

Letters to the Editors, Lancaster Intelligencer Journal/New Era – October 7, 2011

TO THE EDITORS:

What chutzpah! How hypocritical! Our self-professed, fiscally conservative Republican legislators and governor were "forced" to cut drastically in the state budget much needed funding for secondary and higher education.

Yet many of these same lawmakers had no problem allocating themselves \$50,000 for food and travel, etc., to attend at taxpayer expense an ALEC conference advancing only the GOP ideology. (Aug. 15 Intell editorial).

This American Legislative Exchange Council is a powerful coalition of corporations, GOP legislators and operatives. ALEC promotes only right-wing politics. Even some of the conservative Supreme Court justices, especially Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia, attend. No wonder they favored the corporations in Citizens United!

At the expense of working people, the GOP-using ALEC is catering to those with great wealth, like the billionaire Koch brothers, who also fund the tea party. The nerve of our Republican representatives to use scarce dollars from all Pennsylvania taxpayers to participate annually in lavish, GOP-only, ALEC retreats.

States with Republican governors and legislatures, including Pennsylvania, are implementing ALEC's model legislation. The voter ID bill, which suppresses elderly, student and minority votes, has

already passed the state House. What other ALEC legislation has Pennsylvania already passed and plans to pass?

By passing laws that benefit mostly the corporations (oil, banks, pharmaceuticals, insurance companies and the super wealthy), the Republican lawmakers are turning our representative democracy into a representative oligarchy (government by a small, exclusive class). Shame of them for advancing party and self-interest over public interest.

Is it in the public interest to have laws favoring the corporations and the rich, laws that do away with unions, universal health care, privatize education, dilute environmental protection, the Clean Air Act and make it harder for people to vote? These are the goals of ALEC and the GOP.

Since we taxpayers footed the entire cost, do we at least have the right to know who of our local legislators attended and how many statewide, including the governor? Also, was anything left of the allotted \$50,000?

The shameless audacity of our conservative lawmakers is reprehensible. No more taxpayer-paid ALEC retreats!

Inge Kepple – Mountville

TO THE EDITORS:

I read an interesting article today. State Rep. Scott Boyd will not run. He intends to not wear out his welcome and to live up to his promise.

I am an Armstrong, Marietta, ceiling worker who is locked out of his job after 31 years of service.

My company's contract offer takes away our pension for newly hired employees. Asks us to pay more for a lesser medical insurance plan (80-65) and strips us of some seniority rights. Also, our retiree medical plan was taken away years ago.

Now compare this to our elected state officials. Free lifetime medical insurance for serving 10 years. Collect a pension after only five years of service at the age of 50. These same representatives want to revise pension plans for other state workers, which he calls costly and antiquated.

This is the same mentality that runs corporate America. It's OK for me to have all the perks while taking away the average worker's livelihood.

I guess it's just a coincidence he stayed in office for 10 years.

As long as politicians are in bed with corporate America, we will need unions.

Gary Butzer – Rapho Township