



Knowledge Is Power

Who Is This ALEC?

If you are currently dealing with state laws that negatively impact your business, WTCA's partnership with ALEC may help.

by SBC Staff

If you've either recently attended a WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting, or talked to someone who has, you've probably heard someone mention ALEC. You wouldn't be alone if your first thought was "Who is this Alec person?" Well, in actuality, ALEC stands for the American Legislative Exchange Council, the nation's largest nonpartisan, individual membership organization of state legislators.

So, to answer your question of who, ALEC "is" over 2,400 current state lawmaker members, who regularly get together to discuss policies and issues affecting government on a local level. More than 100 of their members hold senior leadership positions within their respective statehouses, and their alumni include over 90 members of Congress and six sitting governors.

ALEC was formed more than 25 years ago by a small group of mainly Midwestern state lawmakers. The mission at the time was to create a voluntary membership organization for legislators who believed, "the government closest to the people was fundamentally more effective, more just, and a better guarantor of freedom than the distant, bloated federal government in Washington, DC."

Their present-day mission is to:

- Promote the principles of federalism by developing and promoting policies that reflect the principles that the powers of government are derived from, and assigned to, first the People, then the States, and finally the National Government.
- Enlist state legislators from all parties and members of the private sector who share ALEC's mission.
- Engage in an ongoing effort to promote its principles among elected officials, the private sector, and the general public, for the purpose of enacting substantive and genuine legislative reforms consistent with the ALEC mission.
- Conduct a policy making program that unites members of the public and private sector in a dynamic partnership to support research, policy development and dissemination activities.
- Prepare the next generation of political leadership through educational programs that promote the principles of ALEC.

As a result, ALEC has earned a credible reputation for gathering legislators, business leaders and public policy experts together to discuss issues and develop policies that focus on encouraging economic growth and limiting the size of government. Their most successful formula in this endeavor has been the ALEC Task Forces.

The ALEC Task Forces started in 1981 under the Reagan Administration as clear-houses of ideas driven by issues like federalism and the public education system. However, by the early 1990s, the Task Forces became more permanent fixtures, adopting a "think tank" type model that actively solicited input from the private sector on pertinent issues.

Today, the ALEC Task Forces hold 20-30 meetings each year, which work to devel-

at a glance

- ❑ WTCA recently became a member of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).
- ❑ ALEC is made up of over 2,400 current state lawmakers.
- ❑ ALEC's task forces give private enterprise a voice with lawmakers through drafting model legislation.

op model legislation to address policy problems. ALEC members then use this model legislation to create, develop, introduce and guide to enactment a wide range of measures into state law.

Consequently, ALEC represents a unique opportunity for WTCA to provide input and help draft model legislation on issues ranging from tort reform, construction defects and transportation, to building and fire regulation. In addition to joining ALEC as a private member, WTCA is now also a member of the ALEC Trade & Transportation Task Force. Throughout the coming year, WTCA will be working with other members of this committee to draft, as an initial trial, model legislation to address industry concerns in various states regarding oversize load permits for commercial motor vehicles.

As a start, WTCA staff will be attending the ALEC annual meeting in Grapevine, TX, this summer, and will attend the Trade & Transportation Task Force meeting scheduled for August 4. If you have encountered problems pertaining to oversize load permits from state entities, please email Sean Shields at sshields@qualtim.com and provide him with your thoughts. The more examples WTCA can provide to members of the task force regarding this issue, the better the opportunity we will have to effect change at the state level.

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