

August 27, 2018

Verizon Communications  
1095 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10013

To:

Lowell C. McAdam, Chairman  
Hans Vestberg, Chief Executive Officer  
Matthew D. Ellis, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
James J. Gerace, Chief Communications Officer  
Rose Stuckey Kirk, Chief Corporate Social Responsibility Officer  
Rima Qureshi, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer  
Marc C. Reed, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer  
Craig Silliman, Executive Vice President, Public Policy and General Counsel

We write to urge that you cease your association with and stop funding the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which recently provided a platform for white supremacist, sexist, and racist rhetoric at their annual meeting.

At its August 2018 convention in New Orleans, ALEC had David Horowitz – a right-wing extremist – as one of its featured speakers at two parts of the conference. Horowitz’s Freedom Center has been identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) as a group “giving anti-Muslim voices and radical ideologies a platform to project hate and misinformation.”

During his time in front of a cheering crowd, Horowitz painted an apocalyptic version of America where the white race and what he calls traditional Christian values are under attack by a “socialist” Democratic Party and their non-white allies. He claimed that public schools are “indoctrination and recruitment centers for the Democratic party and its socialist left.” He claimed that “school curricula had been turned over to racist organizations like Black Lives Matter and terrorist organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood.”

These extreme assertions are already vitriolic enough on their own to justify denouncing Horowitz’s role at ALEC. However, Horowitz also attacked the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which guarantees marriage equality for all Americans, and suggested that states should be able to overturn the decision, even going as far as claiming that the Supreme Court is “the greatest institutional threat to constitutional order.” His remarks at ALEC made additional hateful references to the LGBTQ community, people of color, public education, feminism and gender equality, and women’s access to reproductive healthcare.

According to a legislator and a reporter at the conference, Horowitz also spoke on a panel where he defended Trump calling a woman a “pig,” claimed the Constitution’s 3/5 compromise was not about blacks, denounced its critics as “communists,” and argued that the United States could only have been founded by Protestant Christians. Although ALEC was in control of these two

presentations, not once did an ALEC representative interject to correct Horowitz or distance itself from his extremist claims.

This isn't just rhetoric – Horowitz's goal at the ALEC conference was to build support among the audience for a new constitutional convention via Article V of the U.S. Constitution to embed his racist and reactionary agenda in our Constitution. By featuring Horowitz not just once but twice at the meeting, ALEC has shown it is more interested in redefining “the American way of life” in an undemocratic, authoritarian, and white supremacist fashion. ALEC's lobbying for a dangerous Article V convention to fundamentally rewrite our Constitution, as well as its lobbying for legislation that restricts and criminalizes the First Amendment in state legislatures, are just two examples of how out of step ALEC is with your company's stated values.

Make no mistake, your continued financial support of ALEC is an endorsement of this dangerous vision for our country. Your company's funding of ALEC helped underwrite its conference where Horowitz was given two platforms to spread his hate and attacks.

Although ALEC claims to merely support “free-market values” and “the American way of life,” its agenda points to creating a regressive, exclusionary, and divisive version of society that it pushes behind closed doors, skirting state gift and lobbying laws at lavish resorts where legislators and lobbyists vote as equals on bills at ALEC task forces without the public or press present. ALEC has pushed numerous reactionary measures to become law—including draconian proof of citizenship to vote requirements, repealing environmental safeguards while denying climate change science, expanding detention of immigrants, preempting states and localities from setting their own laws when it comes to gun safety and public health, and enacting “Stand Your Ground” bills. ALEC even has a legacy of standing with South Africa against the anti-apartheid divestment movement. It now appears ALEC is providing an open platform for spreading new extremist and white supremacist claims by the far-right.

In recent years, we as a nation have seen white supremacists and racists feel emboldened to come out of the shadows, but we have also seen the power of organizing against oppression in all corners of our society. We've seen everyday Americans from both political parties and corporate leaders stand up for equality and against hate, harassment, and discrimination. We must continue to speak out against the kind of hate and disinformation like Horowitz's presentations at ALEC.

The undersigned organizations ask you to stand up for equality and American democracy at a time when we need to do everything in our power to protect and defend longstanding democratic norms against further erosion.

Democracy, freedom of speech, assembly, and expression, and the stability that those foundational ideals, have served as the bedrock for the success of our nation, and the success of your business. Your support of ALEC is incompatible with those ideals.

We ask Verizon to make clear that it will not stand for the sort of toxic, inflammatory claims ALEC has embraced.

We urge you to stop funding and leave ALEC.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women  
AFL-CIO  
African American Ministers In Action  
Alliance for Retired Americans  
American Family Voices  
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)  
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Blue Future  
Campaign for America's Future  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for Media and Democracy  
ChangeLab Solutions  
Coalition for Peace with Justice  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Color of Change  
Common Cause  
Communications Workers of America (CWA)  
Courage Campaign  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
Demand Progress  
Democracy 21  
Democracy Initiative  
Democracy Matters  
End Citizens United  
Equal Justice Society  
Food & Water Watch  
Foundation for a Smokefree America  
Franciscan Action Network  
Free Press  
Greenpeace USA  
Harrington Investments  
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Jobs With Justice  
Main Street Alliance  
Make the Road New York

Money Out Voters In  
Move to Amend  
Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
NAACP  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Economic and Social Rights Initiative  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Lawyers Guild  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
Network of Spiritual Progressives  
New Progressive Alliance  
Newground Social Investment  
NorthStar Asset Management  
OneAmerica  
People Demanding Action  
People For The American Way  
Presente.org  
Pride at Work  
Progress Iowa  
Progress Michigan  
Progressive Caucus Action Fund  
ProgressNow Arizona  
Public Citizen  
Public Justice Center  
RootsAction Education Fund  
SC Progressive Network  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sierra Club  
Stand Up To ALEC  
The Laura Flanders Show  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
United We Dream  
UnKoch My Campus  
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press  
Working America  
Workplace Fairness  
Zevin Asset Management  
#VOTEPROCHOICE

