areas,” among other changes that reduce consumer oversight over health insurance, according to the Bangor Daily News<sup>12</sup>.
  - Taking a page from Bragdon’s Maine game plan, FGA recently worked to deny access to health care for an estimated 1 million low income Floridians that would have been newly eligible for Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

**JMI Promoted ALEC-Linked Earned Sick Time/Preemption Bill in Florida:** Florida’s earned sick time preemption bill, CS/HB 655 (Precourt), is similar to a Wisconsin bill circulated at an ALEC meeting as a model. JMI promoted the bill among its “[key legislation](#).” **This damaging piece of model ALEC legislation sailed through the 2013 Florida Legislature and was signed into law by Gov. Rick Scott on July 14<sup>th</sup> despite 80% of Floridians supporting earned sick time standards for workers.**

## The James Madison Institute’s Questionable Motives

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### “Nonpartisan Think Tank” or Republican Policy Machine?

**Although JMI is described as a “nonpartisan” nonprofit, it has very close ties to political parties. JMI has close connections to several Republicans and the Republican Party, both in Florida and nationally:**

- **Close Party Ties.** JMI Chairman Allan Bense, is a Republican former speaker of the Florida House, and is the [father-in-law](#) of current Florida House Speaker Will Weatherford (R). In his speech at JMI’s 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala, Bense said JMI was important because it gave Florida legislators “facts” as compared to what was in the news. When he described JMI, he called it “objective” and “bipartisan,” but stopped and corrected himself saying “we’re a little conservative, agreed.” That would be an understatement, given JMI’s corporate party agenda.
- **Routinely Features Republican Heavy Hitters**
  - In July 2012, JMI and Jeb Bush’s Sun PAC [cohosted](#) an event on education in Miami.

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<sup>12</sup> Source: Bangor Daily News. LD 1333: Key provisions of Maine’s health insurance overhaul bill, May 12, 2011: <http://bangordailynews.com/2011/05/12/health/included-in-full-story-insure0512/>

- Then-Vice President Dick Cheney [spoke at a JMI Conference](#) in 2004.

## **\$1 Million from Koch-Fueled Groups Helps Advance Special Interests**

**The James Madison Institute advocates for policies that protect the bottom line of their corporate donors – at the expense of middle class Florida families.**

JMI has received funding that can be traced directly to the family fortune of the billionaire brothers (Charles and David) who run global oil firm Koch Industries: the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation contributed \$83,479 to JMI between 2007 and 2011. However, the Kochs are known to fund special interest groups in ways other than through the charities in their name. For example, it has been discovered that Koch Industries funds some of the SPN groups directly and because that corporation is not publicly traded its donations are not publicly reported. Similarly, it has been documented that the Koch brothers fund special interests through personal checks and trust account transfers (not from their charities) to other groups that are not required to publicly report their donations.

JMI, for example, received \$963,742 from [Donors Trust and Donors Capital Fund](#) between 2005 and 2011, two funds that have been closely tied to the Kochs but which obscure the percentage of their grants coming from Koch money. In 2011, contributions from the Donors groups made up 10% of JMI's grants.

In recent years, Donors Trust has poured millions into special interest groups that describe themselves as “free market” and are often branded as “libertarian” or “conservative” even though many of their policies are more fairly described as “corporate” or favoring Wall Street firms. Donors Trust allows extremely wealthy individuals who want to donate large sums to right-wing causes to do so anonymously, leaving the identity of those bankrolling such special interest groups cloaked from the public.

Over the years, JMI has released several “studies” and reports that deny global warming is happening, call for an end to clean energy programs, advocate for expanded offshore drilling despite the risks to Florida's shores from deeper wells (like BP's Deep Water Horizon), and push for corporate tax breaks, all of which would directly benefit the Koch brothers' corporate and personal interests. Here are a few examples:

- ***Promoting the Polluters' Agenda:*** JMI vigorously defends its big-oil corporate donors, like the Koch brothers, the American Petroleum Institute, and Exxon Mobil, by publishing studies critical of carbon dioxide restrictions, like its 2009 report “[Obama's Climate/Energy Agenda: Trouble for Florida](#).” JMI also opposes other environmental safety measures, like cap-and-trade programs, renewable-energy mandates, and low-carbon fuel standards, all of which the institute argues against in its 2010 study: “[Our Self-Imposed Obstacles to Energy Independence](#).”
- ***Ignoring Scientific Facts on Climate Change:*** JMI not only promotes a pro-polluter, pro-fossil fuel industry agenda, but has also been a vocal skeptic of whether climate change is happening, despite the agreement of more than 98% of scientific studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Some of the institute's studies, reports, and editorials that deny global warming and climate change include:

- A [2008 Letter to the Editor](#) by JMI President and CEO Bob McClure. McClure argues that global warming is not a “settled science.”
- A [2010 study](#) claiming that scientists manipulated climate data to reach the hypothesis of global warming.
- A 2008 study, titled “[The Cult of Global Warming](#),” which claims that global warming is being pushed by the social elite and compares “Green environmentalism” to “Red communism.”
- A [1998 report](#) questioning if there is a human influence on the global climate, and advocating against implementing environmental safety until the “science is settled.”

While JMI has to concoct imaginary villains who purportedly benefit from raising concerns about global warming, the reality is that the main beneficiary of propaganda to slow efforts to address the demonstrable climate change that is occurring is the oil industry, which just happens to be underwriting part of JMI’s budget through Koch-fueled philanthropies like the Donor groups.

- ***Advocating for More Offshore Drilling:*** JMI has called for more offshore drilling in Florida, specifically in its 2008 report, “[It’s Time To Update Obsolete Policy on Offshore Drilling](#),” and its 2005 report “[Gulf Drilling Can Help Florida’s Environment](#).” In the wake of the 2010 Gulf oil disaster, many have criticized efforts to [expand offshore drilling](#) in Florida. Such drilling provides little direct economic benefit to Florida but poses grave risks to its shoreline, tourism, and fishing industries. Florida has no oil refineries within its territory, but the state economy earns millions annually from its beaches and marine habitats<sup>13</sup>.

## The Foundation for Government Accountability’s Questionable History

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### Run by Partisan Operatives

**The Foundation for Government Accountability is part of a national network of right-wing policy organizations founded by conservative activists from Maine and is only based in Florida because its hyper-partisan founder planted it here.**

While FGA claims to be nonpartisan and Florida-based, it was founded in 2011 by Republican and conservative activists from the state of Maine. FGA’s CEO and founder Tarren Bragdon is a former Republican state legislator who served as head of the Maine Heritage Policy Center, another “think tank” affiliated with the conservative State Policy Network, the national web of right-wing policy

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<sup>13</sup> Source: US Energy Information Administration. [http://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet\\_pnp\\_cap1\\_dcu\\_sfl\\_a.htm](http://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_pnp_cap1_dcu_sfl_a.htm)

organizations to which FGA belongs. [Bragdon has stated](#) that FGA's "initial donors who were interested in having [him] here" in Florida were responsible for his move to the state.

## **"Nonpartisan Think Tank" or Right-Wing Lobbying Machine?**

### **The Foundation for Government Accountability boasts about its lobbying muscle, but does it play by the rules?**

FGA frequently brags about its influence in state politics and clearly has well-established ties with state legislators. In 2012, for example, FGA bragged that it had "[engaged early on](#)" with House and Senate sponsors of HB 1003, a proposal to create a new exemption from tangible personal property (TPP) taxes for businesses with less than \$50,000 in business equipment, to successfully influence the legislation. According to FGA's own post on its website, the organization had "regular discussions and meetings" with the sponsors of the bill and the Governor's office. However, [FGA did not have a registered lobbyist in Florida in 2012](#). While a 501(c)(3) non-profit can engage in a limited amount of lobbying, it appears that FGA's outreach to Florida legislators about changing Florida's laws is not so limited. However, its federal tax filings for 2012 have not yet been made publicly available.

### **FGA's Government Relations Director Helps Operate Maine-Based Lobbying Firm; Lobbies for Clients That Take Government Funds and May Benefit from FGA Proposals**

FGA Government Relations Director Christopher D. Hudson [registered](#) on April 16, 2013 to represent FGA in Florida. [Hudson](#) also works as the Florida Public Affairs Director for [Strategic Advocacy](#), a public affairs consulting firm based out of Maine and [registered](#) as a foreign corporation in Florida.

Hudson and Strategic Advocacy also [registered](#) to lobby this year for LifeStream Behavioral Center, Mental Health Care, Inc., and Apalachee Center, Inc., all of which are Medicaid providers in Florida.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, FGA has [actively pushed](#) for the expansion of a Florida Medicaid privatization pilot program that has boosted the profits of providers of Medicaid services at the expense of expanded enrollment and patient care, [according to critics](#). FGA's activity on behalf of the privatization scheme has included [presenting the plan to ALEC](#), which [endorsed](#) the program's expansion.

Hudson's representation of firms that rely on government spending comes despite FGA's and Bragdon's advocacy for reductions in government spending. In addition to accepting Medicaid dollars, Mental Health Care, Inc., has [accepted](#) more than \$100,000 in federal stimulus funds, according to online records, and another Hudson client, MediSKY, [contracts with government agencies](#).

Hudson and Strategic Advocacy [reported](#) receiving between \$10,007 and \$89,992 combined from Lifestream, Mental Health Care, Inc., Apalachee, and MediSKY for lobbying services in the first half of 2013.

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<sup>14</sup> Sources: Lifestream: [http://www.nfbhp.com/services/services\\_choosing\\_providers.htm](http://www.nfbhp.com/services/services_choosing_providers.htm)  
Mental Health Care, Inc.: [http://www.floridahealthpartners.com/members/mbr\\_medicaid\\_area\\_6.htm](http://www.floridahealthpartners.com/members/mbr_medicaid_area_6.htm)  
Apalachee Center: <http://www.floridahealthfinder.gov/FacilityLocator/FacilityProfilePage.aspx?id=229085>

# Florida's Think Tanks and William Dunn

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**Conservative think tanks in Florida like JMI and FGA promote policies that protect their wealthy right-wing donors, not middle class Floridians, and the case of William Dunn offers a prime example.**

Both JMI and FGA have strong connections to [William A. Dunn](#), who owns an investment firm (Dunn Capital Management) in Florida and also runs a right-wing foundation ([Dunn's Foundation for the Advancement of Right Thinking](#)). William Dunn serves on the [FGA's board of directors](#). In addition, his wife, Rebecca, is a member of [JMI's board of directors](#) and Dunn's foundation has given at least \$335,000 to JMI between 2002 and 2011, making it one of JMI's largest known sources of income.

Dunn's foundation has given millions to other right-wing groups in Florida and around the United States, including the Franklin Center, FreedomWorks, the Cato Institute, the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, the Mackinac Center, the State Policy Network, the National Taxpayers Union, the Heartland Institute, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Reason Foundation. William Dunn has also served on the boards of the Reason Foundation, Competitive Enterprise Institute, and the Cato Institute, alongside representatives of the Kochs or the Kochs themselves.

**Dunn and offshore accounts:** [Dunn Capital Management's website](#) reveals that clients have a program option called "offshore funds," although only those with a username and password can access information about the program. Typically, offshore funds are a way to avoid paying taxes that might otherwise be due to support the American government; although the true nature of Dunn's off shoring of funds is secret and unknown.

**Dunn's Net Worth is Reportedly \$80 Million, Stands to Benefit from JMI & FGA Policies:** In 2009, [Institutional Investor reported](#) William Dunn's net worth at \$80 million. Not surprisingly, Dunn has used his influence to fund think tanks in Florida (JMI & FGA) that promote policies that would help his bottom line:

- **Deregulation of Wall Street/Investment Firms:** JMI calls for less government regulation and oversight both for Wall Street investment firms and the economy overall in [Government Policies Encouraged Wall Street's Risky Business](#) (September 2008) and [Beware When Government Runs Both Politics And The Economy](#) (2009).
- **Repeal of the Estate Tax:** JMI promotes Florida's repeal of the Estate Tax, a tax that largely affects the very wealthy, and calls on Congress to do the same in its 2010 report: "[Florida Has A Huge Stake In The 'Death Tax' Debate.](#)"
- **Lowering Taxes:** JMI and FGA have also released dozens of reports aimed at lowering taxes, often for the wealthiest in Florida, including:
  - JMI 2005, "[Low Taxes Can Keep Florida's Economy Humming](#)"
  - JMI 2007, "[The Case for Florida to Enact A Taxpayer Protection Amendment](#)"

- FGA 2012, "[FGA helps move Florida one step closer toward job-creating business tax relief](#)"
- FGA 2012, "[Making Florida the Tax Haven of the South](#)"

# Florida Think Tanks Pushing a National Right-Wing Agenda

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JMI and FGA often push for the same policies as national right-wing organizations, most notably ALEC, including some the most controversial issues of the 2013 Florida legislative session:

| Issue   | James Madison Institute (JMI)  | Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA)  | American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Advocating for Attacks on Retirement Security</b></p> | <p>In January 2013, after the Florida <a href="#">Supreme Court upheld a law</a> requiring workers to pay more into state retirement plans, JMI President &amp; CEO Robert McClure <a href="#">released a statement</a> praising the ruling, and then called for the legislature to take another action by requiring new hires to be placed in a riskier 401k-style plan. JMI has also released <a href="#">several reports</a> calling for further attacks on worker retirement security.</p> | <p><a href="#">FGA listed</a> the passage of a bill harming workers' retirement security in its list of "good accomplishments" of the 2011 Florida Legislature.</p> | <p>ALEC's "<a href="#">Public Employees' Portable Retirement Option (PRO) Act</a>" is a move towards eliminating defined benefit retirement plans for public employees, which protects retirees.</p> |

| Issue   | James Madison Institute (JMI)   | Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA)  | American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)   |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Privatizing Public Education: Vouchers, Charter Schools, &amp; Parent Trigger</b></p> | <p>“<a href="#">Education Reform</a>” is one of JMI’s stated focus areas, and over the years JMI has published numerous reports supporting school vouchers, charter schools, and parent trigger legislation. JMI President Bob McClure also <a href="#">issued a statement</a> condemning the Florida Legislature for blocking ALEC’s parent trigger bill during the 2013 legislative session.</p>  | <p>In 2011, <a href="#">FGA listed the following</a> as good accomplishments of the Florida Legislature: “Ended tenure, expanded charter schools, vouchers and virtual schools.”</p>  | <p>Education privatization is a key component in ALEC’s extreme agenda. ALEC’s school voucher “models” include the <a href="#">Education Enterprise Zone Act</a> and <a href="#">The Parent Choice Scholarship Program Act</a>. ALEC’s charter school models include the <a href="#">Charter Schools Act</a> and the <a href="#">Next Generation Charter Schools Act</a>. Finally, <a href="#">ALEC’s ‘Parent Trigger Act’ is very similar to ones that have been rejected in the Florida Legislature</a> in recent years, containing some word-for-word language.</p> |
| <p><b>Against Healthcare Reform &amp; Medicaid Expansion</b></p>                            | <p>JMI filed an <a href="#">Amicus Brief</a> with the Supreme Court in support of the State of Florida’s challenge to the Affordable Care Act. In addition, JMI has <a href="#">released several reports</a> against the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid Expansion. In February 2013, JMI <a href="#">released a poll</a> showing the majority of voters opposed Medicaid expansion. The poll was conducted by <a href="#">Cherry Communications</a>, who, according to their website, “promote Republican principles by providing voter contact and other phone services to the Republican community”</p> | <p>FGA is against the <a href="#">2010 Affordable Care Act</a>, and has released several reports <a href="#">against Medicaid expansion</a>. In addition, FGA’s Tarren Bragdon attended <a href="#">ALEC’s Health and Human Services Task Force</a> in Scottsdale, AZ in November 2011. Finally, several news outlets report that Tarren Bragdon <a href="#">met with Florida lawmakers during the 2013 session</a> to “examine the Affordable Care Act” and lobby them not to expand government Medicaid for Floridians.</p> | <p>ALEC has issued several “model” bills against the 2010 Affordable Care Act, including the <a href="#">Freedom of Choice in Health Care Act</a> and the <a href="#">Resolution Opposing Employer-Paid Health Care Mandates</a>. ALEC’s <a href="#">Guide to Repeal Obamacare</a> is a guide for state legislators to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and urges them to reject Medicaid expansion and federal grants for Medicaid.</p>  |
| <p><b>Preemption &amp; Earned Sick Time</b></p>   | <p>JMI released a <a href="#">report in February 2013</a> that opposed minimum wage earned sick time, and wage theft mandates.</p>  |   | <p>ALEC’s model on the issue <a href="#">Living Wage Mandate Preemption Act</a> and its connection to push preemption bills across the country was <a href="#">exposed by Think Progress</a> in March 2013, including <a href="#">its efforts in Florida</a>.</p>  |

| Issue                           | James Madison Institute (JMI)  | Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA) | American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Against the Minimum Wage</b> | JMI has stated its opposition to the minimum wage in Florida in <a href="#">2012</a> and <a href="#">2013</a> reports. JMI Policy Director Robert Sanchez also <a href="#">wrote in the Orlando Sentinel in March 2013</a> against raising the minimum wage. |  | ALEC has produced several “models” to oppose minimum wage laws, including the <a href="#">Resolution in Opposition to any Increase in the Starting (Minimum) Wage</a> and the <a href="#">Living Wage Mandate Preemption Act</a> |
| <b>Paycheck Deception</b>       | In December 2012, JMI <a href="#">released a report</a> calling for the Florida Legislature to pass paycheck deception legislation and an article entitled “ <a href="#">Why Florida Needs Paycheck Protection</a> ” also appeared in the JMI Journal.       |  | ALEC’s <a href="#">Paycheck Protection Act</a> is an attempt at union-busting by making it difficult for public employee unions to raise funds to protect and advance the interests of workers.                                  |