



A conservative billionaire who opposes government meddling in business has bought a rare commodity: the right to interfere in faculty hiring at a publicly funded university.

A foundation bankrolled by Libertarian businessman Charles G. Koch has pledged \$1.5 million for positions in Florida State University's economics department. In return, his representatives get to screen and sign off on any hires for a new program promoting "political economy and free enterprise."

Traditionally, university donors have little official input into choosing the person who fills a chair they've funded. The power of university faculty and officials to choose professors without outside interference is considered a hallmark of academic freedom.

Under the agreement with the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, however, faculty only retain the illusion of control. The contract specifies that an advisory committee appointed by Koch decides which candidates should be considered. The foundation can also withdraw its funding if it's not happy with the faculty's choice or if the hires don't meet "objectives" set by Koch during annual evaluations.

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