



Trump Names Son-in-law as Advisor; Media Raises Nepotism Issues

President-elect Donald Trump [named his son-in-law, Jared Kushner](#), as a senior advisor in his administration on Monday:

Jared has been a tremendous asset and trusted advisor throughout the campaign and transition and I am proud to have him in a key leadership role in my administration.

He has been incredibly successful in both business and politics. He will be an invaluable member of my own team as I set and execute an ambitious agenda, putting the American people first.



The anti-Trump media jumped at the chance to question Trump's decision, claiming that it violated anti-nepotism rules put in place after President John F. Kennedy named his brother, Robert Kennedy, as attorney general.

Jamie Gorelick, an attorney advising Trump and Kushner on the matter, said there's little to be concerned about:

We've discussed this with the Office of Government Ethics. I'm very comfortable that this arrangement is appropriate under the rules. The [OGE] has given us advice and we [have] followed it.

The anti-nepotism rules don't apply to "the immediate office of the president," said Gorelick, and besides, Congress has passed a law saying that the president can have "total discretion" over whom he picks for his staff.

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To be sure there is little conflict of interest, Kushner is ridding himself of nearly every bit of his \$200 million investment portfolio. He is resigning as CEO of Kushner Companies, the real estate firm that he inherited from his father and built into a major presence in New York City. He is also resigning as publisher of his newspaper, the *New York Observer*. He is selling his stocks in foreign companies, and is divesting himself of his interest in his company's property at 666 Fifth Avenue, as well as his interest in his brother's firm, Thrive Capital. And Gorelick will be there to advise him on when he must recuse himself, as necessary, on matters that could relate to his wife's businesses and his other remaining holdings.

Of course, the president is free to seek advice from anyone he wishes, even if the nepotism rule did apply. Kushner will serve as a non-paid staff advisor so he won't even be a government or administration employee.

The primary reason behind Trump's selection of Kushner as an advisor, perhaps one of his most trusted advisors, is that Kushner, according to *Forbes* magazine, put Trump in the White House. As Trump's



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 10, 2017

campaign began, it started from ground zero: little staff, no money, no plan, little political experience. Trump was, and is, an outsider, and he had to build his campaign from the ground up.

Unencumbered with strategies that were soon to be shown as outdated and irrelevant, Kushner initially deferred to experts in the field of data management, targeting, and fundraising online. By June last year Kushner, with the help of Brad Parscale, a web designer from San Antonio, had built a 100-person data gathering, management, and analysis team dubbed “Project Alamo.” Slowly, Kushner and his team, made up mostly of volunteers, began to learn that traditional means of messaging — TV, radio, and print advertising — just weren’t as effective as much less costly social networking through Facebook and Twitter. As the team’s abilities expanded, and Kushner’s hard-headed decision-making style refined its efforts, the Trump campaign began to focus on those networking tools “as key tools not only for spreading Trump’s message but also targeting potential supporters, scraping massive amounts of constituent data, and sensing shifts in sentiment in real time,” according to *Forbes’* reporter Steven Bertoni.

Kushner was, and is, a realist. If something wasn’t working, it was jettisoned in favor of something that was:

We weren’t afraid to make changes. We weren’t afraid to fail. We tried to do things very cheaply, very quickly. And if it wasn’t working, we would kill it quickly.

It meant making quick decisions, fixing things that were broken and scaling [up] things that worked.

As the campaign began to gain traction, “Project Alamo” morphed into an advisory team for Trump, dictating every campaign decision: travel, fundraising, advertising, even rally locations and the speech topic at each of them.

Eric Schmidt, the Google billionaire, admitted that Kushner learned something that traditional media people, and the Hillary Clinton campaign, didn’t:

Jared understood the online world in a way that traditional media folks didn’t. He managed to assemble a presidential campaign on a shoestring, using new technology, and [they] won.

That’s a big deal. Remember all those articles about how they had no money, no people, no organizational structure? Well, they won, and Jared [Kushner] ran it.

In less than 10 days, Donald Trump will be president, and he will need Kushner more than ever. He has learned the advantages of social networking: learning what people are thinking, what they want or don’t want, what’s concerning them, all in real time and without having the message twisted and massaged and spun by the anti-Trump media.

All Kushner has done is change not only how future presidential elections will be won or lost but how the winner will continue to connect with the people responsible for the victory.

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