



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 26, 2020

Senator Chris Coons' Former Chief of Staff Registers as Lobbyist for Company With Chinese Communist Party Links

Adam Bramwell, who was chief of staff and general counsel to U.S. Senator Chris Coons (D-Del.) between 2016 and 2019, registered on August 1 as a lobbyist for Alibaba, a Chinese company whose founder, Jack Ma, was exposed as a member of China's Communist Party in a November 2018 article in *Business Insider*.

The Chinese Communist connection to Alibaba is hardly news, having been reported in a 2015 article in *Forbes* and in a 2014 article in *The New York Times*. The *Times* article reported Alibaba's "deep political connections" with (among other entities) CDB Capital, a wholly owned subsidiary of the government-owned China Development Bank (CDB).

The *Times* also noted Alibaba's "senior executive ranks included sons or grandsons of the most powerful members of the ruling Communist Party."

If Bramwell were just another run-of-the-mill lobbyist, his connections with the Chinese Communists might be just another interesting story. But his close connections with Coons make his potential for having a strong influence with Biden troublesome.

The close relationship between Coons and Biden were discussed in June 23 article in *Politico*, "The Biden whisperer in the Senate." The article began: "If Joe Biden wins in November, much of his agenda will hinge on a potentially surprising power player: Chris Coons."

Though Coons is relatively unknown outside of Delaware, he nevertheless anticipates having an active role in a Biden administration should the former vice president win the election.

"I will not stand idly by for four years and watch the Biden administration's initiatives blocked at every turn," Coons was quoted by *Politico*. "I am gonna try really hard to find a path forward that doesn't require removing what's left of the structural guardrails, but if there's a Biden administration, it will be inheriting a mess, at home and abroad. It requires urgent and effective action."

The *Politico* article also quoted two senators who speculated about what role Coons might play in a Biden administration.

"I prefer to think of him as potential secretary of State," Senator Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) said of Coons, who



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is a Senate Foreign Relations Committee member. “I have frankly teased him about it a little bit.”

Senator Bob Casey (D-Pa.), who is a close Biden ally, added, “If Vice President Biden were to win, I think Chris could serve in a number of high-ranking, significant positions.”

Going back to Bramwell, if Coons were to gain such powerful influence in a Biden administration, what influence might his former chief of staff have? One clue is to notice the glowing terms with which Coons described Bramwell in a 2018 press release: “After more than two years leading my office, my long time friend and Chief of Staff, Adam Bramwell, will be taking on the role of Senior Advisor and General Counsel, where I will benefit from Adam’s two decades of legal and policy experience with management, ethics, appropriations, judiciary, business outreach, and national security issues. For over thirty years, Adam has been one of my closest friends and confidantes.”

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Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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