

POLITICO

Adelson makes fifth new hire to fight online gaming - IFA notches win in Chicago wage fight

By Byron Tau

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ADELSON MAKES FIFTH NEW HIRE TO FIGHT ONLINE GAMING: The casino company run by Republican megadonor **Sheldon Adelson** has hired former Republican congressman **Connie Mack** and his firm **Mack Strategies**. Mack will be working for Adelson's **Las Vegas Sands Corp.** on pushing his top priority: the Restoration of America's Wire Act, a bill sponsored by Sen. **Lindsey Graham** that would ban all forms of gambling on the Internet. Adelson is building an arsenal of firms to work on the issue, which is divisive even within the gaming industry. Since February, Las Vegas Sands has also hired **The Keelen Group, Capitol Counsel, Lincoln Policy Group** and **Steptoe & Johnson**, according to Senate lobbying records. The company, also registered with **Husch Blackwell**, spent \$200,000 across five firms in the first quarter of the year.

In his anti-online gaming push, Adelson stands virtually alone among gaming corporations. He's opposed by most of the other major casino operators, who see online gambling as a ripe market. The issue has divided the main trade association representing the industry, the **American Gaming Association**, which has stepped back from the fight. Adelson has vowed to spend whatever it takes of his considerable fortune to get the online gaming ban through Congress — and he has the ear of major Republican legislators on Capitol Hill.

GOOD WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, where it's been 118 years since William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech. Addressing the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on July 9, 1896, Bryan used the address to call for bimetallism and the abandonment of the gold standard. His speech — the most famous line of which is "you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold" — propelled him to fame and the 1896 Democratic nomination, but he'd never capture the White House in his three attempts. Send lobbying news, gossip, tips and scoops to btau@politico.com. And keep up with PI on Twitter by following [@ByronTau](https://twitter.com/ByronTau) or [@PoliticoPI](https://twitter.com/PoliticoPI).

** America's fiscal future depends on financially stable workers. By opting to provide private disability insurance, businesses ensure individuals continue to receive a paycheck even if they're too sick to work, while also saving American taxpayers up to \$4.5 billion a year. Financial protection benefits: America's workers and taxpayers win: bit.ly/protectingyourincomeunum **

IFA NOTCHES WIN IN CHICAGO WAGE FIGHT: The **International Franchise Association** is celebrating a win in Chicago. The city's Minimum Wage Working Group recommended that any wage hike be applied across the board to all businesses, regardless of their organizational structure. IFA President & CEO **Steve Caldeira** said in a statement: "We are pleased and truly grateful the task force recommended to Mayor [Rahm] Emanuel that any wage ordinance should provide equal treatment to all businesses and not pick winners and losers among business models." He added, "We asked the task force to treat all small businesses in Chicago, including the 1,200 franchisees that employ 44,000 employees, as the small businesses that they are and not discriminate in the form of an accelerated adoption of a wage increase simply because they operate under the name of a well-known brand."

HEALY PUBLISHES NEW CORPORATE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR BOOK: **Robert Healy** of the firm **Wexler | Walker** is out with a new book on corporate political activity. The book, "Corporate Political Behavior: Why Corporations Do What They Do in Politics," was published in late June and talks about why and how corporations choose to engage with policymakers the way they do. In addition to being a working lobbyist and a longtime Democratic Party strategist and fundraiser, Healy has a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Pittsburgh and is an adjunct professor of political science at American University.

MERCATUS STUDY: LOBBYING DOESN'T BOOST CORPORATE BOTTOM LINES: A new study from the **Mercatus Center** at **George Mason University** finds that political activity, including lobbying, has no significant impact on the corporate bottom line. Economists **Russell Sobel** and **Rachel Graefe-Anderson** find "there is little evidence that companies' lobbying expenditures or political contributions lead to greater profits" but that "company executives appear to be the main beneficiaries of strong political connections between firms and the federal government, capturing dollars which do not flow to the rest of the firm or its shareholders." The study also finds that the financial sector is the one exception — showing some links between lobbying efforts, executive compensation and firm profitability.

GILL JOINS H&K: **Holland & Knight** has tapped **Elizabeth Gill** as a government contracts senior counsel in the Washington office. She'll counsel clients on all issues that arise from doing business with the federal government. "We are very pleased that Liz is joining us," said **John Brownlee**, practice group leader for the firm's Government Contracts and Enforcement Defense Group. "Her addition continues the expansion of our government contracts group, which has already seen growth this year with two new partners joining us. We see these moves as an opportunity to build the practice nationally."

HOFF TAKES OVER ABA PAC: **Bethany Hoff** has started a new job at the **American Bankers Association** this week. She previously worked at the **American Trucking Associations**, where she was director of political affairs and helped manage that association's PAC. She'll have a similar position with ABA, serving as senior director of the ABA's **BankPAC**. She sent a note around the fundraising world on Wednesday announcing her job change.

THORSEN FRENCH HIRED BY BITCOIN FOUNDATION: **POLITICO's Zachary Warmbrodt**: The **Bitcoin Foundation** has hired **Thorsen French Advocacy** as outside lobbyists, the nonprofit announced Wednesday. The group, which promotes Bitcoin to the public and guides its software development, has often been the face of the digital currency before lawmakers and regulators in Washington. The foundation said the lobbyists will work under the "strategic direction" of **Jim Harper**, a former Hill staffer and **Cato Institute** senior

fellow who joined the group's Washington office earlier this year as global policy counsel. The foundation received a number of pitches from lobbying firms, Harper told reporters today. Part of the appeal of Thorsen French was that they have a "relatively clean slate in this area" and haven't had a role in past financial services battles, he said. "Their role is going to basically be relationship building," he said. "Eyes and ears. Generating a list of contacts. Generating good will on Capitol Hill so that Bitcoin and the Bitcoin Foundation have a reservoir of good will that we can deploy when we need to avert a crisis or to explain what's going on and when the need arises to move public policy in the direction we need either through regulatory change or law change."

REPUBLICANS MOVE CONVENTION UP TO AVOID MONEY TRAP: Byron Tau reports for **POLITICO**: Republicans will hold their 2016 national convention more than a month earlier than their 2012 event for one simple reason: money. Two years ago, **Mitt Romney** raised \$1 billion but found himself out of cash that August due to campaign finance laws that essentially force candidates to divide their spending between pre- and post-convention accounts. Moving the convention up, the GOP reasons, will help make those rules a nonissue. The **Republican National Committee** announced Tuesday that Cleveland will host its 2016 convention — and that the party is aiming for a late June or early July event. The early summer timing is a sharp break with recent history — when both parties have traditionally held their conventions in late August or early September. The GOP hasn't held a July convention since 1980, and it hasn't held a June convention since 1948.