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## Policy Push - Think Tanks And Trade Groups Under A Trump Presidency

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Policy experts throughout Washington, D.C. spent much of 2016 assuming that a Hillary Clinton presidency was just around the corner. White papers, infographics, and case studies were overwhelmingly aimed at policies and regulations that would fall slightly center-left on the political spectrum, a space the Clinton campaign carved out during much of the primary and general elections.

For these individuals, Election Day brought more than just an unexpected surprise; it upended months of preparation and planning for a future that was suddenly no longer a reality. Their focus had to shift, and quickly.

With a new administration coming to power in Washington, D.C., certain concerns will be elevated over others, including many that the Obama administration did not prioritize over the past eight years. Policy-centric organizations, including think tanks and trade associations, now find themselves in radically different positions than they were just a few months ago.

Under a hypothetical Clinton presidency, the balance of power amongst housing policy-oriented organizations would largely have remained intact. Groups such as the Urban Institute and the Milken Institute would play a large role in the political discussion, proposing policies and analyzing legislation much like they have throughout the Obama administration. Trade associations like the National Housing Conference, National Association of Realtors, and the National Fair Housing Alliance expected to have a large voice in conversations over the next four years, given the Clinton platform's policies on expanding access to home loans, updating underwriting tools, and promoting housing-assistance programs. However, the incoming Trump administration has not yet signaled a desire to focus on any of these issues, so those think tanks and trade groups, among others, may find themselves fighting an uphill battle.

In their stead, conservative and libertarian-leaning groups are already moving to advance a free market agenda on Capitol Hill and in the White House, places where they found little success over the past eight years. Think tanks like the Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the American Enterprise Institute: organizations will have a voice and influence policies behind many of President-elect Trump's campaign promises, including the restructuring of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). They will call for the use of market forces to solve problems, limiting the role of the federal government and reducing government leverage, and overhauling of our nation's tax code. A drastic cut in zoning regulations may be on the table

and Steven Mnuchin, Trump's pick for Secretary of the Treasury, has called the privatization of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac a top-ten priority.

Over the next few months, the agenda of the incoming administration and the new Congress will be the center of attention. Journalists, industry leaders, and various stakeholders will pack themselves into overcrowded committee chambers and press rooms, hoping to gain insights on upcoming policies and programs. However, looking north along Massachusetts Avenue towards Dupont Circle where think tanks and their divergent views on policy reside, may provide a clearer picture of just how the policy conversation is changing with the introduction of a Trump administration.