

Biden Plans To Put Big Tech Cronies In Charge Of Big Tech Regulation As Political Payola

By Tristan Justice

Big Tech's election interference to propel Joe Biden to the Oval Office appears poised to pay off as the president-elect considers tech-friendly corporate lawyers to lead the antitrust division at the Department of Justice.

According to [The Intercept](#) reporting with [The American Prospect](#), Renata Hesse, a former Obama Justice Department official who went on to work for Google during the Trump years, is a top contender to lead the antitrust division at the DOJ during a pivotal moment for the California tech giants facing intense pressure from government regulators on both sides of the aisle. While in private practice, Hesse played a primary role in the Amazon merger with Whole Foods and also represented major pharmaceutical giants.

“As recently as a couple years ago, Hesse seemed to dismiss antitrust concerns from Google's control of the online search market,” the papers reported, highlighting [testimony](#) at a field hearing with the Federal Trade Commission. “She also said that it's ‘really easy to switch’ away from Google if users don't like the product.”

The Intercept and Prospect also reported that Juan Arteaga, another former Obama DOJ official, is in the mix to be assistant attorney general for antitrust. Arteaga represented AT&T in its merger with Time Warner and has defended JPMorgan along with several other major financial firms in fraud cases. Sources reportedly told the papers, however, that Arteaga is more likely to land as deputy assistant attorney general for antitrust under Hesse.

The leading contenders have raised anxieties among Big Tech critics that a Biden administration staffed with former tech lawyers and lobbyists deferential to their corporate interests would be a missed opportunity at a critical time to reign in the unchecked power of a runaway Silicon Valley. The House Antitrust Subcommittee released the findings of its 15-month-long investigation on Big Tech anticompetitive market practices last fall, detailing bipartisan support for changes in tackling the monopoly power of Facebook, Google, Apple, and Amazon. There also remains a series of ongoing bipartisan state and federal antitrust lawsuits targeting Facebook and Google launched in recent months.

Forty national, state, and local groups sent an [open letter](#) to the incoming president Monday, warning Biden against choosing Big Tech elites to regulate Big Tech elites as the president-elect's team considers a series of high-powered veterans of Silicon Valley's corporate class for key roles in the new administration.

“As you prepare to take office, we urge you to avoid appointing to key antitrust enforcement positions individuals who have served as lawyers, lobbyists, or consultants for Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google,” the groups wrote through the American

Economic Liberties Project. “Instead, we encourage you to appoint experienced litigators or public servants who have recognized the dangers of, rather than helped to exacerbate, these corporations’ market power.”

Colorado Republican Congressman Ken Buck also decried the potential appointments of friendly tech veterans to roles where they might regulate the same industry they spent years protecting.

Joe Biden should not be appointing someone who worked for Google and Amazon to lead the Antitrust Division.

This is very concerning for those of us who want to hold Big Tech accountable. <https://t.co/IKioLyCRTO>

— Congressman Ken Buck (@RepKenBuck) **January 19, 2021**

As for who might lead the Justice Department at the top, Biden nominated former 2016 Supreme Court nominee Merrick

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