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Alphabet's Google is racing to hire more conservatives for its lobbying and policy arm, trying to get a foothold in President-elect Donald Trump's Washington after enjoying a uniquely close relationship with the administration of President Barack Obama.

In the weeks since the Nov. 8 election, Google has ramped up efforts to hire Republican lobbying firms and in-house lobbyists to change the composition of its Washington office, according to three lobbyists with knowledge of the matter. The company also posted an advertisement for a manager for conservative outreach and public policy partnership, seeking a "liaison to conservative, libertarian and free market groups."



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New York headquarters. The session, organized by Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, adviser Reince Priebus and Trump supporter and tech financier Peter Thiel, is billed as an introductory meeting that would not result in any job or investment announcements, two sources briefed on the talks said.

Others attending are Apple Inc Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook, Facebook Inc Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg, Amazon.com CEO Jeff Bezos, Tesla Motors Inc CEO Elon Musk, Microsoft Corp CEO Satya Nadella and Oracle CEO Safra Catz, according to sources familiar with the session plans. The Information Technology Industry Council, a trade group whose members include Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon, had a conference call last Friday to discuss policy objectives it could agree on to present to Trump, according to a person familiar with the call.

Trump clashed with Silicon Valley on several issues during the election campaign, including immigration, government surveillance and encryption. His surprise victory alarmed many companies, which fear he

While the position is not new, it gives Google a chance to make a hire that reflects the new political climate. Conservatives already are represented in the office. A Google spokeswoman declined to comment on the record for this article.

Chief Executive Officer Larry Page of Alphabet, Google's parent company, is expected to be in the room on Wednesday when Trump convenes a gathering of some of the largest technology companies in his

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might follow through on his pledges. Trump has also opposed the Obama administration's "net neutrality" rules, ordered in 2015 by the communications regulator to reclassify broadband internet services to treat them more like public utilities. The rule is now said to be headed for a reversal.

Liberal-leaning Silicon Valley bet heavily on Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton winning the White House, and many technology companies have found themselves scrambling in the wake of Trump's election. But Google, which forged deep ties to the Obama White House and was the largest corporate contributor to Clinton's campaign, appears to have been caught especially off guard, Washington insiders said.

Only 33 employees of Google and its parent company Alphabet donated \$201 or more to Trump, for a total of \$23,300. Clinton received donations from 1,359 Google or Alphabet employees for a total of \$1.6 million. Google NetPAC, the company's political action committee, made 56 percent of its contributions to Republicans in the 2016 election cycle, according to data from the Center for Responsive Politics.

During Obama's presidency, more than 250 people moved between jobs at Google or related firms and the federal government, national political campaigns and Congress, according to a report this year by the Campaign for Accountability, a watchdog group. The company notched several wins during the administration, including favorable policies on net neutrality.

Google seemed poised to enjoy similar treatment under a Clinton administration. Schmidt was seen wearing a staff badge at Clinton's election night party, a sign of their close relationship. But those ties are now something of a liability as the company tries to re-position its presence, lobbyists said. The hiring push will adjust the political makeup of Google's Washington office, where the team of lobbyists for Congress and the agencies contains more Democrats than Republicans, according to people familiar with the operation. Such a skew is not unusual given that Democrats controlled the White House the past eight years.

To be sure, conservatives are well-represented in the company's Washington office: Susan Molinari, a former Republican congresswoman from New York, has been the top lobbyist since 2012, and Seth Webb, who worked for a former Republican speaker of the house, helps lead Congressional lobbying.

But the company has tended toward moderate Republicans in past hiring. Its previous director of conservative outreach was alumnus of Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign, and a number of former staffers for Sen. John McCain have passed through the office as well. But the company still has to reconcile the lobbyists it hires with its liberal-leaning existing staff. Said one lobbyist for a rival tech company, "I think they are going to have a tough time really finding the cultural fit." – Reuters

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Republican pols and their supporters are accustomed to biased media coverage from a Washington press corps dominated by liberals, but there's reason to believe that Donald Trump could have it worse than his GOP predecessors.

We are told that Mr. Trump's cabinet picks pose threats to the country ranging from merely grave to existential. Businessman Andy Puzder is unacceptable as labor secretary because he believes minimum-wage hikes hurt job growth. Never mind that McDonald's is currently replacing human cashiers with automated kiosks to counteract the unions' nationwide push for a \$15 per hour minimum.

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, the president-elect's choice to head the Environmental Protection Agency, is branded a climate-change "denier" for writing that scientists "continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind." Liberals often resort to name-calling to shut down serious policy debates. Only a racist would criticize affirmative action, and only a homophobe would oppose same-sex marriage, right? But now we've reached a point where questioning the impact of something is no different from denying that it exists.

Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, the nominee for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, is knocked for having no expertise in housing policy or running a government agency, which is apparently more difficult than brain surgery. While Elaine Chao, a George W. Bush administration veteran who's been tapped to run the Transportation Department, is accused of being an "insider"—i.e., having too much experience in government. Rex Tillerson, the chief executive of Exxon Mobil, is unfit for secretary of state because his company does business with Russia. The same people who questioned the president-elect's knowledge of foreign affairs during the campaign now tell us that he's surrounding himself with too much military brass. Well, make up your mind.

Clearly, Mr. Trump can't win, and the best way forward for him may be to not even try. The media establishment's problems with the incoming president go deeper than ideology. The press still isn't over the fact that a nonpolitician won the White House. The Trump victory knocked veteran journalists off their stride. Most of the political know-it-alls who type and talk for a living misread the candidates and the

public mood, and we're still coming to grips with that. Hillary Clinton promised to put the coal industry out of business and lost. Why should it shock or outrage anyone that Mr. Trump is appointing cabinet members who support the use of fossil fuels?

The current hubbub over Mr. Trump's financial conflicts of interest resembles the debate over his tax returns during the campaign. The media was obsessed with getting Mr. Trump to make his returns public, but voters didn't care. Reporters are right to demand transparency when it comes to Mr. Trump's business dealings, and if he wants to maintain the trust of voters and not waste time warding off congressional investigations for the next four years, he'll be open about conflicts of interest and work to avoid them.

But calls for Mr. Trump to sell off his hotel and real estate businesses to avoid conflicts set a bad precedent and discourage capable people who are not professional politicians from seeking elected office. Mr. Trump won in part due to the country's distrust and disappointment in traditional politicians, yet the media continue to hammer him for not behaving like one.

There's no shortage of legitimate criticism of the president-elect. The tariff threats are as problematic as interference with Carrier's business model or the new administration's talk of another Obama-style Keynesian stimulus package. Evidence that Russia determined the outcome of the election exists only in the imagination of Democrats, but foreign cyberattacks are a real and growing threat, and Mr. Trump ought to take them more seriously than he has in recent interviews. His foolish comments about women, minorities and immigrants didn't prevent him from getting elected, but that doesn't make them any less inappropriate.

At some point, Beltway journalists may become interested in closing the gap between their own concerns and priorities and those of their audience, but the current focus on recounts and fake news suggests that they aren't there yet. Mr. Trump makes it clearer every day, if not with every tweet, that he has zero interest in becoming the kind of workaday politician whom journalists would prefer to cover. So long as this standoff continues, denizens of the Fourth Estate will be catering mostly to each other and the political elites. "Most of Washington punditry," the late Christopher Hitchens once said, is "private letters, written to other pundits, appearing in public space." That's never been as true as it has since Donald Trump was elected. Voters deserve better. – *Wall Street Journal*

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To Twitter Inc., a live video is worth 140 characters.

Twitter is rolling out a feature starting Wednesday to let users of its app broadcast videos as easily as composing a tweet, furthering its bid to move live video from the periphery to the center of its digital town square. The move to let people broadcast their surroundings directly from the app underscores the importance of live video to social-media companies. Twitter and Facebook Inc. are expanding their live-video capabilities to reach more users with more immediate and original content that could eventually be tied to advertising.

Positioning itself as a major player in live video is important to Twitter because the company touts itself as the destination to "see what's happening right now," and increasingly people are recording what's happening in the world through the cameras on their smartphones rather than in text updates. "We think live video can take these moments and bring them to life in a way that no other medium can," said Sara Haider, senior manager for software engineering at Twitter.

Twitter and Facebook have spent significant resources trying to associate their brands with live video. In April, Twitter said it had obtained the rights to stream some of the National Football League's Thursday night games and in July, it announced a partnership with CBS News to live stream the Republican and Democratic conventions to leverage the large audiences of those events to reach more users. Facebook, meanwhile, has paid internet stars to create live broadcasts and planned major ad campaigns to encourage more of its regular users to stream live video, in an effort to refashion the social network into a "video-first" company.

Twitter is hoping live video will juice its growth. In the third quarter, Twitter reported dwindling revenue growth, and executives at the time said the company would double down on its video strategy to broaden Twitter to mainstream users. The new live-streaming feature on Twitter's app is powered by Periscope, an app Twitter acquired in 2015 for slightly less than \$100 million. Earlier this year, Twitter enabled viewing of Periscope videos within the Twitter app, but users still had to go to Periscope to create the videos or comment on them.

The new Twitter feature combines most of Periscope's interface, such as the ability for users to comment on and "like" live videos within the player. Ms. Haider says Twitter has no plans to shut down

the Periscope app and will continue investing in it. As of last year, Periscope said it had 10 million users.  
– *Wall Street Journal*



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