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Alphabet Inc's Google disclosed in a quarterly filing on Tuesday that it spent a company-record \$21.2 million on lobbying the U.S. government in 2018, topping its previous high of \$18.22 million in 2012, as the search engine operator fights wide-ranging scrutiny into its practices.

In its filing to Congress on Tuesday, Facebook Inc disclosed that it also spent more on government lobbying in 2018 than it ever had before at \$12.62 million. That was up from \$11.51 million a year ago, according to tracking by the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics. Google's spent \$18.04 million on lobbying in 2017, according to the center's data. Google and Facebook declined to comment beyond their filings.

U.S. lawmakers and regulators have weighed new privacy and antitrust rules to rein in the power of large internet service providers such as Google, Facebook and Amazon.com Inc. Regulatory backlash in the United States, as well as Europe and Asia, is near the top of the list of concerns for technology investors, according to financial analysts. Microsoft Corp spent \$9.52 million on lobbying in 2018, according to its disclosure on Tuesday, up from \$8.5 million in 2017 but below its \$10.5 million tab in 2013.

Apple Inc spent \$6.62 million last year, compared to its record of \$7.15 million in 2017, according to center data going back to 1998. Apple and Microsoft did not respond to requests to comment. A filing from Amazon was expected later on Tuesday. Google disclosed that new discussion topics with regulators in the fourth quarter included its search technology, criminal justice reform and international tax reform. The company is perennially among the top spenders on lobbying in Washington along with a few cable operators, defense contractors and healthcare firms.

Google Chief Executive Sundar Pichai, who testified in December before a U.S. House of Representatives panel for the first time, has said the company backs the idea of national privacy legislation. But he has contested accusations of the company having a political bias in its search results and of stifling competition. Susan Molinari, Google's top U.S. public policy official, stepped down to take on an advisory role this month. Facebook said discussing "election integrity" with national security officials was among its new lobbying areas in the fourth quarter. The filing said the company continued to lobby the Federal Trade Commission, which is investigating its data security practices. — **Reuters**

Overnight, thousands in our area lost their congressman, at least for now. Tom Marino no longer represents the 12th Congressional District. His resignation is official, but his former offices are still up and running after Marino left mere weeks into his fifth term. One of the district offices in the 12th Congressional District just outside Tunkhannock is staying open despite Marino's resignation. It now becomes a nonpartisan office run by the clerk of the House of Representatives

until a special election for the seat. But for the time being, this district doesn't have a vote or a voice in Washington.

The cable company was getting to work at the congressional offices on West Tioga Street near Tunkhannock, but this office won't have a name on it just yet after Marino's resignation became official overnight. With a letter to the Speaker of the House and Governor Wolf, Marino left saying only that he's taking a new job. The Republican from Lycoming County hasn't said where and would not agree to an interview with Newswatch 16. "That really stinks. That's suspicious. What's going on? What caused him to be here for only three weeks?" asked Jessica Barber. "What's going on?"

For now, Marino's former offices in Williamsport, as well as the one near Tunkhannock, will help constituents with typical issues, nothing political. But there will be no votes in Congress with no one representing the newly drawn 12th District which goes from the northern tier to Harrisburg. Republican party officials in Wyoming County are putting a positive spin on Marino's abrupt resignation. "It has to be unchartered for us, certainly. I'm sure we'll work through it," said Wyoming County GOP chair Davis Haire.

The next step is a special election to replace the congressman. "It was extremely quick, and he was a fantastic man, did a fantastic job for us, and we really need to get somebody else to get in there to take over because of the problems in Washington," said Ken Singer of Montrose. "I'm sure it's hard for the community, especially not knowing they don't have a voice in this community to Washington."

Marino had to file paperwork with the House Ethics Committee before leaving. The office in Washington says we're not allowed to see it. We could know in one month, at most, where Tom Marino plans to work next when he's required to file campaign finance reports. We expect to hear from Governor Wolf as early as Thursday morning on the next step toward a special election for the 12th Congressional seat. – **WNEP-TV, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton**

Voters in heavily Republican northcentral Pennsylvania have a special election date set to elect a new representative to the U.S. House after the five-term Republican incumbent Tom Marino resigned just three weeks into the new congressional term. Gov. Tom Wolf said Thursday he scheduled the special election to coincide with Pennsylvania's primary election on May 21.

Congressman Tom Marino's last day in office was Wednesday. Marino was a strong ally of President Donald Trump's and easily won a fifth term in November, but the 66-year-old **abruptly announced his resignation last week**, saying only that he's taking a job outside government. The sprawling 12th Congressional District seat that includes all of Wyoming, Susquehanna and Bradford counties and all or parts of 12 other counties stretching to Williamsport and State College in central Pennsylvania.

Republicans are heavily favored, with about 100,000 more registered voters than Democrats. On the Republican side, at least seven names have surfaced as possible nominees. On the Democratic side, only one person has publicly shown interest in running in the heavily Republican district. Political party committee members or delegates will pick nominees. – **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**



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