



A Union of Professionals

Funding ‘Won’t Back Down’ – Overview of Philip F. Anschutz

Philip F. Anschutz is a conservative patron and former oil and gas baron with an estimated net worth of \$6 billion.¹ He operates one of the largest nonprofits in the United States, and has a variety of media holdings including Anschutz Entertainment Group, Walden Media and the conservative daily *The Examiner*.² Given Anschutz’s ties to the extreme right—including the funding of homophobic groups, anti-union organizations, and climate and evolutionary science deniers—his recent foray into education reform is very troubling.

Walden Media Owner

Walden Media is the film production and publishing company behind the anti-teachers union movies “Won’t Back Down” and “Waiting for ‘Superman.’” Walden Media is owned by Anschutz, whose business partner has made clear that he wants the film company’s output to be “entertaining, but also to be life affirming and to carry a moral message.”³ With “Won’t Back Down,” Anschutz continues his anti-union advocacy by underwriting a fictional film that misrepresents teachers unions and highlights controversial “parent trigger” efforts.

Anti-Science Activities

- Helped fund the Discovery Institute through a \$70,000 donation from the Anschutz Foundation in 2003. The Discovery Institute is one of the leading think tanks challenging evolutionary science.⁴
- Greenpeace notes that media companies owned by Anschutz figure prominently in the denial of climate science and the promotion of climate-change skepticism.⁵

Anti-Union Activities

- Between 2003 and 2010, the Anschutz Foundation donated at least \$210,000 to the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, a think tank that opposes labor unions.

Anti-Rights Activities

- Anschutz supported Colorado’s 1992 anti-gay Proposition 2, which allowed private property owners and employers to discriminate against homosexuals and lesbians,⁶ by donating \$10,000 to the campaign.⁷
- Between 2003 and 2010, the Anschutz Foundation gave \$125,000 to the Media Research Center. The Media Research Center recently attacked various media outlets for covering protests against Chick-fil-A that stemmed from anti-gay statements made by Chick-fil-A president Dan Cathy.⁸
- Since 2008, the Anschutz Foundation has donated \$175,000 to the Mission America Foundation, a far-right organization whose president considers homosexuality to be a “deviance”⁹ and has railed against the removal of HIV-based travel restrictions, warning that “the U.S.’s liberal homosexual culture’ will attract HIV-positive immigrants.”¹⁰

Backer of Corporate Interests in Public Education

- The Anschutz Foundation donated \$110,000 to the Alliance for Choice in Education between 1998 and 2008. Anschutz’s Walden Media produced and promoted both “Waiting for ‘Superman’” and “Won’t Back Down.”

Anti-Environment Activities

- A natural gas exploration company owned by Anschutz, the Anschutz Exploration Corporation, sued the town of Dryden, N.Y., over the town’s regulation of hydraulic fracturing,¹¹ or “fracking,” a process that has been blamed for severe environmental damage.¹² A judge upheld the town’s ban, but Anschutz’s lawyers have pledged to continue their claim.
- Anschutz Mining Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Anschutz Corporation, is the former operator of Madison County Mines in Fredericktown, Mo. Madison County Mines is an EPA Superfund site, contaminated with cadmium and lead.¹³

A Sample of Anschutz's Donations

Anschutz controls the Anschutz Foundation, the 60th-largest foundation in the United States.¹⁴ Below is a list of donations made by Anschutz compiled by Ken Libby from IRS filings.¹⁵

Foundation	Donation total (1998 - 2008)
AEI	\$22,500
Alliance for Choice in Education	\$110,000
American Spectator Foundation	\$30,000
Americans for Prosperity	\$47,500
America's Future Foundation	\$10,000
Association of American Educators Foundation	\$100,000
Cato Institute	\$120,000
Claremont Institute	\$100,000
Denver School of Science and Technology	\$250,000
Evergreen Freedom Foundation	\$15,000
Free Congress Research and Education Foundation	\$25,000
Freedom Works	\$5,000
Freedom Works Foundation	\$17,500
Heritage Foundation	\$353,000
Hoover Institution	\$15,000
Independence Institute	\$120,000
KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy	\$10,000
Leadership Institute	\$15,000
Manhattan Institute	\$325,000
Mercatus Center	\$50,000
Mountain States Legal Foundation	\$70,000
National Right to Work Legal Defense	\$65,000
Pacific Research Institute	\$172,500
Washington Legal Foundation	\$160,000
Young America's Foundation	\$10,000

¹http://www.forbes.com/lists/2010/10/billionaires-2010_Philip-Anschutz_DSAA.html

²<http://www.examiner.com/article/philip-anschutz-the-examiner-and-the-conservative-movement>

³<http://cdn.breitbart.com/Big-Hollywood/2010/12/10/Exclusive-Interview--Walden-Media-President-Michael-Flaherty-on-Dawn-Treader--the-Liam-Neeson-Controversy--and-the-Franchises-Fu>

⁴<http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/story?id=1297170&WNT=true>

⁵<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/campaigns/global-warming-and-energy/polluterwatch/koch-industries/CASE-STUDY-The-Kochtopus-Media-Network/>

⁶www.nytimes.com/1993/12/15/us/colorado-judge-overturms-initiative-banning-gay-rights-laws.html

⁷<http://www.talk2action.org/story/2011/8/31/113147/698>

⁸<http://www.mrc.org/press-releases/chick-fil-controversy-exposes-medias-anti-christian-bias-and-free-speech-double-stand>

⁹<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/linda-harvey-boycott-everybody>

¹⁰<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/linda-harvey-laments-end-travel-ban-hiv-positive-people>

¹¹http://www.alternet.org/print/story/155381/meet_the_christian_right-wing_multi-billionaire_out_to_frack_our_world

¹²http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/the-big-question-mark-on-fracking/2012/02/28/gIQAebfXgR_blog.html

¹³<http://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.contams&id=0701102>

¹⁴<http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/topfunders/top100assets.html>

¹⁵<http://www.schoolsmatter.info/2010/10/philip-anschutz-and-walden-media-what.html>