



**Kevin McCauley**  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of PR & Marketing Communications



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March 8, 2021 Vol. 54 No. 10

## ARKANSAS SEEKS PR TO PROMOTE HERITAGE

Arkansas Dept. of Parks, Heritage and Tourism has issued an \$850K RFP to develop a marketing communications program to promote its natural, artistic, cultural and historic resources.



The Division of Arkansas Heritage wants a partner to increase its visibility; design, host and maintain various websites; handle social media activity; and bolster attendance at cultural events throughout The Natural State.

DAH is looking to drive home the message that its offerings, such as the Old State House Museum, Delta Cultural Center, Historic Arkansas Museum and Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, are “good value, educational and family-friendly establishments,” according to the RFP.

DAH plans to award a one-year contract. The pact may be renewed for up to six additional one-year periods.

Proposals are due March 11 at 2 p.m. Responses go to: Office of State Procurement; 501 Woodlane St., Ste. 220; Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1023

The outer envelope must include solicitation number SP-21-0055, date & time of proposal deadline and the submitting firm’s name and return address.

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

## OBAMA VET PLOUFFE JOINS PRECISION

David Plouffe, who was campaign manager of Obama for America and senior advisor to president Barack Obama, has joined Precision Strategies as of counsel.

In managing Obama’s election and re-election races, Plouffe developed one of the most sophisticated and data-driven efforts.



**Brian Faith**

Precision co-founder Stephanie Cutter, deputy manager of Obama’s 2012 campaign and chief of staff to First Lady Michelle Obama, said Plouffe’s “experience in managing integrated campaigns is second to none.”

Upon leaving the White House, Plouffe was senior VP of policy and strategy at Uber.

He was also president for policy and advocacy at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, helping launch the organization.

Jen O’Malley Dillon, Precision co-founder, is deputy chief of staff in the Biden White House.

## FRANCE’S AXA HIRES EDELMAN

Edelman is providing PA and communications services to AXA, the Paris-headquartered global insurer, to bolster its visibility in the US. It inked a \$150K six-month contract with AXA that runs through June.

Edelman will handle media monitoring, especially in areas of key importance to AXA (climate change).

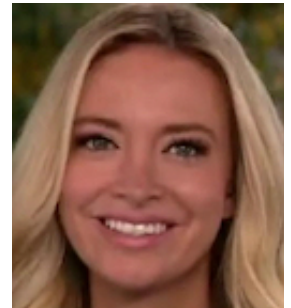
The statement of work calls for a development of a multi-prong strategy built on a foundation of targeted influencer mapping to position AXA leadership among key stakeholder groups. That strategy is to be supplemented by a “First 100 Days Action Plan” and strategic outreach & education to leverage messaging.

The PR firm has Rachel Millard, Julia Sofo and Weston Lloyd working the AXA business.

## EX-WH PRESS SECRETARY MCENANY TO FOX

Kayleigh McEnany, who was Donald Trump’s White House press secretary, has joined Fox News as an on-air commentator.

During a March 2 interview on Fox’s “The Faulkner Focus” about her experience at the White House, Harris Faulkner welcomed her to the network,



**Kayleigh McEnany**

McEnany had a contentious relationship with the White House press corps as she took on more of a role as cheerleader for Trump’s re-election campaign and his effort to discredit the results of the election.

Before joining the White House, McEnany was spokesperson for the Republican National Committee and commentator at CNN.

## LUND NAMED CEO AT M&C SAATCHI UNIT

M&C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment has appointed Steph Lund chief executive officer, North America. The newly created role is a result of the agency’s merger of its East and West coast offices under unified leadership.

Lund joined M&C in 2018 as managing director, New York. Before that, she was senior vice president, public relations at music, style and culture magazine *The Fader*. Lund has also held executive positions at Nylon Communications and 5W Public Relations.

In her new post, she is responsible for leading and evolving M&C’s North America offering. She oversees operations, staff, client services, development and growth.

## SEN. PETERS' COS FELDMAN JOINS AIRBNB

Eric Feldman, chief of staff for Michigan senator Gary Peters, has joined Airbnb as head of federal and international affairs.



**Eric Feldman**

He will help craft policies and promote the economic benefits that home sharing delivers to hosts and communities overseas as they rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Eric has extensive experience working with lawmakers and policy leaders on both sides of the aisle,” Laphonza Butler, Airbnb’s North America policy head, said in a statement. “He understands the complex policy issues that

are critical to the success of our host community.

Feldman, who has more than 20 years of legislative and federal affairs experience, worked with Peters on emerging technology issues in areas such as drones, self-driving cars and cybersecurity.

He also was a staffer for then-Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi and House Democratic caucus policy director Rahm Emanuel.

## OHIO JOB & FAMILY UNIT SEEKS IMAGE CHANGE

The Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services wants a PR partner to change its “welfare agency” image to that of being a dynamic and successful “opportunity agency.”



According to the RFP, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, ODJFS “has been associated with unemployment, the lack of a job, instead of opportunity, having a job.”

It wants Ohioans to think of the many ways that they can get a new job by taking advantage of the workforce development assets that exist under ODJFS’ roof.

The selected PR firm will change ODJFS’ image as a “public assistance agency” by developing a “strategic, creative and passionate” paid and earned media campaign in the Buckeye State’s 88 counties.

Responses are due March 16. They must be submitted electronically at <https://filedrop.cloudfs.ohio.gov/>.

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

## INFINITE GLOBAL COMBATS CLIMATE CHANGE

Infinite Global has made a firm-wide commitment throughout 2021 to undertake, on a pro bono basis, media activity for clients that relates directly to their efforts to combat climate change.



**Jamie Diaferia**

The services are available to any retained clients. Infinite Global has also joined the SME Climate Commitment, requiring the firm to halve its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

“As a values-driven organization, we accept and embrace our own responsibility when it comes to this issue, and are fully committed to also supporting our clients as they strive to do the

same,” said Infinite Global CEO Jamie Diaferia.

## ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

**Diamond & Co.** is tapped to execute a destination marketing and publicity campaign for the **St. Maarten Tourism Bureau**. Diamond & Co., comprised of partners Diamond Public Relations, TruMarketing and Travel Culture Collab, will activate multi-faceted campaigns including traditional media, strategic influencer partnerships, broadcast integrations, interactive digital engagements, and other deliberate promotions and partnership opportunities to target key geographic markets. “Diamond & Co shares our sharp, focused vision for Sint Maarten’s success and ever-bright future,” said Government of Sint Maarten director of tourism May-Ling Chun.



**Strategic Objectives** is selected as agency of record for public relations and social media management for **Weber-Stephen Canada**, a manufacturer of charcoal and gas grills and grilling accessories. The agency will work with Weber on a social media and public relations strategy to establish media and influencer relationships, develop timely and relevant storytelling opportunities and highlight brand innovation, new products and outdoor culinary leadership.

**Ogilvy** takes on lead creative agency duties for **Pernod Ricard USA’s** Olmeca Altos Tequila, Tequila Avión and Del Maguey brands. The agency will coordinate a brand and integrated communications strategy for each of the tequila and mezcal brands. Responsibilities will primarily include brand strategy, advertising and personalized content development.



**Gong Communications** has been engaged by the **Royal Academy of Engineering** (the UK’s national academy of engineering) to support its sub-Saharan Africa grants programs: Higher Education Partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa and Global Challenges Research Fund Africa Catalyst. Gong will work to increase visibility and awareness of the programs as well as amplifying the Academy’s role in helping to build sustainable societies and inclusive economies.

**Mower** is named public relations and marketing agency of record for data science and media company **84.51°**. The agency will handle PR, marketing and advertising for the company. Founded in 1995 as the consumer insights and media activation arm of the Kroger supermarket chain, 84.51° is an industry leader in data science and predictive analytics, helping brands in emerging disciplines connect with customers.

**PAN Communications** will be PR agency of record for **Definitive Healthcare**, a source for data insights and analytics in the healthcare provider and influencer market. PAN will work to elevate Definitive Healthcare’s brand visibility and awareness in the healthcare data and intelligence market, with a focus on the biopharma and medical device verticals. It will also utilize Definitive Healthcare’s data and insights to build a thought leadership and awareness program. PAN’s healthcare practice lead, Dan Martin, will oversee strategy for the partnership.



## GETTING BEYOND ‘EARNED OR OWNED?’

A debate wages on in the public relations world regarding whether an earned or owned media strategy makes more sense. Should you focus on earned media, driven by proactive media relations? Or owned media where you build a following using self-published content on your media channels?

Large companies like Tesla have made recent headlines by “eliminating” their communications teams. Many startups and VCs from Coinbase to Andreessen Horowitz are similarly applying the “go direct” approach.



**Dan O'Mahony**

Why are some companies choosing not to engage with the press? There's more tension than ever between reporters and the companies they cover. Now, the press is holding tech companies accountable for not meeting oversized expectations and for the lack of diversity in the industry.

Every company is looking for the right media mix. It depends on their stage of growth, available resources and business objectives. Communications strategies hinge on broader, more strategic questions: Who is your audience? What do you want them to do? What change are you ushering in? What do you want to be known for?

Instead of deciding between earned vs. owned, consider these questions:

### **What's your business goal and who are your audiences?**

Earned media is called earned because someone else says good things about you. It builds credibility for a company or spokesperson and boosts awareness at a reach most companies don't have. Owned media creates a dialogue with your key audiences and the ability to build individual relationships.

Let's say you're in the healthcare space, and one key audience for you is senior citizens. Both earned and owned make sense to reach this audience. With earned media, this company can leverage the credibility of a reporter that senior citizens know and trust. With owned media, this company can create very specific, niche content.

It's hard to imagine a scenario where you would only pursue one strategy. Both strategies often make sense, and if the story is consistent, the strategies help build on each other.

### **Should you pick only one media strategy?**

Facebook, Tesla or Apple can go direct because they have large consumer followings, celebrity CEOs and can produce massive amounts of owned content across many channels.

But for most companies out there, if you ignore the press, there are two possible outcomes: you won't get news coverage or the media will write a story via leaks and scandals. Likewise, if you decide to only “go direct,” you will need to invest. It will take headcount, new technologies, partnerships and time to build an audience.

### **Are you ready for the media to distrust you?**

If you choose to ignore a problem and not talk about it with the press, that doesn't mean press stop asking about it or covering it. In fact, it makes dealing with those issues more challenging. Building an audience that trusts you is tough without the press.

These two strategies overlap and should work in tandem, but they're not the same. It's a virtuous cycle that communicates transparency and openness.

*Dan O'Mahony is Executive Vice President and San Francisco General Manager at Inkhouse.*

## SHOULD FACEBOOK, GOOGLE PAY FOR NEWS?

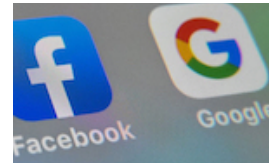
For years, a debate has been raging regarding the role Big Tech companies like Facebook and Google play in the newspaper industry's decline and what responsibility these platforms have in ensuring journalism's survival in the digital age.

The U.S. newspaper sector in 2021 is effectively on life support, with more than a decade of newsroom closures and layoffs as a result of disappearing advertising revenues now hastened by the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many blame the news industry's endangered status on the practices and market dominance of Facebook and Google, which thrive by sharing the content created by local news organizations while sharing none of the ad revenue resulting from the clicks that content generates. Now, in the wake of a recent legislative stare-down between Big Tech and Australian lawmakers, a debate has arisen regarding whether these companies should begin effectively subsidizing news coverage in the U.S.

In case you didn't know: Australia's Parliament in February passed a controversial media bargaining law that forces the dominant tech companies like Google and Facebook to negotiate with Australian news publishers and compensate them for the content shared by its users on their platforms.

Supporters say the move lends much-needed aid to Australia's embattled news industry, where smaller, local media outlets have been unable to compete in a digital media ecosystem where Google, Facebook and other tech platforms have used their market dominance to essentially siphon news organizations' web traffic and digital advertising revenues by linking to the content those third-party publishers create.



Critics say the law unfairly penalizes Google and Facebook, sites that constantly direct massive amounts of reader traffic to news outlets' websites.

Facebook initially responded to the law's passage by saying it would block Australian users from accessing Australian news items on its platform, but quickly reversed that decision. Google, meanwhile, acquiesced and unveiled a plan to begin arranging ad-sharing deals with publishers, including a multi-year partnership with Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

In the U.S., a forthcoming series of House Judiciary Committee hearings will see lawmakers debate proposals to update U.S. antitrust laws in response to Big Tech's immense market power.

Several U.S. lawmakers are also at work on legislation that emulates the Australian plan in many ways. Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI), chairman of the House Antitrust Subcommittee, is reintroducing a 2019 bipartisan bill that would give news publishers a safe harbor from antitrust laws and allow them to negotiate with Big Tech companies on payment for news content. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA) are expected to introduce a similar bill in the Senate.

David Chavern, president and CEO of newspaper trade group the News Media Alliance, told *O'Dwyer's* that his organization was “very supportive” of the Australian bargaining law's passage, likening it to the creation of music licensing in the late nineteenth century.

“There is now a lot of bipartisan support for that core idea in Congress and at a hearing in the House Antitrust Subcommittee, we hope to outline ways to build upon that idea,” Chavern said.

—Jon Gingerich

## **HAWAII TO PLUG IN CLEAN ENERGY PR PUSH**

Hawaii wants a PR firm to promote renewable energy and “clean transportation” as the state aims to develop a resilient carbon-free economy by 2045.



The Hawaii State Energy Office wants proposals for planning, development and implementation of a strategic communications and marketing program.

The selected firm will create and deliver messaging, content storytelling, infographics, and collateral materials across all platforms.

HSEO’s goal is to “educate stakeholders and the public at large about Hawaii’s energy goals and objectives, and to provide an interactive web platform to incorporate public and stakeholder input to help develop successful pathways to 100 percent clean, renewable energy and a carbon free economy,” according to its RFP.

The budget is set for \$150K.

Responses are due March 22. Interested parties must register at the Hawaii State eProcurement System (HIePRO).

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

## **BALLARD BOLSTERS DEMOCRATIC BENCH**

Ballard Partners has hired Tola Thompson, who served as chief of staff for veteran Florida Democratic Congressman Al Lawson and communications director for Congresswoman Carrie Meeks.



**Tola Thompson**

Thompson was primary media contact for the appropriations committee handling telecommunications, education, labor, health and agricultural issues.

He also worked on a Congressional Black Caucus health initiative, addressing HIV and AIDS in communities of color.

Brian Ballard, who was Donald Trump’s top fundraiser in Florida, said his firm is eager to share Thompson’s “unique perspective with our clients.”

Prior to working on Capitol Hill, Thompson was assistant VP and director of government relations for Florida A&M University.

## **BRUNSWICK DRIVES LUCID MOTORS’ SPAC**

Brunswick Group is driving electric vehicle maker Lucid Motors’ \$24B reverse merger with Churchill Capital Corp. in the largest-ever special purpose acquisition company deal.

The deal provides fresh capital to the company as it brings the 500-mile range Lucid Air electric sedan to market this year and the Gravity SUV in 2023.

Lucid’s factory (Casa Grande, AZ) is scheduled to initially build 10K cars a year and then to scale up to more than 350K vehicles.

CEO Peter Rawlinson, who was chief engineer at Tesla, said Lucid “is proud to be leading a new era of high-technology, high efficiency zero-emission transportation.”

Brunswick Group has Tim Daubenspeck, Stephen Powers and Will Rasmussen representing Lucid.

Gladstone Place Partners (Steve Lipin, Lauren Odell and Christina Stenson) handles Churchill.

## **SMALL BUSINESSES UPPED 2020 AD SPENDS**

The unprecedented economic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic has decimated industries of all stripes, but many small businesses actually increased their advertising budgets in 2020, according to a recent survey released by business news site The Manifest.



Despite facing the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, the Manifest’s “2021 Small Business Survey” found that more companies staffing fewer than 500 employees increased their advertising investments in 2020 compared to those that decreased ad spending. While more than a third (38 percent) of small businesses increased their ad spending during the coronavirus outbreak last year, less than a quarter (22 percent) of small businesses reported decreasing their ad budgets during that time period.

The COVID-19 pandemic also resulted in a spike in online content consumption, with adults now spending more than 16 hours per day on digital platforms. So, perhaps it’s no surprise that social media sites remain the preferred advertising channel for small businesses.

According to the survey, nearly half of small businesses (45 percent) said they now plan to increase their investment in social media advertising in 2021. An additional 35 percent of small businesses said they plan to increase their advertising investment on digital video platforms this year.

On the other hand, of the 28 percent of small businesses that say they invest in print advertising, almost all of them (24 percent) said they plan to reduce their print ad spending in 2021.

According to the survey, the majority of small businesses (55 percent) spent less than \$50,000 on advertising last year and only 11 percent spent more than one million dollars.

The Manifest’s “2021 Small Business Survey” polled 500 U.S.-based small business owners and managers in December. The Manifest is the sister site of D.C.-based research and consulting firm Clutch.

## **NYWICI TARGETS WOMEN EXITING WORKFORCE**

New York Women in Communications is launching #WOMENHEARD, a research-driven platform and initiative to address the high number of women who have exited from the workforce over the last year.

The #WOMENHEARD platform will be informed by a national research study intended to identify how COVID-19 is affecting women (particularly women of color), and how the challenges women face can be addressed.

Additional #WOMENHEARD programming initiatives include a podcast, the annual NYWICI Student Bootcamp, digital events and mentorship initiatives to support mid-level female executives, working mothers and women.

“Once we understand the ‘why’ and what it means for our industry, together, we can provide actionable tools, resources and open dialogue to help companies bring women back to a much better environment,” said Ashley Miles, NYWICI president and CEO of Franklyn West.

For more information about #WOMENHEARD, visit <https://www.nywici.org/women-heard/>.



#WOMENHEARD

## QATAR PASSES GOVT. AFFAIRS WORK TO ISG

Qatar has signed a \$30K monthly government affairs contract with Integrated Strategy Group, the firm co-founded by former Democratic Congressman and National Football League quarterback Heath Shuler.



**Heath Shuler**

The Arab state, which recently emerged from a political and economic blockade by a group led by Saudi Arabia, is using ISG for outreach to Biden administration officials and Congress.

ISG's Hayden Rogers, former chief of staff to Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Shuler, handles the Qatar account.

The contract went into effect March 1. Shuler had an outstanding college career as quarterback for the Tennessee

Volunteers, where he was SEC Football Player of the Year and runner-up for the 1993 Heisman Trophy.

Shuler was elected to Congress in 2002 and retired in 2012 after his district was redrawn. He went on to serve as senior VP-federal governmental affairs at Duke Energy and is senior advisor to BakerHostetler.

## SUSTAINABLE BIZ COUNCIL TABS NEUWIRTH

The American Sustainable Business Council has appointed Michael Neuwirth as its first chief communications officer.



**Michael Neuwirth**

Neuwirth was previously senior director of external communications at Danone. Before joining Danone, he was a senior vice president at Ruder Finn. Neuwirth also runs his own independent consulting practice, Neuwirth Communications.

“Michael has a unique track record helping to build campaigns that change the direction of industry, whether it be the creation of the market for probiotics, encouraging more plant-based

diets, healthy hydration choices, and more recently corporate adoption of benefit corporation status and B Corp Certification,” said ASBC chief executive officer and co-founder Jeffrey Hollender.

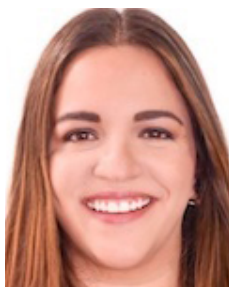
## MERCURY'S CASTILLO TO COMMERCE DEPT.

Mercury's Gabriella Castillo, who served the Joe Biden campaign in Florida as deputy state director, has joined the Commerce Dept. as PA director.

At the Omnicom unit, Castillo handled strategic communications, government relations, issues advocacy and digital strategies in English and Spanish for clients in the Miami and Fort Lauderdale area.

Earlier, the Venezuela native was communications director for Miami mayor Francis Suarez. She took that post after handling PR for his 2017 campaign manager.

She was previously senior associate at LSN Partners doing PA and advocacy work; and associate attorney at Llorente



**Gabriella Castillo**

& Heckler handling government procurement and compliance issues.

## NEWS SUBSCRIBERS PAY, BUT DON'T READ

Digital subscriptions are critical to local news publishers' bottom lines, but new findings suggest that an increasing number of these subscribers are “zombie” readers who seldom consume what they pay for, highlighting an unnerving trend among readers who remain unengaged even though they may still pay for local news.



Recent data analysis conducted by Northwestern University's Medill Spiegel Research Center found that, on average, nearly half of local news outlets' digital subscribers (49 percent) don't visit the news sites they pay for even once a month.

An additional 54 percent said they visit the website of the news outlets they pay for only one day per month or fewer, 58 percent reported visiting two days a month or fewer, 69 percent visited seven days or fewer, and 79 percent visited 15 days or fewer.

The Medill Spiegel Research Center's findings come on the heels of a viral Feb. report, which found that about 42 percent of *The Arizona Republic's* digital-only subscribers didn't read a single article on the paper's website in the last month. That Gannett property, which was founded in 1890, is the Grand Canyon State's largest daily newspaper.

Sharing these findings via Twitter, CNN host Brian Stelter wrote, “I think I've lost the passwords for 42% of the digital outlets I subscribe to.”

Research for the Medill Spiegel Research Center study was based on a data analysis of local news outlets in 45 U.S. markets.

## MEDIA MANEUVERS

*The Washington Post* promotes Kristine Coratti Kelly to chief communications officer, a newly created role at the paper. The Post's PR blog says that the move is intended to “reflect the increased role the communications team is playing in The Post's national and global expansion.” Kelly has been with the paper since 2009, most recently serving as vice president of communications and general manager of Washington Post Live, the newsroom's live journalism platform. Taking on the vice president of communications role is Shani George, who most recently served as director of communications.

**Sinclair Broadcast Group** is axing about five percent of its workforce (approximately 500 employees), in a move that the company says is due to the effects of COVID-19. Employees were notified of the layoffs in a March 3 memo sent from Chris Ripley, the company's president and chief executive officer. Sinclair, which runs 186 TV stations in the U.S., reported a seven percent dip in total revenue for Q4 2020, compared to Q4 2019.

**Facebook** is lifting the ban on political advertising that it instituted after the November elections. The company says that it will now permit advertisers to buy ads about “social issues, elections or politics,” from March 4, according to a report in the *New York Times*. For now, political advertisers can either submit new ads to the platform, or reactivate existing ads. Ads will appear with a disclaimer noting that the ad was paid for by a political organization.



## COMMENTARY



**President Biden took a well-deserved PR bow** for ironing out the deal between rivals Johnson & Johnson and Merck to collaborate on the production of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Merck, which failed to produce its own vaccine and is receiving \$268.8M from Uncle Sam to manufacture J&J's COVID-19 shot, said the alliance is "part of its commitment to contribute to the global response to the pandemic."

J&J, which fell behind on its promise of 37M doses of vaccine by the end of March, is being bailed out by Merck.

It somewhat downplayed the deal with Merck, noting that eight other companies signed on to its global COVID-19 network since January.

J&J did praise Merck's "long history of vaccine expertise" that will "enhance our production capacity so that we can supply beyond our current commitments."

Biden spun the deal as "the type of collaboration between companies that we saw in World War II."

That's priceless PR for the companies, especially coming from a leader of a political party that is not usually singing the praises of Big Pharma.

**Poor Mike Pence...** After humiliating himself by carrying Trump's water for the past four years, there is no chance that his old boss will pick him as a running mate in 2024.

That did not stop Mike from trying to win his former master's approval.

Pence penned an op-ed in the Heritage Foundation's March 3 *Daily Signal*, repeating the lie that the 2020 election was rigged and marked by "significant voting irregularities and numerous instances of officials setting aside state election law."

The former VP knows that is simply not true. The Trump administration's Dept of Homeland Security called the 2020 election "the most secure in American history."

Court after court threw out challenges to the election.

Pence does the nation a disservice by trading in the rigged election misinformation.

Meanwhile, the Brennan Center for Justice, which is affiliated with New York University, reports that as of Feb. 19, legislators in 43 states have introduced more than 250 bills that would make it harder to vote, primarily limited mail voting and imposed stricter ID requirements.

It is not Democrats trying to take away the right to vote, Mike.

**Freedom House is out with its Freedom in the World 2021 report**, and it shows the US continues to slip on the democracy front.

The US scored 83 out of 100 points in 2020, compared to 86 in the previous year.

Freedom House notes that the US, which once was a beacon of democracy for the rest of the world, needs "a serious and sustained reform effort to repair the damage done during the Trump era to the perception and reality of basic rights and

freedoms in the United States."

It torched the final weeks of the Trump White House for its unprecedented attacks on US democracy.

The group noted that 2020 was fraught with "politically distorted health recommendations, partisan infighting, shockingly high and racially disparate coronavirus death rates, and police violence against protesters advocating for racial justice over the summer. All underscored the United States' systemic dysfunctions and made American democracy appear fundamentally unstable."

**"No Irish Need Apply" was a fixture** on help-wanted signs and classified advertising in mid-19th century America.

Pontins, British campground operator, has updated that bigoted view of Irish people, according to the *Irish Times* and UK press. It put together a list of surnames of undesirables who were to be banned from the parks.

The Times revealed the names of the banned 40.

They are: Boylan, Boyle, Carney, Carr, Cash, Connors, Corcoran, Delaney, Doherty, Dorran, Gallagher, Horan, Keefe, Kell, Leahy, Lee, MacLaughlin, McAlwick, McCully, McDonagh, McGinley, McGinn, McGuinness, McHarg, McLaughan, McMahan, Millighan, Mongans, Murphy, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, O'Mahoney, O'Reilly, Sheridan, Stokes, Walch, Ward.

The list covers the names of about half the people who live on the island of Ireland.

Alastair Pringle, executive director of Britain's Equality and Human Rights Commission, said banning people from services based on their race is discrimination and is unlawful, according to the BBC. "To say that such policies are outdated is an understatement."

Pontins has agreed to change its bookings practices and to enhance staff training and procedures "to promote equality throughout its businesses."

The move comes just before the busy summer vacation season. The Irish should skip Pontins and spend their money in the Emerald Isle.

Or better yet, The Big Apple welcomes you.

**Las Vegas Sands Corp. claims it is paying tribute** to Sheldon Adelson by selling off its cherished Vegas properties and charting a new path to growth.

The founder/CEO of LVSC made his mark in Vegas, buying the Sands Hotel in 1988 and opening The Venetian mega-casino in 1999. He died Jan. 11 at the age of 87.

LVSC is selling The Venetian and Sands Expo & Convention Center for \$6.3B. In its March 3 announcement, LVSC said, "selling The Venetian, the property that helped establish Sheldon Adelson and his company at the top of the gaming industry, will be bittersweet."

It claims that focusing its future on Macao and Singapore will pay a new tribute to Adelson's legacy.

Adelson might not have agreed. The next step for LVSC is to drop "Vegas" from the corporate name.

Will that be pitched as another tribute to Adelson?

—Kevin McCauley