



Tomas Philipson

Former Acting Chair of the CEA/NEC



Life In Brief

Current Title: Former Acting Chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisors

Political Party: Republican Party

Birthplace: Uppsala, SWEDEN

Education:

- PhD, University of Pennsylvania
- MA, Claremont Graduate University
- BA, Uppsala University

Work History:

- Acting Chair, White House Council of Economic Advisors, June 2019-present
- Member, White House Council of Economic Advisers, 2017-2019
- Senior Expert, Compass Lexicon, 2016
- Director, Health Economics Program, Becker Friedman Institute for Economics (UChicago), 2015
- Senior Health Care Advisor, Presidential Campaign of Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), 2008
- Founder, Precision Health Economics, 2005-2015
- Senior Economic Advisor, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 2004
- Senior Economic Advisor, Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, 2004
- Professor of Public Policy, University of Chicago, 1998-present
- Visiting Faculty, Yale University, 1994-1995
- Faculty, University of Chicago, 1990-1998

Quick Summary

Distinguished economics researcher with drug industry ties has health policy experience in government, academia, and the private sector; market-centric philosophy aligns with pro-business White House

- Swedish-born health economist reiterates Administration messages around deregulation and tax cuts as Acting Chair of the WH Council of Economic Advisors (CEA)
- UChicago professor embraces prestigious faculty's traditional preference for markets over government intervention
- Views the provision of health care through a strictly economic lens; encourages market-based system that rewards innovation through high profits
- Consulted for high-profile health care industry players, including Bayer AG and McKesson
- Founded Precision Health Economics, which has conducted research justifying high cost of pharmaceuticals based on calculations of total benefit to society
- Co-authored 2018 CEA report criticizing "socialist policies" that have entered mainstream U.S. debate (e.g. Medicare for All)
- Left CEA in June 2020 to return to his professorship at UChicago

Approach and Motivations

Applies private sector-friendly health care analysis to broader economy and advocates for Trump economic policies

- Academic who draws on economic models to buttress his arguments
- Has embraced role as spokesman for Administration economic policy; preached



optimism about the direction of the U.S. economy as COVID-19 spread in March 2020

- Wrote op-eds with key WH figures, including Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump

Policy Position and Areas of Focus

Former top WH economist who focused on promoting President Trump's economic agenda; past work revolved around health care

Pro-Growth Agenda: *Extolling the president's economic performance*

- Wrote 2020 Economic Report of the President, released in February 2020; catalogs the success of the economy under Trump and makes optimistic growth projections
- Argues that the economic recovery since the 2008 Great Recession can be divided into two phases: a sluggish period under Obama and an accelerated period under Trump
- Credits tax cuts, deregulation, and energy innovation for faster growth since 2017

Health Insurance: *Emphasizing the advantages of private health insurance over single-payer*

- Opposed to U.S. adoption of single-payer "Medicare for All" system; 2018 CEA report ("The Opportunity Costs of Socialism") citing Philipson makes case that single-payer would increase costs and worsen outcomes
- Criticizes European-style health systems for focusing solely on costs and neglecting long-term societal benefits of expensive treatments
- Supports decentralized health care system that encourages innovation and allows for consumer choice

Prescription Drugs: *Defending the drug industry with economic arguments*

- Opposes pharmaceutical price controls; contends they would ultimately reduce innovation and lead to fewer future cures
- Wrote in 2016 op-ed that the debate over drug prices fails to account for the full benefit of expensive drugs; exceeds the sticker price for patients and society
- Argues that every innovative drug, regardless of cost, ultimately lowers the "price of health"

Core Communities

Health economics expert has deep ties to academia, think tanks, and drug makers; has ascended to circle of key WH advisors

University of Chicago: *Longtime professor involved in several university departments*

- Public policy professor has also lectured at the Law School; listed as faculty at the Center for Poverty research; member of the Steering Committee for Center for Health and Social Sciences
- Co-authored papers with renowned UChicago law lecturer and former U.S. circuit court judge Richard Posner
- Co-authored papers with numerous UChicago Economics PhDs

Pharmaceutical Industry: *Former industry board member and consultant*

- Former Eli Lilly board member consulted for numerous drug makers (e.g. Amgen)
- Filed amicus curiae brief on behalf of drug maker Activas; retained as expert on behalf of Amgen in dispute with generic manufacturer



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Conservative Think Tanks: *Affiliations with right-leaning research institutions*

- American Enterprise Institute Visiting Scholar and Heartland Institute Senior Fellow; Milken Institute Fellow and Distinguished Research Award recipient
- Former Chairperson of Project FDA at the Manhattan Institute; initiative seeks to transform the FDA into a “bridge for innovation”

White House Advisors: *Close collaboration with inner circle WH figures*

- Advised Trump with National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin
- Wrote op-eds praising the president’s policies with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner

Relevant Financial Information

Career academic has not donated to any candidates

Political Donations

- According to the Federal Election Commission database, Philipson has no recorded campaign donations

Research grants

- Philipson has received funding from a variety of sources, including UChicago, think tanks, federal agencies (e.g. Department of Agriculture), and private foundations (e.g. John M. Olin Foundation)

Consulting work

- Retained by numerous health industry and pharmaceutical firms, including Bayer AG,

Bristol Meyers Squib, Johnson & Johnson, and McKesson

- A disclosure in a 2017 Forbes column entitled “Value in Healthcare,” noted that drug manufacturers Amgen, Gilead, and Abbvie, which “benefit from higher drug prices,” were clients of Philipson’s firm
- Biotech company Precision for Value bought Precision Health Economics in 2015 for an undisclosed amount

Publications, Media and Speaking

Health policy expert has appeared widely in academic journals, print, and on-air; recent appearances and op-eds praise President Trump

Publications: *Prominent academic has produced a significant body of economic research and wrote a weekly column for Forbes; pens op-eds in national papers with Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump*

- Favorite Outlets: Forbes, national papers, academic journals (e.g. American Economic Review)
- Favorite Subjects: Affordable Care Act, public health (e.g. obesity), health care technology, health care economics, Trump Administration economic policy
- Research examples:
 - “Sharing R&D Risk in Healthcare via FDA Hedges” (2017)
 - “How Does Technological Change Affect Quality-Adjusted Prices in Health Care? Systemic Evidence from Thousands of Innovations” (2016)
 - “Financial Health Economics” (2014)



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Media: *Touts administration economic policy on cable news*

- Preferred Outlets: Fox Business, CNBC
- Favorite Subjects: Labor market, strength of the U.S. economy
- Social Media Habits: Twitter account amplifies White House economic messaging and highlights Philipson's contributions and media appearances

Speaking: *Appears before economists to promote Trump's economic policies*

- Favorite Subjects: Trump Administration economic policies
- Preferred Audience: Economic forums (e.g. National Association of Business Economists)

Professional Affiliations

- Manhattan Institute
- USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics
- Eli Lilly
- Round Table Group

Awards

- International Health Economics Association Kenneth J. Arrow Award, 2000 and 2006; awarded for best paper in the health economics field

Family and Personal Background

“The Swede in the White House” came to the U.S. for a university exchange program and never left, embarking on a successful research career

- Born and raised in Uppsala, Sweden, where he also earned his bachelor's degree; U.S. citizen has lived in the country since 1984

- Mother and two brothers live in Stockholm; told Swedish media that he visits once a year, usually at the family summer home in Scania (southern Sweden)
- Stated in Swedish interview that having a Swedish perspective “has been very useful in evaluating the US economic system”
- After suffering serious knee injuries related to playing on Sweden's junior national volleyball team, Philipson began a one-year exchange program with Claremont Graduate School in California

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