

May 21, 2020

Karen Hobert Flynn
Chief Executive Officer
Common Cause
805 15th Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Karen:

I write in response to your letter to companies about ALEC work related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Your organization's letter unnecessarily politicizes the issue of human wellbeing; an issue where we both agree. Facts matter. Your provably false narrative and continued corporate intimidation are pursued without regard for the actual work of ALEC over the past two months.

The "dangerous agenda" you say ALEC has advanced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic includes communicating official, [fact-based public health information](#) from the CDC to all U.S. state legislators, regardless of their ALEC membership status. It includes the promotion and encouragement for legislators to share [Ad Council public service announcements about social distancing](#) and risk mitigation. And, in regards to [public policy](#), we've shared models to empower medical professionals to work across state borders, individuals to seek needed care via telehealth, and for children to learn remotely while separated from their school communities and trusted teachers.

We are all in this together. Regardless of your political views or activist agenda, this is not the time for division, name calling and finger pointing. This is a time for us to unite America.

Americans and people the world over are suffering as a result of the pandemic. They have lost loved ones and support networks; missed school graduations and church services; lost access to employment or to food and the ability to fulfill and meet basic human needs.

We are social beings. We need community. And during this time, the fabric of society has unraveled. We should work together to ensure every fiber of our shared society is restored.

In this regard, virus containment cannot be society's sole focus. There are health risks to any and every action taken—related to both restrictions and to infections. It is a false choice to force a public health debate on virus spread without regard for mental health. Joblessness and isolation can lead to depression, substance abuse and domestic violence.

We must also acknowledge that in our vast country, each state, community, and individual confront a different set of circumstances. New York City is worlds away from Rapid City, South Dakota. It is healthy and reasonable for communities to take different approaches to public health and societal lock down.

As states and communities begin their return to normal, society must implement the best workplace practices to protect the health of our citizens. This is the first principle of the [Save Our Country Coalition](#) targeted and vilified in your letter. Individual responsibility is also paramount. While ALEC has always focused on individual liberty, it is more important now than ever for individuals to act responsibly, to take the necessary precautions absent a mandate. As free-thinking people, we do not need the government to tell us to act responsibly. It should be a matter of course for adults to act like adults and take the necessary precautions to protect themselves, their families, neighbors, and communities.

We agree with your letter's assertion. "We understand the damage the COVID-19 crisis has caused to our communities and economy and support lifting public health and safety measures when it's safe, but now is not the time to rush a political agenda or jump to unfounded conclusions." However, we also believe in the locally executed, state managed and federally supported response to COVID-19. The perspective shared in your letter indeed rushes a political agenda and jumps to unfounded conclusions about ALEC work without regard for the facts.

Will you join me in putting people and solutions over politics?

Respectfully,



Lisa B. Nelson
Chief Executive Officer
American Legislative Exchange Council