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American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a “bill mill” which produces “model” anti-public education legislation for state legislatures throughout the nation.

ALEC is a non-profit organization of conservative state legislators and private sector corporate representatives. Hundreds and hundreds of corporations are involved in ALEC.

Much of the privatization of public services legislation has ALEC’s fingerprints. ALEC is a champion of the privatization of public education. Charter schools, vouchers, and most of the legislation that is negative to public education has been churned out by ALEC.

Nick Evans, in the September 6 [Ohio Capital Journal](#), identifies some of the new slices of model legislation ALEC released recently.

Coming soon in Ohio? ALEC releases new raft of model legislation

BY: [NICK EVANS](#) - SEPTEMBER 6, 2023 4:55 AM

The American Legislative Exchange Council unveiled [23 new pieces of model legislation this summer](#) — potentially offering a sneak peek at upcoming agenda items in Ohio. The organization, commonly known as ALEC, is a kind of “bill mill,” drafting and disseminating proposals state lawmakers can try out back home.

Among the organization’s ideas? Prohibitions on ranked choice voting and state pension programs aimed at environmental or social investment goals. They also want to discourage regulations on artificial intelligence or social media.

What is model legislation and why does it matter?

Model legislation is a kind of skeleton key for state lawmakers. It’s relatively easy to convey what you want a law to do. But actually drafting it to do so can be tricky. Groups like ALEC step in to provide the means to achieve those ends.

In practice, that means one idea can pop up in statehouses all over the country remarkably quickly. Even if those proposals carry local tweaks, model legislation allows a broader policy objective to spread rapidly.

Outside sources like industry groups or think tanks lobbying lawmakers isn’t new, but ALEC has arguably perfected the process. The organization brings together dues-paying state lawmakers and representatives from some of the country’s biggest corporate interests. UPS, Koch Industries and State Farm are all represented on the ALEC’s private enterprise advisory council. Industry groups representing tech and pharmaceutical interests are there too alongside the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Federation of Independent Business.

State Rep. Bill Seitz, R-Cincinnati, during the Ohio House session, May 24, 2023, at the Statehouse in Columbus, Ohio. (Photo by Graham Stokes for Ohio Capital Journal. Republish photo only with original article.)

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Lawmakers get ready-made legislation and the gratitude of potential donors. Corporations get to advance their interests quietly and cheaply.

Although ALEC bills itself as nonpartisan, it describes its principles as “limited government, free markets and federalism.”

Every single member of its board of directors is a Republican, among them Ohio state Rep. Bill Seitz, R-Cincinnati.

Starting in 2019, the Center for Public Integrity started [tracking model legislation](#) as part of a project called “Copy, Paste, Legislate.” The effort compares legislative text across states, so it’s not always clear where the proposal originated. According to the database, however, more than 40 bills in Ohio over the last two years carry language matching legislation filed in other states.

Not all of them are hot button culture war proposals. But Ohio’s so-called anti-trans [SAFE Act](#), public accommodation protections for [people who refuse vaccines](#) and broad new [emergency powers](#) for suppressing riots were all introduced in some form in multiple states.

New model legislation

ALEC’s latest model legislation covers a broad array of policy areas. One proposal would address housing shortages by allowing homeowners to build “[accessory dwelling units](#)” on their property. Another encourages courts to recognize “[fictive kin](#)” — think family friends or unrelated godparents — when making custody decisions if a parent can’t provide care.

On the tech front, they’ve offered two industry friendly proposals on social media and AI.

When it comes to young people on social social media, rather than requiring parental consent — as was recently proposed in Ohio — or imposing sweeping new privacy restrictions — as California did — ALEC suggests [safety training](#). Under the proposal, the state education department would create a curriculum encouraging “time management and healthy behaviors” as well as how to identify and report cyberbullying or predatory behavior. The same curriculum can discuss social media’s benefit, too, like “resume building” and meeting people with similar interests.

For AI, their legislation warns “throughout history, major technological advances have been met by hysterical and misguided responses from government regulators.” Instead, ALEC asserts the [free market](#) is “best equipped to advance artificial intelligence innovation and protect consumers.” Existing anti-discrimination laws, they contend, should be sufficient for regulating entities using AI.

ALEC also takes a swipe at “[ESG](#)” [investment strategies](#) by proposing legislation that prohibits the approach for state pension systems. In theory, environmental, social and corporate governance investing considers a company’s broader societal impact in addition to investment returns. Conservatives have [criticized private asset managers](#) like BlackRock and Vanguard for putting “woke” politics above profits. Even some liberals argue the ESG designation is too vague, and allows corporations to “greenwash” their practices.

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Despite favoring a hands-off approach to AI, ALEC contends state lawmakers can't leave the markets to decide on ESG. "These strategies reduce investment returns over the long term," ALEC argues, "which leads to underfunding in state pension plans across the country."

ALEC's proposals also include a handful of criminal justice ideas that depart from earlier more punitive responses. In one, they propose [eliminating fines and fees for youth offenders](#). Collecting often costs more than the potential revenue and the debt leads to greater recidivism. Another measure encourages [alternative sentencing for crimes committed by veterans](#).

In its [anti-ranked choice voting proposal](#), ALEC insists "states are the fundamental level of government," and warns activists are trying to advance the procedure through local elections. ALEC says ranked choice is "novel and complicated," and asserts it creates "conflict between state and local election processes." Maine and Alaska have used ranked choice in federal races since 2020 and 2022 respectively without a problem. Several municipalities around the country use it for local elections as well.

ALEC's model legislation would prohibit any procedure where voters vote for "more than one candidate" or "rank multiple candidates" for the same office, as well as any system that "reallocate a voters vote" to another candidate.

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