

Best in the business: Hired Guns

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After Democrats took control of Congress, they took control of K Street. Often junior partners during the years of Republican rule, Democratic lobbyists became the faces of their firms in 2007. Even as Democratic congressional leaders sought to break the bond between lobbyists and lawmakers, some advocates took the plunge and opened new shops. By year's end, several had built books of business worth millions of dollars.

The Hill's annual list of top lobbyists reflects the greater importance Democratic lobbyists play, while not forgetting the Republicans in town who maintain a major role in crafting legislation, particularly in the Senate, where voting margins are so close. Today's list names the best "hired guns" and corporate lobbyists. To compile our list, we talked to key congressional aides and lobbyists themselves.

Josh Ackil and Matt Tanielian, Franklin Square Group. Highly regarded for their tech industry connections, former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) aide Ackil and ex-Senate Judiciary Committee chief counsel Tanielian have started their own lobbying shop.

John Ashcroft, The Ashcroft Group. Working with Juleanna Glover, the former attorney general has built a lucrative client base and plays a prominent role in legislative fights ranging from patent reform and telecom issues to immigration.

Doyle Bartlett, Eris Group. This lobbying powerhouse (formerly Bartlett & Bendall) renamed itself last year after the dwarf planet discovered in 2003.

Charles Black, BKSH & Associates. A senior official in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations, Black recently stepped down from his firm to become a full-time adviser on Sen. John McCain's (R-Ariz.) presidential campaign.

Jim Blanchard, DLA Piper. As government affairs practice co-chairman, Blanchard, a former Democratic Michigan governor, has overseen the firm's strong lobbying presence.

Thomas Hale Boggs Jr., Patton Boggs. The pace setter for K Street, Patton Boggs routinely smashes records for annual lobbying revenue.

Chuck Brain, Capitol Hill Strategies. The ex-Clinton White House lobbyist and longtime Ways and Means Committee staffer is one of big business's first choices to bring its message to Democrats.

John Breaux, Trent Lott, Breaux-Lott Leadership Group. The powerful former senators joined forces at the beginning of the year and already have some high-profile clients, among them Northrop Grumman.

Al Cardenas, Tew Cardenas. A Bush-Cheney '04 campaign co-chairman, Cardenas was involved in former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney's (R) presidential run.

Gerald Cassidy, Cassidy & Associates. Despite intensifying scrutiny of earmarks, Cassidy, with help from Republican Gregg Hartley, has seen business remain steady for his firm while diversifying its client base.

David Castagnetti, Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti. This one-time Kerry campaign liaison to Congress boasts close ties to Democrats on the Hill.

Kirsten Chadwick, Fierce, Isakowitz and Blalock. A former aide to Minority Whip Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Chadwick has few peers on K Street in accurately counting votes.

Steve Champlin, Ken Duberstein, The Duberstein Group. A former staffer for several House Democratic whips, Champlin is an effective vote counter on trade and other issues who often works in tandem with Kirsten Chadwick. Duberstein is a top Republican strategist.

George Crawford, King & Spalding. The former chief of staff to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) opens doors on the Hill. The charismatic former staffer has been busy on issues ranging from healthcare to energy and immigration reform.

Al D'Amato, Park Strategies. The top lobbyist for the Poker Players Alliance, this former GOP senator has fused his work

with his passion.

Linda Daschle, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz. The go-to lobbyist for the airline industry, Daschle is broadening her business to rail and telecommunications clients.

Julie Domenick, Multiple Strategies. Domenick struck out on her own last year. When she's not lobbying, she is usually raising money for Democrats.

Tom Downey, Downey McGrath Downey. A former Democratic House member with impressive access to leaders in both chambers, Downey has built a stable practice with a broad range of clients.

Steve Elmendorf, Elmendorf Strategies. If you need a sit-down with a top Democrat on Capitol Hill, calling Elmendorf is a good place to start.

Vic Fazio and Bill Paxon, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld. The Democratic and GOP ex-Reps. Fazio (Calif.) and Paxon (N.Y.) keep racking up business for the large law firm.

William Ferguson, The Ferguson Group. Ferguson and his firm wrote the book on lobbying for local governments.

Mike Fulton, GolinHarris. A former Appropriations Committee aide, Fulton is a veteran hand in the earmarks game and is well-known among West Virginia's congressional delegation.

Sam Geduldig, Clark Lytle & Geduldig. This former aide to House Minority Whip Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) knows how to kill legislative threats to his clients.

Dick Gephardt, Gephardt Group. The former House Democratic leader also lobbies for DLA Piper, representing clients like Turkey. His own shop, which includes his son, Matthew, and daughter, Christine, has lobbied for Boeing and Peabody Energy.

Nick Giordano, Washington Council Ernst & Young. Giordano is among the most well-respected tax lobbyists in town.

Rich Gold, Gerry Sikorski, Holland & Knight. Democrats Gold and Sikorski, a former congressman from Minnesota, have broad experience in Washington and a long list of contacts on the Hill.

Slade Gorton, K&L Gates. From high technology to utilities to Starbucks, this former Republican senator from Washington served a smorgasbord of clients last year.

Frederick Graefe, Law Offices of Frederick H. Graefe. Graefe, a Marine Corps veteran, raises a ton of money for Democrats and represents many clients who have business before the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means committees.

Lanny Griffith, Loren Monroe, BGR Holdings. Though it's shifting to a bipartisan shop, BGR has held its own as an all-Republican outfit and is expanding into international business and state government work.

Larry Harlow, Timmons & Co. Harlow is a former official in the Reagan and Bush administrations. On K Street, his clients include Union Pacific, Chrysler and the American Petroleum Institute.

J. Steven Hart, Williams & Jensen. When he's not lobbying on behalf of blue-chip corporations, Hart raises money for Republican candidates.

Richard Hohlt, The Hohlt Group. This discreet lobbyist attracted headlines when columnist Bob Novak cited Hohlt as a source during the I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby trial. Hohlt is a major contributor to the GOP, and represents high-profile clients - such as Chevron and Fannie Mae.

Mike House, Hogan & Hartson. The head of his firm's lobbying group, House has set his sights on hard-to-pass legislation to reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac this year.

Mark Irion, Gary Andres, Dutko Worldwide. Irion, a former Democratic staffer, and Andres, who worked for Bush 41, have built a bipartisan lobbying powerhouse in Washington.

Joel Jankowsky, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld. Jankowsky is one of the founders of the modern American lobbying business and still one of its best practitioners.

Chris Jennings, Jennings Policy Strategies. In addition to being one of Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's (D-N.Y.) top

healthcare gurus, Jennings also runs a fine lobbying operation with clients in healthcare, manufacturing and high-tech sectors.

Broderick Johnson, Bryan Cave Strategies. A former Clinton administration lobbyist, Johnson helped to win the longest moratorium on Internet taxes last year.

Joel Johnson, Glover Park Group. Johnson, who was a top aide to then-Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), and his firm are viewed as being particularly effective in the Senate, which is often the true test for legislation.

Thomas Jolly, Jolly/Rissler. Jolly is well-known around town, having founded The Washington Caucus, a group that has held monthly meetings with members of Congress to tackle legislative issues for over 15 years.

Matt Keelen, The Keelen Group. A lobbyist with political consulting skills, Keelen was active in this year's Republican presidential race.

Kenneth Kies, Clark Consulting. The former director of the Joint Committee on Taxation, Kies is a sought-after lobbyist for companies trying to avoid tax increases.

Robert Leonard, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld. This sage of tax reform was the Ways and Means staff director during the 1986 tax overhaul.

Bob Livingston, The Livingston Group. While the former House Appropriations chairman lobbies for many clients from his home state of Louisiana, he does not shy away from high-profile jobs such as Turkey's fight against a House resolution condemning as genocide the killing of Armenians during and after World War I.

Paul Magliocchetti, The PMA Group. The Appropriations Defense heavyweight keeps delivering for his clients large and small. He has strong ties to several Appropriations Defense subcommittee veterans, including panel chairman Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.).

Drew Maloney, Moses Mercado, Ogilvy Government Relations. Maloney, former aide to then-House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Texas), maintains strong ties to Republicans in both the House and Senate; Mercado, who used to work for the Democratic National Committee and on then-House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt's (D-Mo.) staff, is a rising star on K Street.

Susan Molinari, The Washington Group. Molinari rose quickly up the Republican ranks as a member of Congress. She's charted the same upward course on K Street.

Daniel Mattoon, Mattoon & Associates. Even without Tony Podesta at his side and during an era of Democratic control, this GOP vet snagged plenty of business in 2007.

Steve McBee, McBee Strategic Consulting. The former senior aide to Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) not only has seen a booming client list, but has also extended his business to Seattle.

Scott Parven, Brian Pomper, Parven Pomper & Associates. Democrats Parven and Pomper are go-to guys for clients who want to reach out to Blue Dogs on Capitol Hill.

Jeffrey Peck, Johnson, Madigan, Peck, Boland & Stewart. Peck helped to shield the private equity industry from a tax hike pushed by the Democratic-controlled Congress last year.

Jim Pitts, DC Navigators. Pitts and co-founding partner Phil Anderson lead this well-regarded GOP firm.

Anthony Podesta, The Podesta Group. Podesta and the firm's other 32 employees represent clients like Lockheed Martin, the National Association of Broadcasters and BP America.

Heather Podesta, Heather Podesta & Partners. Along with husband Anthony, Podesta is a prominent Democratic fundraiser; her new lobbying shop represents blue chippers like Boeing and HSBC North America.

Elliott Portnoy, Mike McNamara, Sonnenschein Nath and Rosenthal. Portnoy, who built the Chicago-based firm's lobbying arm from scratch, is now the youngest chairman in Sonnenschein's history; McNamara, a Harvard-educated lawyer, took over its public policy branch.

Larry O'Brien, OB-C Group. O'Brien's bipartisan shop has clients from practically every sector of the business world.

Manuel Ortiz, Quinn Gillespie & Associates. Ortiz was on the finance committee for Sen. John Kerry's (D-Mass.) 2004

presidential campaign and is well connected to several Democratic senators.

Jack Quinn, Quinn Gillespie & Associates. Republican partner Ed Gillespie may leave from time to time, but Quinn always keeps the firm on course by hiring people like Kevin Kayes, a former chief counsel to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), and Allison Giles, a former chief of staff to then-House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas (R-Calif.).

Thomas Quinn, Venable. Wall Street regularly turns to Quinn for representation in the Democratic-controlled Congress.

Robert Raben, The Raben Group. Raben, a former top aide to Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), leads a growing shop with a diverse client base, which includes corporate giants like Home Depot and advocacy groups like the Human Rights Campaign.

John Raffaelli, Capitol Counsel. A top Democratic lobbyist, Raffaelli is already collecting clients nervous about tax increases if a Democrat wins the White House.

Mitch Rose, Mitch Rose Strategic Consulting. Rose is best-known for his work with the entertainment industry, boasting moviemakers, cable TV providers and record companies on his client list.

Alan Roth, Lent, Scrivner & Roth. Roth maintains close ties to the Energy and Commerce Committee, which his old boss, Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.), again runs as chairman.

Marty Russo, Cassidy & Associates. The ex-Illinois Democratic congressman not only is CEO of one the biggest lobbying shops in town, he's also tight with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.).

Melissa Schulman, The Bockorny Group. Schulman, a former top aide to House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), helps her clients reach the centrists on Capitol Hill.

Scott Segal, Ed Krenik, Bracewell & Giuliani. Segal represents utilities, while Krenik's clients include manufacturers; both are well-respected on Capitol Hill.

Rhod Shaw, the Alpine Group. Shaw and his firm come highly recommended by congressional aides on Capitol Hill.

Joseph Stanko, Hunton & Williams. Stanko, a former GOP counsel to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, is the cerebral head of a government-relations team that also includes former E&C counsel Mark Menezes.

Charlie Stenholm, Olsson, Frank and Weeda PC. The former top Democrat on the Agriculture Committee, Stenholm is close to the key people writing this year's farm bill and knows the policy inside and out.

Sandi Stuart, Clark & Weinstock. A Clinton administration veteran, Stuart represents a lot of healthcare clients but has a broad portfolio.

Linda Tarplin, Tarplin Downs & Young. After opening the doors to her firm two years ago, this GOP veteran and her partners quickly became a go-to shop for healthcare interests.

Rich Tarplin, Tarplin Strategies. Tarplin left Timmons & Co. at the beginning of the year to use his K Street, Clinton White House and Senate experience to their full benefit representing healthcare and financial services clients.

Dan Tate Jr., Capitol Solutions. Tate's experience both on Capitol Hill and in the White House gives companies like Honda, Amgen and Comcast a leg up in Washington.

Stu Van Scoyoc, Van Scoyoc Associates. Known for its appropriations work, Van Scoyoc's firm remains one of the top lobbying practices in town.

Alex Vogel, Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti. The former chief counsel for then-Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) has helped build up one of D.C.'s newest blue-chip firms.

Eric Washburn, BlueWater Strategies. Washburn, a former energy adviser to then-Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), continues to be a resource for Democrats on issues relating to climate change and renewable fuels.

J.C. Watts, J.C. Watts Companies. Watts, an election-night analyst for CNN and a former House GOP leadership member, is tied in with top U.S. corporations.

Vin Weber, Clark and Weinstock. The former Minnesota congressman has racked up high-profile clients ranging from pharmaceuticals to financial services and Internet companies.

Anne Wexler, Wexler & Walker. A pioneer for female lobbyists, Wexler has strong connections to Democrats, having served in the Carter administration. Her partner, former Rep. Bob Walker (R-Pa.), also has clout on K Street.

Jonathan Yarkowsky, Patton Boggs. Yarkowsky is a highly respected advocate on issues before the House and Senate Judiciary committees.