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## D.C. Notebook: Critics hit Leavitt for Romney transition gig

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Former Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt now has a very key job in the Mitt Romney campaign: heading up the potential transition into a Romney administration.

And it didn't take long for critics of Leavitt to come down hard on the ex-governor for not being conservative enough.

"Mitt Romney has chosen liberal Republican Michael Leavitt to lead his presidential transition team," wrote a blogger for the Libertarian-leaning Cato Institute in Washington. "A lot of commentary focuses on his 'Obamacare-lovin' proclivities."

See, Leavitt, the former head of the Department of Health and Human Services, has backed state-based health care exchanges, a key part of the Democrats' health-care law, and Leavitt's company, Leavitt Partners, has made a bunch of money helping states set up those exchanges.

Leavitt also took some heat for pitching taxes for online retail sales while he was governor, a battle he never won.

Welcome to the presidential race, governor, where everyone involved gets to experience the full wrath of the Internet.

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Quick endorsement • Leavitt offered a comment to the publication Politico about his new gig but has declined other news media requests. That didn't stop him, however, from sending a letter to Sen. Orrin Hatch, endorsing the Utah Republican in his primary battle.

"Not only do you have the vision and ideas for Medicaid reform, but, as ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, you are in a key leadership position to make historic reform happen," Leavitt said in a statement. "Utah and our country need you for this important endeavor."

Romney is backing Hatch, so it's no surprise that Leavitt tossed his support to the senator, too. But don't expect Leavitt to weigh in on other races.

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Oops • Romney appeared on stage recently in Las Vegas, rallying his supporters now that he's locked up enough delegates to claim the party's nomination.

The former Massachusetts governor started thanking each person standing next to him: Donald Trump, Newt Gingrich, Nevada Sen. Dean Heller, Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval and Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki.

When he came to Rep. Jason Chaffetz of Utah, though, Romney pulled a blank.

"I gotta skip the guy in the center here, because I'm not sure who that is," Romney said, according to a pool report from the event.

Everyone laughed, apparently, including Romney and Chaffetz, the latter looking "mildly embarrassed," the pool reporter said.

A few seconds later, Romney recalled the name of the Utah congressman who has crisscrossed the country for several months helping to promote the White House hopeful.

"This is Jason Chaffetz, a congressman from Utah," Romney said. "How he got on the stage, I don't know. But he's a good friend, and he's been traveling with me, and I appreciate his being here."

Chaffetz told us later that Romney was just playing with him and it was an inside joke since they had spent the entire day together and Romney clearly knew his name.

"He was just having fun," Chaffetz said. "Good fun joshing."

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