

From: Luther Lowe [mailto:luther@yelp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 1:44 PM
To: Jay Riestenberg
Subject: Re: Yelp's membership in ALEC

Here's the statement:

Yelp allowed its membership in ALEC to expire months ago and we did not join Google in Dallas at the meeting in July. When we joined in 2013 we [were very specific and transparent about our goals](#): to encourage the adoption of model anti-SLAPP legislation. Anti-SLAPP laws make it tough to bring meritless lawsuits against individuals that have shared their honest opinions online. It should be no surprise that at Yelp, we're highly supportive of any effort to promote and protect free speech online; we advocate for free speech on both sides of the aisle. We found ALEC provided a unique forum to bring a good idea to the table. [Our approach was not without irony and it invited a backlash](#), yet to ALEC's credit, our model bill passed unanimously: the Public Participation Protection Act -- a model bill we advanced to protect consumers from bullying -- [is live on ALEC.org today](#), and we hope lawmakers in states across the country are able to draw inspiration from it for years to come. Given that our very specific goal was achieved, we allowed our membership to expire.

Amidst the backlash to our joining, we had a direct conversation with the ALEC leadership and encouraged more transparency within the organization. Specifically, we suggested ALEC invite C-SPAN to fully cover their meetings. Such sunlight on the organization would exert important pressure on ALEC to steer clear of controversial issues it has taken up in the past, while revealing to the broader public that providing a forum for policy makers and industry leaders to collaborate can result in consumer benefit (as was our experience).

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