August 27, 2018

Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

900 Ridgebury Road

Ridgefield, CT 06877

To:

Paul Fonteyne, U.S. President and CEO

Dr. Wolfgang Baiker, Senior Vice President, Human Pharma Supply & Global Quality

[Hubertus von Baumbach](https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/people/person.asp?personId=8084969&capId=5466292&previousCapId=5466292&previousTitle=Boehringer%20Ingelheim%20GmbH), Chairman of Board of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer

We write to urge that you cease your association with and stop funding the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which recently provided a platform for white supremacist, sexist, and racist rhetoric at their annual meeting.

At its August 2018 convention in New Orleans, ALEC had David Horowitz – a right-wing extremist – as one of its featured speakers at two parts of the conference. Horowitz’s Freedom Center has been [identified](https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/david-horowitz) by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) as a group “giving anti-Muslim voices and radical ideologies a platform to project hate and misinformation.”

During his time in front of a cheering crowd, Horowitz painted an apocalyptic version of America where the white race and what he calls traditional Christian values are under attack by a “socialist” Democratic Party and their non-white allies. He claimed that public schools are “indoctrination and recruitment centers for the Democratic party and its socialist left.” He claimed that “school curricula had been turned over to racist organizations like Black Lives Matter and terrorist organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood.”

These extreme assertions are already vitriolic enough on their own to justify denouncing Horowitz’s role at ALEC. However, Horowitz also attacked the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges,* which guarantees marriage equality for all Americans, and suggested that states should be able to overturn the decision, even going as far as claiming that the Supreme Court is “the greatest institutional threat to constitutional order.” His remarks at ALEC made additional hateful references to the LGBTQ community, people of color, public education, feminism and gender equality, and women’s access to reproductive healthcare.

According to a legislator and a reporter at the conference, Horowitz also spoke on a panel where he defended Trump calling a woman a “pig,” claimed the Constitution’s 3/5 compromise was not about blacks, denounced its critics as “communists,” and argued that the United States could only have been founded by Protestant Christians. Although ALEC was in control of these two presentations, not once did an ALEC representative interject to correct Horowitz or distance itself from his extremist claims.

This isn’t just rhetoric – Horowitz’s goal at the ALEC conference was to build support among the audience for a new constitutional convention via Article V of the U.S. Constitution to embed his racist and reactionary agenda in our Constitution. By featuring Horowitz not just once but twice at the meeting, ALEC has shown it is more interested in redefining “the American way of life” in an undemocratic, authoritarian, and white supremacist fashion. ALEC’s lobbying for a dangerous Article V convention to fundamentally rewrite our Constitution, as well as its lobbying for legislation that restricts and criminalizes the First Amendment in state legislatures, are just two examples of how out of step ALEC is with your company’s stated values.

Make no mistake, your continued financial support of ALEC is an endorsement of this dangerous vision for our country. Your company’s funding of ALEC helped underwrite its conference where Horowitz was given two platforms to spread his hate and attacks.

Although ALEC claims to merely support “free-market values” and “the American way of life,” its agenda points to creating a regressive, exclusionary, and divisive version of society that it pushes behind closed doors, skirting state gift and lobbying laws at lavish resorts where legislators and lobbyists vote as equals on bills at ALEC task forces without the public or press present. ALEC has pushed numerous reactionary measures to become law–including draconian proof of citizenship to vote requirements, repealing environmental safeguards while denying climate change science, expanding detention of immigrants, preempting states and localities from setting their own laws when it comes to gun safety and public health, and enacting “Stand Your Ground” bills. ALEC even has a legacy of standing with South Africa against the anti-apartheid divestment movement. It now appears ALEC is providing an open platform for spreading new extremist and white supremacist claims by the far-right.

In recent years, we as a nation have seen white supremacists and racists feel emboldened to come out of the shadows, but we have also seen the power of organizing against oppression in all corners of our society. We’ve seen everyday Americans from both political parties and corporate leaders stand up for equality and against hate, harassment, and discrimination. We must continue to speak out against the kind of hate and disinformation like Horowitz’s presentations at ALEC.

The undersigned organizations ask you to stand up for equality and American democracy at a time when we need to do everything in our power to protect and defend longstanding democratic norms against further erosion.

Democracy, freedom of speech, assembly, and expression, and the stability that those foundational ideals, have served as the bedrock for the success of our nation, and the success of your business. Your support of ALEC is incompatible with those ideals.

We ask Boehringer Ingelheim to make clear that it will not stand for the sort of toxic, inflammatory claims ALEC has embraced.

We urge you to stop funding and leave ALEC.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women

AFL-CIO

African American Ministers In Action

Alliance for Retired Americans

American Family Voices

Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)

Bend the Arc Jewish Action

Blue Future

Campaign for America's Future

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Constitutional Rights

Center for Media and Democracy

ChangeLab Solutions

Coalition for Peace with Justice

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Color of Change

Common Cause

Communications Workers of America (CWA)

Courage Campaign

Defending Rights & Dissent

Demand Progress

Democracy 21

Democracy Initiative

Democracy Matters

End Citizens United

Equal Justice Society

Food & Water Watch

Foundation for a Smokefree America

Franciscan Action Network

Free Press

Greenpeace USA

Harrington Investments

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Jobs With Justice

Main Street Alliance

Make the Road New York

Money Out Voters In

Move to Amend

Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia

Muslim Public Affairs Council

NAACP

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Economic and Social Rights Initiative

National Employment Lawyers Association

National Lawyers Guild

National Partnership for Women & Families

Network of Spiritual Progressives

New Progressive Alliance

Newground Social Investment

NorthStar Asset Management

OneAmerica

People Demanding Action

People For The American Way

Presente.org

Pride at Work

Progress Iowa

Progress Michigan

Progressive Caucus Action Fund

ProgressNow Arizona

Public Citizen

Public Justice Center

RootsAction Education Fund

SC Progressive Network

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Sierra Club

Stand Up To ALEC

The Laura Flanders Show

Union of Concerned Scientists

Unitarian Universalist Association

United We Dream

UnKoch My Campus

Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press

Working America

Workplace Fairness

Zevin Asset Management

#VOTEPROCHOICE