



**Kevin McCauley**  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

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## CAHILL SUCCEEDS LUND AT GCI HEALTH

Wendy Lund, CEO of GCI Health since 2010, is leaving the BCW unit to take the chief communications officer job at Organon & Co.



**Kristin Cahill**

Kristin Cahill, North America president, will succeed Lund on Jan. 1. The 17-year GCI veteran was New York market leader prior to rising to the presidency in 2015. Cahill will report to Donna Imperato, BCW CEO.

“Kristin has spent her entire career in the healthcare industry, providing strategic and creative counsel to clients, recruiting and retaining the industry’s top talent and fostering a very strong

culture,” said Imperato in a statement.

She credited Cahill for serving as a key member of the leadership team that “catapulted the agency from a boutique into a global powerhouse.”

Organon, which has more than 10K employees, is the spin-off of Merck & Co.’s women’s health, contraceptive and fertility businesses.

It also has a line of dermatology, pain, respiratory and cardiovascular products.

## ANTI-SMOKING ORG SEEKS COMMS SERVICES

Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, a nonprofit dedicated to reducing deaths and diseases caused by smoking, is looking for an agency that can design and implement a communications strategy that will drive international media coverage.



FSFW is looking for an agency with nonprofit experience

as well as experience securing international earned media placements that can raise awareness of its work, research and initiatives and generate international media coverage.

Scope of the work includes: developing and implementing strategies that communicate FSFW’s work; conducting targeted media outreach and securing press coverage; and crisis communications planning and counsel.

Agencies interested in submitting bids should confirm their participation with communications vice president, Nicole Bradley at [nicole.bradley@smokefreeworld.org](mailto:nicole.bradley@smokefreeworld.org) or 646/321-9379, by November 25.

A pre-proposal development meeting will then be scheduled once participation is confirmed.

[Download the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

## EGYPT SIGNS BROWSTEIN HYATT

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck has inked a \$65K per-month contract to provide government relations and strategic counsel to Egypt, which is headed by president Trump’s “favorite dictator,” Abdel Fatah al Sissi.

President-elect Joe Biden has promised to get tough with Sissi, whom the *Washington Post* has called “the most repressive ruler in Egypt’s modern history” for his crackdown on independent journalists, political activists and civil society organizations.

In its Nov. 21 editorial, WaPo called for Biden to make Egypt the prime target of his pledge to “revive US support for democracy and human rights around the world.”

Former Congressman Ed Royce (R-CA), who chaired the foreign affairs committee, and Nadeam Elshami, chief of staff to then-minority leader Nancy Pelosi, head Egypt’s eight-member lobbying team.

Brownstein Hyatt reports to Motaz Zahran, Egypt’s ambassador to the US.



**Abdel Fatah al Sissi**

## OFF MADISON AVE ACQUIRES FINEMAN PR

Phoenix-based marketing and communications agency [Off Madison Ave](#) has acquired San Francisco-based firm [Fineman PR](#). Financial terms of the deal weren’t publicly disclosed. The acquisition was facilitated by PR merger and acquisition consultancy [Gould+Partners](#).

Fineman was founded in 1988 by Michael Fineman, who also serves as president. The agency will retain its name and branding as a division of Off Madison Ave.

Michael Fineman will continue managing the firm and counseling clients from the agency’s San Francisco location.

Off Madison Ave in a statement said the acquisition would bolster the agency’s existing PR and social media services and provide both firms’ clients a range of additional marketing, creative and digital solutions.

Founded in 1998, Phoenix-based Off Madison Ave specializes in travel/tourism, healthcare, health/fitness, retail, technology, education and nonprofit work. Clients include WD-40, the Arizona Office of Tourism, Grand Canyon Conservancy, Visit Phoenix, Maricopa Association of Governments and Arizona Game & Fish.

The agency maintains a satellite office in Boulder, CO.



## **HUNTINGTON WOODS SEEKS DE&I PLAN**

Huntington Woods, which is located 15 miles from downtown Detroit, is looking for a partner to engage the public in designing a comprehensive plan on how best to approach diversity, equity and inclusion.

The DEI blueprint is a large part of HW's anti-racism plan that was adopted last month, according to the city's RFP.

Known as "The City of Homes," HW's 6,300 people are 96 percent white, 1.6 percent Hispanic/Latino, 1.3 percent Asian-American, 1.0 percent Black and 0.2 percent Native-American. Median household income is \$125,873 and property value is \$321,400.

The RFP notes that HW has a "longstanding history of being a leader in public policies." In June, HW issued a statement condemning acts of racial injustice and a commitment for justice, fairness and peace for all.

The selected firm will conduct community-wide engagement sessions—within the restraints of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions—and incorporate DE&I into urban planning, community/economic development and public policy.

Send proposals in an envelope marked "Huntington Woods Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consulting" to: Heidi Barckholtz; City Clerk; 26815 Scotia Road; Huntington Woods, MI 48970.

[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

## **BIDEN VOTES FOR O'MALLEY DILLON**

President-elect Joe Biden has named campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon deputy chief of staff.

The Democratic operative worked on both Obama presidential runs. Prior to joining Team Biden in March, Dillon helmed the campaign of Texas Congressman Beto O'Rourke's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination.



**Jen O'Malley Dillon**

Dillon, a co-founder of Precision Strategies in Washington, is the only woman to lead a winning Democratic presidential campaign.

Reportedly, she had no desire to serve in the new administration but will now work closely with Ron Klain, the president-elect's chief of staff.

Biden also named Julie Rodriguez, a deputy campaign manager, head of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. She was an aide to VP-elect Kamala Harris.

## **WEBER SHANDWICK CATCHES KERRYGOLD**

Weber Shandwick has added Kerrygold, an international brand of Ornua, the Irish dairy cooperative, to its roster. The relationship marks the first time Kerrygold has partnered with a communications agency for ongoing public relations support in the US.

Weber Shandwick will help Kerrygold enhance brand awareness and maintain brand equity in the market through strategic media storytelling and corporate communications counsel.

"We wanted a partner with deep appreciation and understanding of our heritage, including the way we work hand-in-hand with farmers to produce the butter and cheeses that consumers have grown to love. Weber Shandwick was that partner," said Kerrygold marketing director Brian Cleere.

## **CONFIDENCE OF FEMALE LEADERS RISES**

The confidence level of female leaders is on the rise, while male leaders are becoming less confident, according to the latest edition of [Worldcom's Global Confidence Index](#).

Female leaders saw their confidence level go up seven percent from 2019 to 2020, the index found, while male leaders experienced a seven percent drop. What had been a confidence gap of 16 percent in favor of male leaders 12 months ago has closed almost completely.

Overall, however, corporate leaders are becoming progressively less bullish each year. From 2019 to 2020, confidence levels fell eight percent, following a drop of 21 percent the previous year.

When it comes to topics leaders are most assured about, their ability to successfully upskill and reskill employees, and prospects for using technology to collaborate and innovate topped the list, both showing a 9.1 increase.

One surprise: confidence in the impact and role of the media was up 3.1 percent globally.

In addition to measuring confidence, the Worldcom study also looked at the levels of leader engagement across a variety of topics. The topic with the biggest jump in leader engagement was government and legislative change, which was up 78.7 percent.

The index also looks at which audiences are judged most important by leaders. Influencers took the top spot at 24.47 percent, with customers (22.13 percent), employees (19.21 percent), government and legislators (16.07 percent) and shareholders (12.99 percent) following behind.

Worldcom's study looked at leaders from 36 countries, and was compiled by Advanced Symbolics, a research company that employs artificial intelligence to create a representative understanding of what audiences are saying.

To see the full report, [click here](#).



## **SAUDI ARABIA ADDS OFF HILL TO LINEUP**

Saudi Arabia has signed Off Hill Strategies to a \$25K per-month pact for Congressional outreach and to improve bilateral relations between the Kingdom and the US.

Headed by the husband-and-wife team of Tripp and Jennifer Baird, Oak Hill says it stands for clients with conservative principles dedicated to championing limited government and protecting constitutional rights.

Prior to setting up Off Hill in 2014, Tripp launched the political arm of The Heritage Foundation. He also was a partner at Watts Consulting, leading corporate strategy and PA for clients in the finance, energy and technology sectors, and an aide to former Florida Republican Senator Mel Martinez.

Jennifer, who is of counsel to Oak Hill, worked at McGuinness and Holch lobbying firm, served on the staff of Republican Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah and Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack of California and handled outreach at the Christian Legal Society.

Off Hill's contact became effective Oct. 19 and runs through Jan. 18, 2021. The pact may be ended if the firm engages in conduct that may negatively affect its public image and, by association, the public image of the Saudi Embassy.

The Bairds report to Musab Alsaud, chief of staff at the Embassy, and Abdullah Aleissa, director of engagement.

## **ELECTION BRAND WINNERS AND LOSERS**

The 2020 elections and their aftermath left few Americans pleased. A recent poll found that 70 percent of Republicans believe the presidential election was stolen, while Democrats are seeing significant infighting between the moderate and liberal wings in light of a “blue wave” that didn’t happen.

The post-election chaos will take time to settle down, but already three brand busts and two brand winners have clearly been established.



**Dustin Siggins**

### ***Winners***

**Joe Biden:** The third time was the charm for the former Vice President. He first ran for the White House 32 years ago, then again 12 years ago. This time, while the results won’t be official until President Donald Trump’s lawsuits end and the formal Electoral College process is completed, he’s finally won the most powerful political job in the world

with the greatest number of votes in American history.

Whether he wants the job with a Congress that’s likely to be divided is anyone’s guess; the same is true of the impact of his policies, especially given Biden’s advanced age and therefore possibly a short window to make his mark. But those are questions for another day. From a brand perspective, Joe Biden’s star has never been higher.

**The Republican Party:** In a year that keeps on getting stranger, the GOP is set to lose the White House ... but it demolished the polls by nearly winning the presidency, likely keeping the Senate—including races in Maine, South Carolina and Texas where Republicans won handily despite poor pre-election polling—making gains in the House of Representatives and locking in power in state legislatures.

Trump may not be popular, but the GOP clearly did a good job of appealing to voters. Their brand is strong and may be set for a good midterm election in 2022. From a brand perspective, the GOP is as strong as ever with voters.

### ***Losers***

**The Trumpism personality** strangely turned the GOP into winners, but the president himself into getting fired by voters and opposed by even some of his allies when he claimed fraud was the reason he lost. A lot of “Trumpism” will survive in his populist policies and predilections, the support he has cultivated, and the positive and negative impacts of his policies. But the Trump personality lost with voters.

**Our political system’s brand** has been damaged significantly by matters which took place before, during and after the election. Trump has been a major cause of this—but Trump is just part of the problem. Here are some other major players in our political system’s brand value reduction:

- The pandemic threw chaos into an already-tense election year. Reasonable concerns about mail-in voting became partisan weapons, ballot drop-off points became court battles, a record number of pre-Election Day ballots were cast and states were scrambling to adjust to both the pandemic and court battles related to ballot access and ballot security.

- The polling industry botched things. Some of this was certainly because of the “shy”—read: dishonest—Trump voters who either distrust pollsters or are afraid to publicly admit they support the president. But those voters weren’t responsible for the cross-industry mistakes in polls like the ABC/*Washington Post* poll which showed Biden up by 17 points.

- Distrust in the media is at a peak, especially among

conservatives, but the industry’s left-of-center bias peaked as Election Day got closer.

**The Democratic Party’s left wing** is the last loser on this list. It entered the summer strong with support for Black Lives Matter at an all-time high, a projected left swing from Biden on a host of issues after he was elected and the likelihood of both the House and the Senate pushing its policies in legislation. Now, the brand of the left wing of the Democratic Party is in tatters because voters rejected it.

### ***America’s brand is resilient but weak***

It’s easy to say that America is at a tipping point when a 24-hour news cycle, social media and historical ignorance make 2020 seem like the worst year ever. But we’ve pulled back from such points before. Our issue is that we’re less able to relate to each other about politics, morality and personal philosophies even as politics becomes increasingly part of our lives through social media, the news media, an abrasive and self-centered president and pervasive cancel culture.

The question isn’t whether America’s brand is weak. It is. The question is what can we do to improve our brand. I recently proposed that we start with charity to our neighbors. The next step is to focus on where we can have an impact, following through on localized brand trust.

The sooner we recognize that each of us has responsibility for America’s brand, the better off our nation will be. Otherwise, we’ll see a continued destruction of trust in our system, our leaders and each other.

*Dustin Siggins is CEO of the publicity firm Proven Media Solutions and a business columnist. He was previously Director of Communications for a national trade association.*

## **NEWS OF FIRMS**

**Public Relations Society of America/New York** announces Andrew Graham, Clear founding partner, will serve as 2021 president. KWT founder and Prophet founder and CEO Aaron Kwittken is named president-elect. Internova Travel Group PR manager Kellie Jelencovich will take on the role of immediate past president. The chapter has also created three new roles to support its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion efforts. GLAAD CCO Richard Ferraro will serve as VP (diversity & inclusion); Lippe Taylor VP, media Rashidah Timothy will be senior director (diversity & inclusion); and PAN Communications VP & GM/New York Brandon Thomas will be associate director (diversity & inclusion).

**ASTRSK PR** is awarding a full year of free PR services to a BIPOC, woman and/or LGBTQ+ founded startup. The winner of the contest receives a one-year contract with ASTRSK, valued at over \$200,000. To be considered, startups must have at least one female, LGBTQ+ or minority founder, be consumer-facing (no B2B startups) and early-stage (no more than \$1.5 million in funding). Applications will be accepted through Nov. 27, with five finalists selected by Dec. 4 and a winner named Dec. 17. To find out more, or apply, click here.



San Diego-based marketing agency **Power Digital** has acquired **DataQ**, a customer activation and targeting technology tool. DataQ employs proprietary algorithms and advanced extract, transform and load technology to help companies increase purchase frequency, reduce customer churn and find customers similar to their most valuable clientele. “With the incorporation of DataQ, we can offer game-changing intelligence, making our approach that much more data-driven,” says Power Digital CEO Grayson Lafrenz.

## **FINSBURY HIRES HUGGINS FOR DE&I WORK**

Finsbury has hired Kito Huggins for the managing director slot in New York to help drive its diversity, equity and inclusion communications practice.



**Kito Huggins**

Bros. and MetLife.

Finsbury North America CEO Paul Holmes said Huggins “will provide strong support to our clients as they respond to stakeholder expectations that they will take meaningful action to address inequity in the workplace and their communities.”

Finsbury is merging with Glover Park Group and Hering Schuppener early next year to create Finsbury Glover Hering, a combine of 700 staffers.

## **MD COUNTY FIRE DEPT FLOATS PR RFP**

Maryland’s Prince George’s County wants proposals from agencies providing communications services.

The county’s MVFD is looking for an agency that can assess the department’s current recruitment efforts and devise a strategy that improves the department’s future volunteer recruitment and retention abilities.

The contract calls for a start date on Feb. 1, and will run for one year, with the option to renew yearly for three more one-year periods. MVFD has allotted budget of \$30,000 for the initial one-year contract and \$15,000 for each of the yearly extensions.

Proposals are due by 6 p.m. (EST) Monday, November 30, and should be sent electronically in PDF format to: safer-rfp@mvfd27.org.

Agencies should register their intent to submit proposals by e-mailing safer-rfp@mvfd27.org with their contact information.

Download the RFP (PDF).

## **EDELMAN TAPS SCHEIDELER FOR DIGITAL POST**

Pam Scheideler, former chief digital officer at Deutsch advertising agency, has joined Edelman as US head of digital.



**Pam Scheideler**

Most recently managing director of R/GA’s Los Angeles office, Scheideler also held key posts at Google Creative Labs, JWT New York and Crispin Porter + Bogusky.

“Pam has a history of building immersive digital experiences that integrate with culture and move at the speed of social media,” said Tristan Roy, Edelman’s global digital chair. “She has world-class expertise at

the intersection of technology, innovation and creativity.”

Based in LA, Scheideler will report to Roy and Russell Dubner, Edelman US CEO.

## **WEBCASTS, VIRTUAL EVENTS ARE BOOMING**

Virtual events and webcasts are booming in today’s work-from-home world, according to a new study from Intrado Digital Media.

Intrado’s study found a 362 percent increase in the number of client virtual events and webcasts from 2019 to 2020. The number of live unique viewers rose by 510 percent, and total registrants for virtual events jumped 268 percent.

The most popular day of the week for webcasts turned out to be Thursday, with 27 percent of them taking place that day. Wednesday (25 percent) and Tuesday (24 percent) were close behind, with Monday, Friday (both 11 percent) and Saturday (two percent) following.

For virtual events, Tuesday (25 percent) was the most scheduled day, and while only seven percent of events took place on weekends, they saw a steep rise from six in 2019 to 65 in 2020—a 938 percent increase.

Both webcast viewers and attendees at virtual events are increasing their level of online engagement, the report finds. The number of questions asked during webcasts jumped 278 percent from 2019 to 2020, and chat messages during webcasts saw a 334 percent increase.

Video is becoming a major presence in webcasts, used in 74 percent of them. However, the report says the quality of the video used in webcasts is key.

When speaking to a virtual audience, the study says, following a few simple rules can heighten your impact. Avoiding distracting or unprofessional clothing, making sure you have adequate lighting and headroom, and ensuring a clutter-free background are some of the tips provided. Intrado also suggests practicing multiple times before you hit the virtual stage.

Intrado’s reports analyzed virtual events and webcasts conducted between March and September of 2019 and then compared them with those from the same period this year.

To see the full report, [click here](#).

## **ALBERTA FACES CROSSROADS**

Alberta, which is the Saudi Arabia of Canada, has signed Crossroads Strategies to a \$350K one-year pact for strategic government relations and PA services.

Former US Senators Trent Lott (R-MS) and John Breaux (D-LA) spearhead the push for the Canadian province that is home to the world’s third-largest reserves of crude oil.

The COVID-19 pandemic has battered demand for Alberta oil sands output, which also faces spirited competition from US shale. Environmentalists have long opposed oil sands development.

Crossroads’ contract, which went into effect on Nov. 5, calls for it to provide Alberta with “informed, nimble representations before policymakers.”

It will advocate on Alberta’s behalf before Congress and the executive branch, track relevant legislation, develop PR messaging and coordinate with Alberta stakeholders.

The firm reports to the Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Innovation and its senior representative in the US, James Rajotte.



## **MATTEL MAKES FRYMARK CORP COMMS. CHIEF**

Mattel is bringing on Catherine Frymark as executive vice president, corporate communications. Frymark previously spent over 20 years at Discovery, most recently serving as group senior vice president, communications.



**Catherine Frymark**

She also held a variety of leadership roles at the company, which included leading communications for Discovery's acquisition and integration of Scripps Networks, home to such networks as HGTV and Food Network. At Mattel, Frymark will be in charge of internal and external communications on a global level. Additionally, she will oversee Mattel's philanthropic efforts, including the Mattel Children's Foundation. "Catherine is an outstanding executive, with a demonstrated track record of driving strategic communications during times of growth and transformation," said Mattel chairman and CEO Ynon Kreiz.

## **BRUNSWICK HELPS KIND LAND ON MARS**

Brunswick Group represents Kind North America, which is positioned as the health snacking leader, as it agrees to be acquired by candy giant Mars Inc. in an estimated \$5B deal.



The maker of Snickers, M&Ms, Milky Way, Twix and Skittles acquired a minority stake in Kind in 2017.

Privately held Mars has been distributing Kind's bars in 35 countries. Kind North America and Kind International will now be merged into a single entity.

Kind founder Dan Lubetsky said the Kind and Mars teams have complemented and strengthened each other during the past three years.

Brunswick's Jayne Rosefield and Blake Sonnenshein are working the deal.

## **EDELMAN'S GEMMILL LUNCHES ARGYLE IN DC**

Robert Gemmill, most recently director of litigation communications at Edelman, has joined Argyle, a top Canadian PR firm, as senior VP and head of its new Washington office.

A lawyer by training, Gemmill also was managing director of litigation and crisis communications for the Hogan Lovells law firm, and senior VP of litigation communications at Levick.



**Robert Gemmill**

Noting that Argyle has a growing US client roster, CEO Daniel Tisch said "it's exciting to put down roots in the US capital."

The firm, which has seven offices across Canada, also has recruited crisis veteran Harlan Loeb to serve as a senior advisor in Chicago.

He was global practice chair for crisis and reputation risk at Edelman, founding principal of the Chicago office at FTI Consulting's strategic communications unit and managing director of litigation communications at Hill & Knowlton.

Gemmill told O'Dwyer's Argyle US will focus on corporate communications and reputation risk.

## **ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT**

**Clearpoint Agency** adds trio of COVID-19-related accounts: **ARCpoint Labs of North San Diego, Downtown Works and North County Biotech Laboratories.** The services that Clearpoint will be providing for the clients include strategy/positioning, media relations, content development, social media consulting and other marketing services. ARCpoint Labs has added a comprehensive menu of COVID-19 tests to its regular offerings of DNA, drug and alcohol, and clinical blood tests as well as stepping up its mobile services offering. Coworking space Downtown Works has adapted to the COVID-19 work environment by installing acrylic partitions between open space workstations, medical-grade HEPA air purifiers, and UV-C LED germicidal lights. North County Biotech Laboratories provides laboratory spaces for scientists who are working in new and innovative areas of research, such as vaccines or medical therapies.

**The Brandman Agency** checks in **Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands.** Brandman will represent the property in the US in addition to handling all US media relations and outreach. Accepting bookings from May 2021, The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands will be the first Ritz-Carlton property to open in the region. Brandman's portfolio of international hospitality and travel clients also includes Cathay Pacific Airways, Casamigos Tequila and Como Resorts and Hotels.



**Hemsworth Communications** has added **Waipapa Bay Wines** to its roster of food, wine & spirits clients. Hemsworth will work together with Waipapa Bay Wines' New Zealand owners and US importer Broadland Drinks to drive the company's regional and national media relations campaigns. The agency is also responsible for developing relationships with retail partners and influencers to increase consumer awareness and drive sales. Waipapa Bay Wines' portfolio includes an award-winning Sauvignon Blanc, as well as a rosé, Pinot Gris and Chardonnay.

**V2 Communications** is now representing SaaS data value platform **GRAX.** V2 will help the company drive brand awareness and elevate its subject matter experts as industry thought leaders on how organizations can use SaaS backup data to steer business decisions and enhance performance.

The agency will design campaigns targeted at management decision-makers and enterprise system architects and engineers. "From day one, V2 has shown an insatiable appetite for learning about the many aspects of our business," said GRAX vice president of marketing Chris Shakarian.



**EVINS Communications** has been named agency of record for boutique luxury matchmaking service **Selective Search.** The agency is responsible for developing and executing a media relations strategy for Selective Search aimed at enhancing visibility and awareness of the brand, driving engagement and showcasing how the company is redefining the business of finding love. EVINS will also support the brand with a tactical thought leadership program that will focus on securing speaking opportunities through avenues such as conferences, panel discussions, talks and networking. Selective Search says that its 87 percent success rate is the highest in the industry.

## COMMENTARY

**Welcome to Day 20 of Donald Trump's sore-loser tantrum**, which appears to be paying off as his rabid followers swallow the toxic lies that the election was stolen.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted Nov. 13-17 found that 52 percent of Republicans believe Trump "rightfully won" the election and only 29 percent agree that Biden won.

Nearly seven-in-ten (69 percent) of Republicans expressed concern the election was rigged. A third of Independents and 16 percent of Democrats said the same thing.

Though the Dept. of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency declared the presidential election "the most secure in American history," the Reuters poll found Americans are more suspicious of the electoral process than they were four years ago.

Fifty-five percent called the Nov. 3 tally "legitimate and accurate," down from 60 percent from the 2016 election, which was manipulated by Russian trolls.

Each day that the president rants about the rigged election, he gains more acceptance of the deception that it was stolen.

Trump doesn't give a fig about the damage that he is doing to America's democracy. The presidency keeps him a step ahead of the jailer.

He's desperate to hold on to power, even if it means delegitimizing the American electoral system.

**It didn't take Democrats very long to roll out the circular firing squad.** While Republican cultists stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their petulant leader who persists in the fantasy that the majority of Americans didn't fire him from his day job, the progressive wing of the Democratic party is jumping all over Joe Biden's choices to serve on his White House staff.



The Justice Democrats sprinted from the starting blocks, issuing a press release Nov. 17 headlined: "Progressives Find Corporate-Friendly Biden Appointments Unacceptable." Talk about a false start.

"If Joe Biden continues making corporate-friendly appointments to his White House, he will risk quickly fracturing the hard-earned goodwill his team built with progressives to defeat Donald Trump," Alexandra Rojas, executive director of JD said in the release.

Geez, give the guy a break. JD released its broadside hours after the president-elect announced his first appointments.

"A Biden administration dominated by corporate-friendly insiders like Steve Ricchetti and Cedric Richmond will not help the President-elect usher in the most progressive Democratic administration in generations," Rojas added.

She went on to blast Ricchetti for being a former pharma lobbyist who has opposed Medicare for All and the public manufacturing of prescription drugs.

Rojas seems to forget that Biden, who has promised to expand Obamacare and build it back better as Bidencare, is against Medicare for All.

Rojas should recall that the Democrats who supported Medicare for All were defeated in the primaries.

There's a time and a place for everything under the sun. This is neither the time nor place for Medicare for All.

**Stanford University has a PR problem and his name is Scott Atlas**, the White House's off-the-wall science advisor, because of his attacks on widely-accepted guidance on dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lacking any background in infectious diseases, neuro-radiologist Atlas is a media star and must-see TV for Trump.

He has blasted lockdowns, use of masks and uncorked a gem on Fox News about the importance of inviting the elderly to Thanksgiving dinner because they may not be around in 2021.

Atlas, who is currently on leave from his post at Stanford's Hoover Institution think tank, also apologized earlier this month for appearing on Russia's RT propaganda network, saying he was unaware that it is a registered foreign agent.

In that 27-minute interview, Atlas claimed lockdowns kill people and downplayed the testing of asymptomatic people.

An embarrassed Stanford issued a statement on Nov. 16 to distance itself from Atlas. It states:

"Dr. Atlas has expressed views that are inconsistent with the university's approach in response to the pandemic. Dr. Atlas's statements reflect his personal views, not those of the Hoover Institution or the university."

The university can't wait until Atlas distances himself from the spotlight, once Trump leaves office.

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, which has warned people not to travel during the holiday season, is waging a war on Thanksgiving and Christmas to boot, according to the gang at Fox News.

Rupert Murdoch's network also is pushing back at COVID-19 mitigation guidelines advising people to limit the number of people at their holiday festivities.

Fox News scoffs at it all, gleefully adding Thanksgiving to its traditional "War on Christmas" campaign.

Fox Business News host Charles Payne told the Nov. 17 "Fox & Friends" that America needs Thanksgiving now more than ever before. "It's the most important day of the year. I think, outside of Christmas, and this time it means so much more. We have been separated. We've been forced apart."

Americans are being "forced apart" because the White House task force on coronavirus predicts "aggressive, unrelenting, broad community spread across the country, without evidence of improvement, but rather further deterioration."

It dismisses current mitigation efforts as inadequate, saying much more must be done.

COVID-19 has killed more than 256K Americans and things are getting worse.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington predicts a staggering 470,974 Americans will be dead from COVID-19 by March 1.

Some of those people will have died, believing the lies and disinformation about COVID-19 that aired on Fox News.

They will be missed at Thanksgiving tables and Christmas gatherings in 2021.

—Kevin McCauley