

"Congress shall make no law ... abridging ... the right of the people ... to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Vested Interests

ROLL CALL

The lobbying and legislation that drives Capitol Hill

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Lobbyists Circling Lincoln, Harkin

Some on K Street Destined to Thrive With New Chairmen

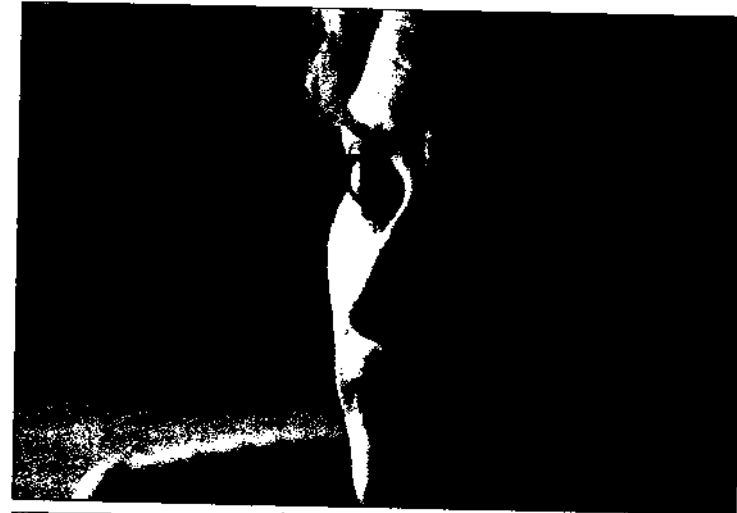
By **Kate Ackley**
ROLL CALL STAFF

Last week, even before Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.) had formally taken the gavel of the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, potential new clients with an interest in the panel started calling lobbyist Kelly Bingel.

Bingel, a partner with the firm Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti, once served as Lincoln's chief of staff.

Now, she and other former Lincoln aides on K Street, as well as the one-time employees of Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), who has taken control of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, are finding a new crop of prospective business sprouting up.

"We have had several different folks reach out to us," Bingel said, noting that last week the firm was retained by the International Dairy Foods Association. "In the business we're in, you always want to grow your business."



Lobbyists with ties to newly minted HELP Chairman Tom Harkin and his replacement as head of the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, Blanche Lincoln, are expected to see an upsurge in business.

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New Chairmen Mean New Spheres of Influence

LINCOLN, from page A-9

The ag lobbying world, she noted, has often been viewed as predominantly male. The rise of Lincoln, the first woman to head the panel, may change that. "While it's typically been an area dominated by older white males, and typically Republicans, there might be some room for some expansion there," she said.

Lincoln, a Southerner and daughter of a farmer, is also considered to be a supporter of Southern agriculture interests such as cotton and rice.

Ben Noble, a principal at Troutman Sanders Strategies, served as a policy adviser to Lincoln and now represents clients in those areas including the USA Rice Federation and the National Cotton Council.

"I think a lot of people that would consider themselves aggies, if you will, are excited

to have her as chairman because she understands the complex nature of the business," Noble said. "You're going to see someone that can put together coalitions and be proactive and provide leadership."

While Lincoln's K Street community is not particularly large, it also includes former legislative assistant John Gilliland, a senior counsel at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld. And another alumnus of Lincoln's staff, Drew Goehl, just joined the lobby shop Capitol Counsel this month. Goehl, who most recently was chief of staff to Rep. Mike Ross (D-Ark.), worked for Lincoln for eight years.

Chuck Barnett, a lobbyist with the Alpine Group, spent five years working for Lincoln. According to his firm's bio, Barnett worked on Lincoln's first Senate campaign and then became her senior adviser on energy, resources and environmental matters. He now

focuses his lobbying practice in many of those same areas.

Harkin, who vacated the job Lincoln took at Agriculture, is no stranger to health care

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issues. But as chairman of HELP, his former health aides, in particular, can expect their stock to increase.

One former chief of staff, Robert Waters, is now a partner at Drinker Biddle & Reath, while another longtime aide and chief of staff, Peter Reinecke, runs Reinecke Strategic Solutions.

Another former senior policy adviser, Mary Langowski, is now with Alston & Bird.

"I think his staff and office have always been accessible," said one former Harkin aide who is now a lobbyist. "He's passionate about a certain set of issues. Even when he disagrees with you, he'll at least listen to you."

Some of Harkin's former top advisers are not available for hire by clients but are lobbying in-house: Daniel Smith, president of the American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network, was a Harkin chief of staff, while former aide Adam Gluck is director of federal government relations for Biogen Idec.