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Justice Department drama clouds White House's antitrust approach

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A bitter tug-of-war over antitrust enforcement is testing the White House's dual impulses to challenge tech companies' consolidation and to simply back big American business.

Capitol Forum reported today that acting associate attorney general Chad Mizelle



The argument turned bitter when Slater's team [reportedly](#) pushed HPE to dispense with two consultants close to the Trump administration, the vocal MAGA legal activist Mike Davis and lawyer Arthur Schwartz, and negotiate directly with the government's lawyers.

Slater and her antitrust allies didn't just lose the argument: Earlier this week, top Trump DOJ officials told associates that two of Slater's deputies, Roger Alford and Bill Rinner, were out, two lawyers close to DOJ told Semafor.

By Thursday morning, the men's names had been removed from the department's website. They were restored a few hours later, and a DOJ spokesman said Thursday morning that the two had not, in fact, been ousted.

The episode deepens the perception that Trump's efforts to, for example, support Big Tech in the AI race with China or punish corporate diversity initiatives are crowding out the antitrust enforcement popular with parts of his base.

His appointees have used M&A approvals to win ideological concessions, and Slater just approved a telecom merger that she [acknowledged](#) would cement a cellphone oligopoly.

"The incredible shrinking Trump antitrust enforcers," corporate critic Matt Stoller described the phenomenon [this week](#). On the other hand: FTC Chair Andrew Ferguson appears to have played his internal political cards more deftly and avoided run-ins with Trump aides.

— [Liz Hoffman](#) and [Ben Smith](#)

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