

# Black Alliance for Educational Options

The Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) is seeking to organize the black community in support of legislation to authorize charter schools in Kentucky. The purpose of this review is to share more information regarding BAEO and the organizations that fund and support it. Although the speakers from BAEO portray the organization as a grassroots advocacy group, BAEO is actually a well-funded issue advocacy arm of well-financed political interests that promote privatization of public services.

President George W. Bush received a great deal criticism for funding BAEO with public funds for this reason. Consider what THE BLACK COMMENTATOR had to say about this at the time...

"The Bush Administration is directly funding a media campaign by the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO), the school vouchers propaganda outfit created by the far-right Bradley Foundation. The blatant political nature of the gift could not be plainer. "We want to change the conversation about parental choice by positively influencing individuals who are resisting parental choice options and get them to reconsider their outlook," said Undersecretary of Education Gene Hickok, announcing a \$600,000 grant to the BAEO."

[http://www.blackcommentator.com/16\\_thw.html](http://www.blackcommentator.com/16_thw.html)

A quick internet search reveals the following description of BAEO along with some of its primary funders...

## Black Alliance for Educational Options

The **Black Alliance for Educational Options** (BAEO) is an organization dedicated to the eradication of public schools. It received much of its funding from the [Walton Family Foundation](#). According to [Media Transparency](#), BAEO is "actually a project of the [Institute for the Transformation of Learning](#), headed by [Howard Fuller](#), at Marquette University." [1]

## Funding

According to Media Transparency, BAEO has received funding from: [3]

- [John M. Olin Foundation](#) - \$100,000 in 2001, "to support parental choice in education"
- [Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation](#) - \$500,000 in 2001 and \$325,000 in 2003, to support general operations
- [Walton Family Foundation](#) - \$621,374 in 2002, to support education, and \$600,000 in 2003

It is worth looking further into these funders and what other organizations and cause they support...

## John M. Olin Foundation

The Foundation is **financed by profits from the Olin chemical and munitions fortune** with assets estimated at \$90 million, \$3 million of which goes to conservative advocacy groups. The Foundation "supported right-wing causes for many years but became more focused on grantmaking after [William E. Simon](#) took over as president in 1977." Simon, who had been chosen to lead the Foundation by Olin, was followed by [Michael Joyce](#), who left Olin in 1985 to lead the [Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation](#). He has since returned to be Olin's president.[6]

Conservative agenda

During a typical funding year, the Foundation gave \$20,482,961 to fund various [right-wing think tanks](#) including:

- [American Enterprise Institute](#) (AEI),
- [Brookings Institution](#),
- [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#) (CSIS),
- [Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy](#),
- [Council on Foreign Relations](#) (CFR),
- [Heritage Foundation](#),
- [Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace](#),
- [Hudson Institute](#),
- [Independent Women's Forum](#),
- [Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies](#) (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University,
- [Manhattan Institute](#) for Public Policy Research,
- [Project for the New American Century](#) (PNAC).

"The Foundation also gives large sums of money to promote conservative programs in the country's most prestigious colleges and universities."<sup>[3][4][5]</sup> and it provided funding support, along with the various foundations controlled by [Joseph Coors](#) and family, and [Richard Mellon Scaife](#), to create a chain of anti-environmental, pro-business, legal advocacy organizations.

## Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation

The **Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation**, according to The Bradley Foundation 1998 Annual Report, was giving away more than \$30 million per year.<sup>[1]</sup>

Harry was one of the original charter members of the far right-wing [John Birch Society](#), along with another Birch Society board member, [Fred Koch](#), the father of [Koch Industries](#) billionaire brothers and owners, [Charles](#) and [David Koch](#).<sup>[2]</sup>

According to the [Media Transparency](#) web site, the Foundation's "resources, its clear political agenda, and its extensive national network of contacts and collaborators in political, academic and media circles has allowed it to exert an important influence on key issues of public policy. While its targets range from affirmative action to social security, it has seen its greatest successes in the areas of welfare 'reform' and attempts to privatize public education through the promotion of school vouchers...

"The overall objective of the Bradley Foundation, however, is to return the U.S. -- and the world -- to the days before governments began to regulate Big Business, before corporations were forced to make concessions to an organized labor force. In other words, laissez-faire capitalism: capitalism with the gloves off.

"To further this objective, Bradley supports the organizations and individuals that promote the deregulation of business, the rollback of virtually all social welfare programs, and the privatization of government services. As a result, the list of Bradley grant recipients reads like a *Who's Who* of the U.S. Right ... [Heritage Foundation](#) ... [Madison Center for Educational Affairs](#) ... [American Enterprise Institute](#) for Public Policy Research, literary home for such racist authors as [Charles Murray](#) (*The Bell Curve*) and [Dinesh D'Souza](#) (*The End of Racism*), former

conservative officeholders [Jeane J. Kirkpatrick](#), [Jack Kemp](#) and [William J. Bennett](#), and arch-conservative jurists [Robert H. Bork](#) and [Antonin Scalia](#)...<sup>[3]</sup>

"Other Bradley grantees include ... [Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace](#); and the [Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation](#)" ... [Potomac Foundation](#), the [MacIver Institute](#) and [Encounter Books](#).<sup>[4][5]</sup>

## Walton Family Foundation

The **Walton Family Foundation** was established as the culmination of the philanthropic interests of the family of Sam M. and Helen R. Walton, owners of [Wal-Mart](#). **Much of the focus of the foundation is on the eradication of public schools.**

The foundation held assets worth \$733.9 million at the end of 2003. It's director is [Buddy Philpot](#). The foundation is governed by Helen Walton, [Rob Walton](#) and [John Walton](#).

Grants Include:

[American Education Reform Council](#) - \$1,310,000.00  
[American Enterprise Institute](#) for Public Policy Research - \$80,000.00  
[Black Alliance for Educational Options](#) - \$600,000.00  
[Cato Institute](#) - \$3,000.00  
[Center for Education Reform](#) - \$1,177,709.00  
[Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence, Inc.](#) - \$5,000.00  
[Center for Policy Studies](#) - \$373,444.00  
[Children's Educational Opportunity Foundation America](#) - \$10,492,047.38  
[Fellowship of Christian Athletes](#) - \$8,000.00  
[Florida School Choice Fund](#) - \$1,383,584.50  
[Freedom House](#) - \$5,000.00  
[Fuller Theological Seminary](#) - \$2,500.00  
[Heritage Foundation](#) - \$5,000.00  
[Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options](#) - \$1,029,500.00  
[Hudson Institute](#) - \$25,000.00  
[Institute for Humane Studies](#) - \$40,000.00  
[Institute For Justice](#) - \$200,000.00  
[Institute for Policy Studies](#) - \$5,000.00  
[Manhattan Institute](#) for Policy Research - \$75,000.00  
[Milwaukee Center for Independence](#) - \$150,000.00  
[National Council of La Raza](#) - \$776,250.00  
[National Council on Economic Education](#) - \$20,000.00  
[National Right to Work Legal Defense & Education Foundation](#) - \$25,000.00  
[Oral Roberts University](#) - \$5,000.00  
[Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy](#) - \$35,000.00  
[Parent Institute for Quality Education, Inc.](#) - \$205,000.00  
[Partners Advancing Values in Education](#) - (PAVE) \$280,000.00  
[Strategies for the Global Environment](#) - (Sea Change) \$200,000.00  
[Students in Free Enterprise](#) - \$150,000.00

Clearly, BAEO and its funders are part of a political movement which is fundamentally at odds with the interests of the very individuals and groups for whom BAEO purports to be advocating.