

### HIRED GUNS

- 1 **Neal T. "Buddy" Jones**  
HillCo Partners, Former State Representative, Former Executive Assistant to Speaker Gib Lewis
- 2 **Mike Toomey**  
Texas Capitol Group, Former State Representative, Ex-Chief of Staff to Govs. Rick Perry and Bill Clements
- 3 **Bill Messer**  
Texas Capitol Group, Former State Representative, Speaker Tom Craddick Transition Team
- 4 **Rusty Kelley**  
Blackridge, Former Executive Assistant to Speaker Billy Clayton
- 5 **Robert Miller**  
Locke Lord Public Law Group Chair, Former Houston METRO Chairman, Former State Senate Aide
- 6 **John Pitts**  
Texas Star Alliance, Former General Counsel to Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock, Twin Brother to House Appropriations Chairman Jim Pitts
- 7 **Demetrius McDaniel**  
Greenberg Traurig, Former Special Assistant to Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower
- 8 **Robert Johnson**  
Johnson & Johnson Law Firm, Son of legendary parliamentarian Bob Johnson and Speaker Joe Straus' Chief Political Advisor's brother
- 9 **Ron Lewis**  
Ron Lewis & Associates, Former State Representative
- 10 **Clint Hackney**  
Clint Hackney & Company, Former State Representative
- 11 **Luis Saenz**  
McGuireWoods Senior Vice President and Director, Former Campaign Manager for Governor Rick Perry, Ex-Assistant Secretary of State
- 12 **Walter Fisher**  
Texas Capitol Group, Former Parliamentarian in Senate, Ex-Legislative Director for Texas Municipal League
- 13 **Curt Seidlits**  
Focused Advocacy, Former State Representative, Ex-TXU and Association of Electric Companies of Texas Top Executive
- 14 **Lara Keel**  
Texas Capitol Group, Former State Senate Aide, Married to State Auditor John Keel
- 15 **Yuniedth Midence Steen**  
Locke Lord, Former Chief of Staff to State Senator John Whitmire
- 16 **Galt Graydon**  
Graydon Group, Former Texas Senate Aide
- 17 **Steve Bresnen**  
Former General Counsel to Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock

### TEXAS LOBBY POWER RANKINGS 2013

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**January 23, 2013**

*Dedicated to Reggie Bashur and Mike McKinney*

### Tenth Anniversary Power Chart Reflects Transformation of Statehouse to Playing Field Where Young Lions Roam

[Professional Advocacy Association of Texas](#)

**By Mike Hailey**  
Capitol Inside Editor

On January 23, 2003 - exactly 10 years ago from today - Capitol Inside came to life on the Internet with a centerpiece feature story called the Texas Lobby Power Rankings.

The 78th Texas Legislature had convened in regular session exactly 10 days earlier with the GOP in control of both chambers for the first time since Reconstruction in the late 1860s when almost all of the Republicans here were African-Americans. The Republican majority in the Capitol's west wing capped off a partisan revolution that had been in crescendo since the GOP took control of the Senate in 1997 and won every statewide office a year after that.

So it was pretty clear that the 28 lobbyists who were featured on the brand new web site's inaugural power list faced an imposing challenge in the way they would go about their business at a statehouse where Democrats had been running the show throughout their careers. But no one at that point could have possibly predicted or envisioned that the lobbying industry at the state level in Texas was entering the infant stages of a major transformation that's never been more evident and obvious than it is now.

The Texas Lobby Power Rankings for 2013 that we're unveiling on the 10th anniversary of a remarkable run is a significantly bigger project than it was just two years ago when more than 450 lobbyists were listed in a dozen categories - more than 16 times the number that the chart contained on the day Capitol Inside was born. While the power rankings have mushroomed beyond anyone's wildest original expectations in sheer size and the magnitude of the import they carry on Austin's version of K Street, the number of registered lobbyists at the Texas Ethics Commission has remained fairly constant while hovering between 1,703 eight years ago and 1,837 by the end of 2011.

But while the size of the Capitol lobby hasn't changed all that much, its personality, complexion and operational dynamics have undergone a massive makeover that directly reflects the political conversion of Texas to a state that's more red than ever with a sufficient number of Democrats to keep their party relevant and the boat rocking perpetually. The presence of the largest freshmen class of legislators in four decades - with three out of every four new members representing the GOP - will be putting the old guard's adaptability and survival instincts to their biggest tests yet while giving the younger and inexperienced lions who've proliferated rapidly in recent years a golden opportunity to make the kind of immediate inroads that used to take many years to establish.

The trending that began 10 years ago has the potential in 2013 to hit a peak that spawns the next generation of special interest advocates. And the current set of circumstances inside the Austin beltway will be putting a higher premium than ever on teamwork, a relatively new and rapidly growing dependence on technological advancements like social media and a reintroduction process for the long-established lobbyists whose names don't ring near as many bells at the statehouse as they had until now. As the regular session unfolds over the course of the next four months, the lobbyists who'd been at the top of their game for years are being forced to start over in some ways if they hope to remain relevant and successful on a playing field that's more level, more competitive and far more crowded than it ever used to be. Reputation is still a critical variable in the lobby power hierarchy at the giant building that towers on the hill above the point in downtown where Congress Avenue and 11th Street meet. But cruise-control is no longer an option for the heaviest hitters who will have to work as hard as they ever have if not more to retain the level of clout they'd amassed over longer periods and could lose in a few months if they're not up to the new challenge.

Now it's true that many of the names are the same in the higher reaches of the list of the top 100 contract lobbyists who each represent multiple clients across the special interest board. Three of the four

- Stan Schlueter**  
18 Schlueter Group, Former State Representative
- Chris Shields**  
19 Texas Strategy Group, Former Aide to Governor Bill Clements and Secretary of State Jack Rains
- Jay Howard**  
20 HillCo Partners, Son of Former State Senator
- James Mathis**  
21 Former John Sharp Campaign Manager
- Randy Erben**  
22 Former Office of State-Federal Relations Director, Former Assistant Secretary of State
- Carl Richie**  
23 Former Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Ann Richards, Former Texas Ethics Commission Interim Director
- Marc Rodriguez**  
24 Former City of San Antonio Intergovernmental Relations Manager, Former SA Chamber Government Affairs VP
- Dean & Andrea McWilliams**  
25 Former Legislative Aides to Democratic and Republican Members
- Brad Shields**  
26 Texas Legislative Associates Managing Associate, Former Eanes School Board President
- Mark Vane**  
27 Gardere Wynne Sewell, Former Texas House Legislative Director
- Kathy Hutto**  
28 Jackson Walker, Former Sunset Advisory Commission Staff
- Eric Glenn**  
29 Schlueter Group, Former Texas House Aide, Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute Board
- Michelle Wittenburg**  
30 Former General Counsel to Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick, Former State Senate Aide, Former Aide to Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn
- Marsha Jones**  
31 HillCo Partners, Former Texas House and Senate Aide, Former Texas Hospital Association Official
- Jim Grace**  
32 Baker Botts Government Relations Chair, Former Campaign Advisor, U.S. Navy Lieutenant and Afghanistan Veteran
- David Marwitz**  
33 Marwitz and Company, Former Texas Medical Association, Texas Hospital Association and Texas Farm Bureau Director, Former Deputy Legislative Director for Governor Bill Clements
- Frank Santos**  
34 Santos Alliances, Former National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators Consultant, Former State House Aide
- Nora Del Bosque**  
35 Former State House Aide and Appropriations Committee Clerk, Sister is Speaker Tom Craddick's

top hired guns - Neal T. "Buddy" Jones, Bill Messer and Rusty Kelley - were ranked among the top four on the original list 3,652 days ago and have been fixtures at the pinnacle of lobby power in Texas on every list since. The second highest-ranked contract lobbyist this time around - Mike Toomey - has been in the top four on every power list since 2005 and would've been from the start if he hadn't taken a few years off from his mid-life profession to be Governor Rick Perry's chief of staff.

Those four lobbyists have seemed as deeply embedded at the top of the power list as the faces of the presidents that are carved into the cliffs of Mount Rushmore. But none of the lobbyists in the highest reaches of the hired gun list bought their way to the pinnacle or inherited their rightful place there. They earned the lofty rankings through several decades of experience while amassing a cumulative body of winning results, reputation and relationship building and countless connections and contacts. But the most impressive thing about the Capitol lobby's four kings is how they've been impossible to leapfrog and dislodge as a result of individual work ethics that time hasn't diminished, the strength of the teams they've built around them and their ability to anticipate and to adapt to a business that's evolved with the state's ever-changing political persona and become way more competitive and cutthroat in some ways during the past decade.

The same can be said about a pair of lobby rivals - Robert Johnson and Demetrius McDaniel - who were ranked among the top 10 in 2003 and still are today. An African-American attorney, McDaniel has been a trailblazer in a business that's been dominated by white males and not nearly as diverse as the Legislature or the state as a whole despite some belated trending in a more reflective direction. Johnson, the son of a former House and Senate parliamentarian who has a state building named after him, was a top 10 hired gun before his brother took a leave of absence from the firm four years ago en route to becoming the most powerful behind-the-scenes player in Texas politics today.

But the lead on the real story on the Texas Capitol lobby in 2013 actually is buried in the mid-and-lower ranges of the hired gun directory and even more so in the sidebar lists like those that rank recently retired legislators who've hung out lobbyist shingles, former agency heads who are lobbying now and the ever-increasing number of teams that are sprouting up constantly in a corresponding decrease in members of the profession who still go lone wolf.

Those lists demonstrate how the number of people who've passed through the revolving door from the Legislature to the lobby has been soaring and growing exponentially each year since the GOP's ascension to ruling party status in Texas. While lawmakers began making the transition to the lobby long before Republicans outnumbered Democrats under the pink granite dome, legislative staffs have become the principal farm clubs and training grounds for a lobbyist profession that's been inundated with talent that's generally younger but just as well connected and highly versed on state government issues as the elected officials who'd employed them.

The lobby profession used to be a place where ex-legislators, lawyers, association officials and others who'd worked around the Capitol could go for a mid-life career change and make a decent living off the knowledge and experience they'd gained in the public arena. But the business has experienced a major growth surge in recent years as more young people set their sights on lobbyist careers as principal occupations in contrast to times past when children would typically say they wanted to be doctors or lawyers when they grew up.

College students and recent graduates - as a result - are applying for jobs on staffs at the Capitol because they see them as apprenticeships for lucrative lobby jobs that they hope to secure without taking the longer and highly unpredictable route that many of today's more seasoned and experienced lobbyists followed into the lobby field.

The explosion in the level and quality of competition has elevated the importance of the team concept in an industry that had been limited mostly to statewide professional association directors and lawyers with clients with issues before the Legislature before the advent of the hired gun in the early 1980s with the emergence of ex-lawmakers like Messer and Jones as contract lobbyists who represent multiple clients instead of just one. Jones, a former district attorney who served one term in the House before joining Gib Lewis' staff in the speaker's office, was one of the original hired guns long before he teamed up with veteran communications professional Bill Miller as the co-founders of HillCo Partners in a move more than 10 years ago that made lobby teams in vogue as the wave of the future.

But the future from this point forward may be more evident arguably in the list of Rising Lobby Stars that's ballooned to almost twice the size since the biennial rankings were published two years ago. The huge infusion of new talent at the start of a session with the largest House turnover in four decades has prompted the creation of a separate list for lobbyists who were legislators in the past four years or less. More than two dozen lobbyists are ranked on these two lists combined this year. And there would be more if we hadn't decided for the first time to limit the list of rising stars to lobbyists who'd never appeared in that category until now. Most of the rising stars of the past have graduated to the hired gun list or specialty categories for this year's ranking.

The new rising stars list includes lobbyists from a variety of backgrounds who bring a wide and unique range skill sets to their new profession. Craig Chick - as an example - is ranked high on the rising stars list as the co-founder of a new lobby venture after a highly-acclaimed stint as one of Texas House Speaker Joe Straus' top policy strategists. Gardner Pate occupies a high spot on the rising stars list as well as a young Locke Lord lawyer who worked for Republican Greg Abbott before and after his election as the state's attorney general in 2002. Pate, who still serves as Abbott's chief advisor on campaign finance, has emerged as the heir apparent to Ed Shack in the role as the GOP's leading expert on political money issues and ethics law in Texas. Pate's expertise in that area has been in increasing demand despite the fact that he's only 30 years old.

- Chief of Staff Nancy Fisher
- 36 Bill Pewitt**  
Bill Pewitt & Associates, Texas  
Computer Industry Council Founder
- 37 Eric Wright**  
Congress Avenue Partners, Former  
Chief of Staff to Lt. Governor Bill  
Ratliff, Former Senate Finance  
Committee Director
- 38 Billy Phenix**  
Texas Capitol Group, Former Aide to  
Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock  
and State Senator Buster Brown
- 39 Royce Poinsett**  
Baker Botts, Former Advisor to Gov.  
Rick Perry, House Speaker Joe  
Straus, Gov. George W. Bush and  
U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison
- 40 Gilbert Turrieta**  
Former Houston Chamber of  
Commerce and Texas Medical  
Association Official, Former LBB  
Examiner
- 41 Jack Erskine**  
K&L Gates, Former Corporate  
Lawyer for Amoco and Dupont, Oil  
Field Clean-up Fund Architect
- 42 J. McCartt**  
HillCo Partners, Former Aide to Rick  
Perry in the Lieutenant Governor's  
Office
- 43 Brandon Aghamalian**  
Focused Advocacy, Former Chief of  
Staff to State Sen. Kim Brimer,  
Former Fort Worth Governmental  
Affairs Director
- 44 Mindy Ellmer**  
Former Bracewell & Giuliani  
Consultant, Ex-State House Aide,  
Ex-Aide to Governor Bill Clements
- 45 J.E. "Buster" Brown**  
Former State Senator, Former  
Senate Natural Resources Chair,  
Former Assistant District Attorney
- 46 Carol McGarah**  
Blackridge, Former State Senate  
Aide
- 47 Jody Richardson**  
Allen Boone Humphries Robinson,  
Former Television Reporter,  
Longtime Akin Gump Member
- 48 Jay Propes**  
Graydon Group, Former  
Congressional Aide, Ex-Trade  
Association Executive
- 49 Jay Brown**  
Graydon Group, Son of Former State  
Senator, Former GOP Campaign  
Staffer
- 50 Sabrina Thomas Brown**  
Former Texas House aide and  
Appropriations Committee Clerk
- 51 Keith Strama**  
Beatty Bangle Strama, Former Texas  
House Aide
- 52 Mark Borskey**  
Former Deputy Legislative Director  
for Governor Rick Perry, Former  
Chief of Staff to State Rep. Mike  
Krusee
- 53 Snapper Carr**  
Focused Advocacy General Counsel,  
Former Texas Municipal League  
Legislative Counsel, Former Texas  
House Committee Clerk

Mark Miner - on the other hand - is a battle-tested political warrior who's making the transition to the lobby after spending several years in the trenches of high-level state and federal campaigns. Miner, who's ranked among the top five rising lobby stars in 2013, served as the chief spokesman for Governor Rick Perry and Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst at the Capitol and on the campaign trail since arriving in Texas 10 years ago. Miner has graduated, however, to a newly-formed McGuireWoods Consulting team in Austin that's led by Luis Saenz, a former Perry campaign manager and assistant secretary of state who's the highest-ranked Hispanic on the hired guns list in 2013.

But while the Rising Lobby Stars list in 2013 is more than twice as long as it's been in the past, none of the up-and-coming lobbyists who've been ranked in this particular category since its inception six years ago have been armed with the kind of marquee resumes Denise Davis and Deirdre Delisi have as the two highest-ranked newcomers to the profession in Texas. Davis and Delisi are tied for first on the rising star list this time around as a pair of Capitol players who've wielded tremendous amounts of clout behind the scenes and out in the open as well.

Delisi managed Perry's first campaign for governor before a stint as his chief of staff and an eventual appointment to the prestigious post of Texas Transportation Commission chair. Delisi, who's husband is longtime GOP consultant Ted Delisi, left her job on the highway board for a role as a senior advisor to the Perry presidential bid. While she appeared to be a victim of a power play inside the White House campaign, she's been nailing down lucrative lobby contracts despite speculation on whether she and others had been squeezed out of the Perry camp for good.

Davis, who's African-American, has been a Capitol fixture who's ever-rising power value skyrocketed during a recent stint as House Speaker Joe Straus' chief of staff. Davis broke into state politics as an assistant press officer for Democrat Bill Hobby in the lieutenant governor's office before tours of duty as the top lawyer for several Senate committees. Davis served as the general counsel to Republican Bill Ratliff in the lieutenant governor's office before working as the House parliamentarian under Speakers Tom Craddick and Straus. She got a taste of the lobby business during a brief stint with the Baker Botts law firm before returning to the lower chamber as a Straus staff member.

While HillCo Partners and the Texas Capitol Group that Toomey and Messer lead remain tied for first for the second consecutive biennium on the list of lobby teams, the group that Robert Miller directs for the Locke Lord law firm at the statehouse in Austin may be the epitome of teamwork in the public advocacy profession here.

Miller - a former state Senate staffer whose resume includes a stint as the chairman of the public transportation agency board in his home base of Houston - has climbed to the fifth spot on the hired guns list as the traffic cop maestro of a Locke Lord team that's been ranked first on the Law Firm Lobby Practice list for most of the past decade. While Miller has become the go-to lobbyist in the state's largest city when it comes to fundraising there, he's amassed a significant amount of the clout he wields by virtue of the strength of the team that he's personally crafted and its members' unique abilities and individual niches.

Miller - for example - has helped Yuniedth Midence Steen develop into one of the Austin lobby's youngest superstars since she joined the Locke Lord team after leaving a job as Democratic State Senator John Whitmire's chief of staff. Midence Steen, who's not only one of the best lobbyists in Austin but clearly one of the most popular as well, is the second highest-ranking woman on the hired guns list behind Texas Capitol Group member Lara Keel. Midence Steen and Keel could be closing in on top 10 status by the time lobby rankings are rearranged in early 2015.

The number five slot on the hired guns list had been occupied by the sibling duo of Johnson and Johnson in 2011 and 2009 - the year Gordon Johnson left the business temporarily to take over as the chief political mastermind and organizational director for Straus when he won the speaker's job initially. But the unofficial statute of limitations as expired for Gordon Johnson in terms of eligibility for the lobby power rankings - and that's caused his brother to slip a few rungs even though he's still one of the best in the business.

The arrow has been pointing up, however, for John Pitts - a former minister who doubled as Senate chaplain and general counsel to Bob Bullock in the lieutenant governor's office in the 1990s before embarking on a career as a lobbyist. Pitts is making his debut in the top 10 on the hired guns list for several key reasons. Pitts - for starters - looks an awful lot like twin brother Jim Pitts - a veteran Republican lawmaker who's the House's second most powerful member behind Straus in his fourth regular session as the Appropriations Committee chairman. Pitts the lobbyist is a highly cerebral political player whose institutional acumen was evident as Bullock's chief negotiation a landmark water package that legislators approved in 1997. He's one of the lead lobbyists now in the push for casino gambling in Texas.

But the most compelling factor behind the elevation of Pitts into the top 10 is the new role he's assumed as the founder and leader of a relatively large lobby team known as the Texas Star Alliance. Pitts' new group is loaded with young muscle with expertise on a wide range of major issues. The Texas Star Alliance is ranked just below the groups that a pair of former Democratic House chairmen - Stan Schlueter and Curt Seidlits - are leading on the Lobby Teams list. .

The Seidlits group - Focused Advocacy - has moved up the list after surviving a legal showdown that erupted when Austin lobbyists Brandon Aghamalian and Snapper Carr left HillCo to join Seidlits' new team less than three years ago. Seidlits has garnered a top 20 ranking this year while Aghamalian and Carr are making their first appearances on the hired guns list.

Several other lobbyists including Gardere Wynne Sewell attorney Mark Vane, Baker Botts lawyer Jim



54	<b>Tristan "Tris" Castañeda</b> Longbow Partners, Former Asst. Attorney General, Former Aide to SA Mayor Henry Cisneros
55	<b>Mike Krusee</b> Former State Representative
56	<b>Jaime Capelo</b> Former State Representative
57	<b>Shannon Swan</b> Graydon Group, Former Texas House Chief of Staff
58	<b>Eric Woomer</b> Congress Avenue Partners, Former Chief of Staff to State Senators Kel Seliger, Teel Bivins and Mario Gallegos, Former U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison Senior Advisor
59	<b>Nancy Fisher</b> Former Chief of Staff to Ex-Speaker Tom Craddick, Former Texas Racing Commission Executive Director
60	<b>Kathy Grant</b> Former Texas Cable Television Association Government Relations Director, Former Texas House Aide
61	<b>Joe Garcia</b> Texas Capitol Group, Former Chief of Staff to State Senator Eddie Lucion
62	<b>Deborah Ingersoll</b> Legislative Solutions, Key Fundraiser for Campaigns
63	<b>Mario Martinez</b> Mario Martinez & Associates, Former Aide to State Rep. Tom Uher
64	<b>Mignon McGarry</b> Former State Senate Aide
65	<b>Curtis Fuelberg</b> Former Texas Association of Realtors Official, Former Aide to House Speaker Gus Mutscher
66	<b>Joey Bennett</b> Former Public Strategies Lobbyist
67	<b>Mike Meroney</b> Former U.S. Senate Aide, Former Congressional Campaign Staffer
68	<b>Gavin Massingill</b> Former Chief of Staff to State Representative Charlie Geren
69	<b>Jennifer Rodriguez</b> McGuireWoods, Daughter of Former State Legislator & Gubernatorial Advisor Dan Shelley
70	<b>Richard Evans</b> Texas Lobby Solutions, Former Deputy Legislative Director for Governor George Bush, Former Chief of Staff to State Senator Dan Shelley
71	<b>James Clark</b> Former John Sharp Campaign Manager, Former Jim Mattox Campaign Aide
72	<b>Robert Culley</b> Former Legislative Aide
73	<b>Pat Haggerty</b> Former State Representative
74	<b>Michael Grimes</b> Imperium Public Affairs, Former Chief of Staff to State Senator Chris Harris, Former Gov. George W. Bush Aide
	<b>Trent Townsend</b> Imperium Public Affairs, Former

Grace and veteran Capitol professional David Marwitz are making debuts on the hired guns list as well in 2013. Vane is the most highly-visible lobbyist at the statehouse for a Gardere team that's led by Kim Yelkin and ranked second on the law firm lobby practice list. Yelkin divides her time between roles as a Capitol lobbyist and attorney who spends significant time on cases before state agencies.

Grace, who's based in Houston, put his courage under fire on display literally when he signed up for the Naval Reserve the day before his 40th birthday in 2007 en route to an eventual deployment to Afghanistan two years ago. While some Capitol players wondered if Grace had lost his sanity, he attributed the midlife move to a call of service that had been nagging at him since his graduation from law school. But Grace is back in action now as the leader of the Baker Botts team that's ranked third on the law firm list with former lobby rising star Royce Poinsett as a featured new member.

The newest member of the law firm lobby practice list is the team that Keith Strama has assembled at a firm he co-founded called Beatty Bangle Strama. As the brother of Democratic State Rep. Mark Strama of Austin and nephew of Texans for Lawsuit Reform field general Dick Trabulsi, Strama the lobbyist has an inherent advantage in the public affairs advocacy business in Texas. But BBS has strengthened its new team with the addition of former Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott, a Perry appointee who'll give the firm the critical partisan balance that's a prerequisite for success in the lobby world today.

Scott, who led the massive Texas Education Agency for five years before stepping down in 2012, is one of several new names on the list of former state agency chiefs who are lobbying now. This list includes lobby newcomer Tom Suehs, who served until recently as the state's health & human services commissioner - one of the toughest jobs in the public sector anywhere. Suehs is a member of Pitts' team at Texas Star Alliance.

There's been little change at the top of the lists of public affairs practitioners who represent one client exclusively as in-house corporate lobbyists or the point people at the Capitol for statewide associations with members from a wide range of industries and professions in the private sector. The Texans for Lawsuit Reform, the Texas Medical Association, the Texas Trial Lawyers Association and the Texas Association of Realtors continue to crown the list of private sector associations that lobby in Austin while the Texas Association of Business still has the fifth spot in that category locked down. The only significant change on that particular list is a jump up the ladder for the groups that represent alcoholic beverage interests in light of a push by some key lawmakers for an overhaul of regulations that will affect their businesses directly if approved. While the beer and liquor lobbyists have always flexed considerable muscle in Austin, they will be circling the wagons this time around without the legendary Capitol player Mike McKinney on hand for the fight in the role that he had for several decades with the Wholesale Beer Distributors of Texas before cancer claimed his life last year.

The Corporate In-House lobbyist list looks quite a bit in the new power rankings installment like it did two years ago with a couple of key changes in the higher reaches. While the folks who represent AT&T on a full-time basis at the Capitol are still ranked first in this category, the CenterPoint Energy team in Austin that Jeff Bonham leads has moved into the second place slot that Verizon had occupied until dismantling their in-house shop here and turning exclusively to contract lobbyists. The Energy Future Holdings team has vaulted into third after a merger with the group that TXU Energy had stationed at the statehouse. Veteran lobbyist Carl Richie had been TXU's lead lobbyist in Austin before the changes prompted him to resume an independent practice that's put him back in relatively high spot on the hired guns list.

The Texas Municipal League has first place to itself this time around on the Public Sector Organizations list after sharing the top spot with the Texas Association of Counties in 2011. Potential repercussions from some personnel shuffling at TAC made it possible for the Texas Conference of Urban Counties and the County Judges & Commissioners Association of Texas to take leaps up this list to the second and third spots respectively in 2013. The groups that represent the state's bigger counties and county officials are led by Capitol veterans Don Lee and Jim Allison respectively.

Ironically perhaps, the only list that's shorter in 2013 than it had been in recent biennium's is the category for political consultants who lobby. The most noticeable change beyond the size of the consultant lobby list is the absence of Reggie Bashur in the number one spot. Bashur - a veteran lobbyist who'd been an adviser to all three of the state's modern-day Republican governors - died last year after a battle with brain cancer that took his life eventually but didn't stop him from working right up to the end at a profession that had always been a true passion. While Bashur had focused increasingly on his lobby practice, he served as Comptroller Susan Combs' senior political advisor throughout the final decade of his life.

But what makes the reduction in the number of political consultants who lobby interesting is the fact that the list had mushroomed in the wake of the GOP state House takeover as Republican campaign strategists flocked to the lobby registration table to capitalize on the opportunity to make money lobbying the legislators they'd help elect to an arena where the party's power stock had soared. The subsequent and steady infusion of GOP Capitol staffers and others with Republican ties into the lobby has appeared to limit the opportunities that political consultants who moonlight as lobbyists had in the early days of Grand Old Party rule in the west wing. It's hard to do both jobs full time.

The consultants lobby list - while smaller in size - features some names that have long been well known in Texas political circles like Ray Sullivan, Bryan Eppstein, Ted Delisi, Chris Britton and Todd Smith, who all made names for themselves as strategists for Republican candidates and officials including many that they've ended up lobbying. Sullivan, who's ranked first, is back on the list after a four-year hiatus during which he served as Perry's chief of staff and presidential campaign adviser. Eppstein, however, is one of the few campaign consultants who'd worked as a registered lobbyist before Republicans seized control of the Legislature.

75	Chief of Staff to State Senator Kirk Watson, Former Legislative Director for State Senator Kim Brimer
76	<b>Shayne Woodard</b> Former Chief of Staff to Railroad Commissioner Barry Williamson, Former Aide to State Senator Bill Sims and State Rep. David Counts
77	<b>Toby Goodman</b> Former State Representative, Former Juvenile Justice & Family Issues Committee Chairman, Ex-Republican Precinct Chair
78	<b>Mark Harkrider</b> Former Aide to Dallas Mayor Annette Strauss
79	<b>Ron Hinkle</b> Former Texas Department of Economic Development Government Relations Director, Former PUC Legislative Liaison, Former House Legislative Director & Sgt. at Arms
80	<b>Kraege Polan</b> Former Legislative Aide
81	<b>Chuck Rice</b> Chuck Rice Group, Ex-State Senate Aide, Former Texas Hospital Association Legislative Director
82	<b>Jack Roberts</b> Former Deputy Comptroller
83	<b>Dan Shelley</b> Former State Senator, Former State House, Former Legislative Director for Gov. Rick Perry
84	<b>Bill Siebert</b> Former State Representative
85	<b>Stephanie Gibson</b> Texas Legislative Associates, Former Texas Retailers Association Vice President of Governmental Affairs
86	<b>Scott Gilmore</b> GovBizPartners, Former Chief of Staff to State Rep. Ray Allen, Former U.S. Rep. John Culberson, State Senator Buster Brown and State Rep. Robert Talton Aide, Former Texas House Sgt. at Arms
87	<b>Robert Howden</b> Former Texas Tax Reform Commission Staff Director, Former Communications Director for Gov. Rick Perry
88	<b>Jerry Phillips</b> Former Chief of Staff to State Representative Jim Dunnam, House Democratic Campaign Committee Executive Director
89	<b>Kurt Meachum</b> Former Chief of Staff to State Representative Pete Gallego
90	<b>Robert Peeler</b> Longbow Partners, Former Chief of Staff to State Senator Mike Jackson, Former Aide to Gov. George Bush
91	<b>Brett Findley</b> Longbow Partners, Former Chief of Staff to State Senator Florence Shapiro
92	<b>Chris Heckman</b> Former Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Rick Perry
93	<b>Jerry Valdez</b> Former Texas Department of Economic Development Official

The hired guns list features 100 members in 2013 - almost seven times more than it contained the day Capitol Inside popped up for the first time online. Seventy-seven contract lobbyists were mentioned on the hired guns list just two years ago when 27 of those were ranked in a tie for 50th.

Most of the lists are considerably longer this year as a result of the deluge of new talent that's been flowing through the spinning door. The number of registered lobbyists in Texas, however, has only grown 7 percent in the past eight years. While there were 1,837 registered lobbyists on file with the TEC by the end of 2011, about one-third of them were full-time public affairs advocates like those you often see crammed into the halls behind the House and Senate chambers when they're in session. The power rankings this time around, however, suggest that closer to half of all of the state's registered lobbyists could be working the Capitol on a full time basis as the session progresses and sticking around for any special sessions that might be necessary or called anyway even if they're not.

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*Editor's Note: We apologize in advance for inadvertent omissions that are inevitable in the compilation of a project of this magnitude in a state with nearly 2,000 people registered to lobby. The best way to prevent that from happening in the future is to reach out to ensure that we're aware of you and your practice here before the rankings are published in the early stages of regular legislative sessions in odd-numbered years. The proactive approach is far more effective than complaining after the fact.*

*The rankings are subjective in nature and based on a consensus of opinion among a relatively small group of people with maximum expertise on the subject at hand, proven credibility and a professional commitment to objectivity and veracity. We're always open to input from others even if it's purely self-promotional because it raises our awareness and scope of knowledge on a profession for which we've never been registered.*

*Policy Changes: A. Lobby teams can have a maximum of two members apiece for each interval of 10 on the Hired Guns list. B. The list for Ex-Legislators Turned Lobbyists is limited to former lawmakers who were members of the Texas Legislature in 2011 or 2009 or both. C. The Rising Lobby Stars list only contains lobbyists who have never appeared on the list previously.*

<b>94</b>	<b>Will Yarnell</b> Former Chief Advisor to State Rep. Patrick Rose
<b>95</b>	<b>Susan Baumbach Ross</b> Former Texas Dental Association Public Affairs Director
<b>96</b>	<b>Kwame Walker</b> McGuireWoods, Former Legislative Director & General Counsel to State Senator Royce West
<b>97</b>	<b>Laura Matz</b> Former Santos Alliances Member, Former Thompson & Knight Law Firm Member
<b>98</b>	<b>Richard McBride</b> Former General Land Office Spokesman, Former Aide to Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst
<b>99</b>	<b>Louis Bacarisse</b> Former Aide to Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and House Speaker Pete Laney
<b>100</b>	<b>Fred Shannon</b> Former Hewlett Packard Governmental Affairs Manager