

POLITICO



POLITICO



POLITICO Influence

Delivered daily, Influence gives you a comprehensive rundown and analysis of all lobby hires and news on K Street.

1e POLITICO Influence newsletter

By signing up you agree to receive email newsletters or updates from POLITICO and you agree to our privacy policy and terms of service. You can unsubscribe at any time and you can contact us here. This sign-up form is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply.

Mulvaney and Heitkamp land on K Street

By **CAITLIN OPRYSKO** | 01/27/2022 04:38 PM EST

Presented by Natural Allies for a Clean Energy Future

With Daniel Lippman

FORMER MERCURY LOBBYISTS LAUNCH NEW FIRM: The lobbyists who left **Mercury Public Affairs** en masse last year have formed a new firm, Actum, with a Washington office led by a high-profile bipartisan duo: **Mick Mulvaney** and **Heidi Heitkamp**.

— Mulvaney, the former acting chief of staff to former President **Donald Trump** and Heitkamp, the former Democratic North Dakota senator, will co-chair Actum's Washington office, your host reports. In California, where Mercury was one of the most powerful lobbying firms in the state, former Sen. **Barbara Boxer** will co-chair the Los Angeles office along with former L.A. Mayor **Antonio Villaraigosa**, **Peter Villegas** and **Cliff Einstein**.

— **Kirill Goncharenko**, a co-founder at Mercury who was among the mass departures in October stemming from a long-simmering dispute with the firm's corporate owner **Omnicom**, and **Fabian Nuñez**, a former California Assembly speaker, will be Actum's managing partners based in L.A. They'll be joined by partners **John Ek**, **Nicole Flotteron**, **Stefan Friedman**, **Glenn Gritzner**, **Duncan McFetridge**, **Michael McKeon**, **Rachel Noerdlinger**, **Morris Reid**, **George Tucker** and **Jennifer Wlach**, along with seven managing directors and four senior vice presidents, with 70 staffers in total scattered across six offices in Washington, D.C., London, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento.

— The former Mercury lobbyists are bringing more than 100 clients with them to the new firm, among them the e-scooter company **Bird**, the **Boys & Girls Club**, **Charter Communications**, **Clear**, **Comcast**, **FedEx**, **Lyft**, **No Kid Hungry** and **SoCalGas-Sempre Energy**. In an interview, Nuñez told your host that the firm won't shy away from controversial clients in certain industries or foreign countries — though he did note Actum would likely never represent the Taliban should they come calling.

— He also touted Actum's bipartisan makeup, and explained that the name comes from the Latin word for "action," an attribute the firm is aiming to embody in its work. "If you look at the talent of the people we talk to, it speaks to the fact that we're doing something very unique," Nuñez argued, adding that "whenever you tie yourself to one ideological frame of mind, you really limit yourself."

— He pointed to the ideological gulf between Mulvaney, a founder of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, and Boxer, an outspoken liberal: "Two people who probably ... would have never worked with each other when they were in Congress — but here, they're going to sit down, and they're going to work together to address the solutions that are necessary to resolve a problem that clients that we represent have."

— Though Mulvaney and Heitkamp both are now free from any ethics rules barring them from registering to lobby, Wlach told POLITICO that neither has any plans to do so in the near future. Still, they could be the most-high profile bipartisan pair to hit K Street together since former Reps. Joe Crowley and Bill Shuster joined Squire Patton Boggs in 2019. Actum won't be Heitkamp's first foray into the world of advocacy — though she never formally registered, last year Heitkamp joined a dark money group that lobbied against doing away with the so-called stepped-up basis for taxing capital gains in Democrats' reconciliation package.