

PROPOSAL RESPONSE

Request for Proposals for Lobbying Services 2024-07



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**COMMONWEALTH  
STRATEGIC PARTNERS**

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## COMMONWEALTH STRATEGIC PARTNERS

The team working with Dillingham would include all three federal lobbyists on CSP's team: Co-founders and Managing Partners George McElwee and Keith Pemrick, and Vice President for Federal Government Affairs Katie Hazlett. Additionally, the team would be supported by Mackenzie Campbell, CSP's Government Affairs Manager.

George and Keith started CSP almost ten years ago and Katie has been with the firm since 2021. All three have extensive experience in Congress and have had significant successes in securing federal funding for municipalities and state efforts as both Congressional staff and for clients of CSP. All are available and reachable to clients at all hours.

CSP has a depth of understanding on federal funding issues unmatched by other firms. George McElwee, CSP's co-founder and managing partner, served for nine years as Chief of Staff to a senior House Appropriator. During George's time as the Congressman's lead strategic advisor, he helped secure tens of millions of dollars for various local projects including intermodal transportation centers, bus purchases including hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, community centers, enhancing institutions of higher learning and bridge enhancement projects. George's team led projects for traffic calming efforts, streetscaping improvements, road widening, and prioritized projects that alleviated congestion and enhanced safety on critical roads. During all of this work, George worked regularly with program managers and administration officials for various agencies and program offices.

As a federal lobbyist, George has interacted with hundreds of municipal governments while advocating for improved housing options for first responders and educators. George is the lead lobbyist for legislation, H.R.3170/S.1514, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act. The legislation was an idea of a CSP's client who saw a need for affordable housing options for first responders. CSP worked with the client to strategize on the legislative idea and helped craft legislative language to create a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) home loan program for police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and preK-12 teachers. CSP assisted the client with identifying Congressional champions to shepherd the proposal. The legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate and has the support of 173 Members of Congress (117 Democratic, 55 Republican) **including Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AK-At Large)**. During the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, CSP has facilitated more than 100 Congressional meetings with both personal offices and committee offices. Thousands of emails and calls have been made to secure national, state, and local endorsements of more than 150 local elected officials, **including the Mayors of Cordova, Kodiak, Valdez, and Wasilla**. CSP has leveraged those endorsements with op-eds running in major media markets and press events in multiple states. CSP made introductions to Administration officials, and at CSP's urging, the Administration has weighed in with positive comments at Congressional hearings and provided technical assistance with the bill's drafting.

Keith Pemrick, CSP's other co-founder and managing partner, has specific expertise in federal transportation issues and appropriations. As a legislative director, Keith was the lead staff member to a senior member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. In this role, he wrote the legislative language included in transportation authorization bill that allows for state



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Katie has performed similar work for clients. Specific examples include Katie's work with the City of Aberdeen, Maryland on their efforts to rehabilitate a train station and make it a multi-modal transportation hub. In Fiscal Year 2023, Katie helped **secure \$4 million in congressionally directed funding for this project through the Federal Transit Administration**. She has also identified multiple Department of Transportation (DOT) grant opportunities to assist the municipality. She has guided the client through the grant process including identifying opportunities, reviewing and editing grant proposals, arranging in-person one-on-one collaboration sessions with DOT and securing Congressional letters of support. In 2024, these efforts have resulted in the Client being awarded both a **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program** and a **Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant**. Katie has also executed site visits from both Administration officials and Congressional representatives.



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**In the 117th Congress**, George worked with members of the House and Senate to introduce bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the EB-5 Regional Center Program through Fiscal Year 2026. HR2901 and S831, the **EB-5 Reform and Integrity Act of 2021** was incorporated in an omnibus spending package and enacted into law.

**In the 116th Congress**, George worked to introduce bipartisan HR1975 and S4024, **Cybersecurity Advisory Committee Authorization Act**. Enacted into law through its inclusion of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2021, the legislation established a new committee of industry experts to advise the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). George was able to secure language to establish the Cybersecurity Advisory Committee in the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act, which was enacted in January 2021.

George's knowledge of politics and his instinctive ability to connect people of varying backgrounds has led him to consistent success and respect among his colleagues. For example, while working as Chief of Staff to U.S. Representative Charles W. Dent (R-PA), George was elected by his peers to serve as President of the House Chiefs of Staff Association, a position he held for three years, making him the longest-serving president in the association's 36-year history.

After working for Mr. Dent, George served as the Organization for International Investment's Vice President, Public Policy & Government Affairs, as the association's chief lobbyist. He also spent five years as Director, Federal Government Affairs for the American Financial Services Association and worked on the staff of U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA).

Lt. Cmdr. McElwee is currently assigned to the Navy Public Affairs Support Element East and serves as Assistant Officer in Charge (AOIC). As AOIC, Lt. Cmdr. McElwee oversees the administration and operation of a 40+ member unit of officers and enlisted personnel. His previous assignments include Flag Assistant to the U.S. Navy Vice Chief of Information, Navy Office of Community Outreach, U.S. Navy Chief of Information, and U.S. Fleet Forces Command. Lt. Cmdr. McElwee's service has taken him to Alaska. Earlier this year, in June, Lt. Cmdr. McElwee supported a mission that included time at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

Nominated by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate, George is a proud member of the Shippensburg University Council of Trustees.

George holds an M.A. in Strategic Security Studies from National Defense University at Fort Lesley J. McNair, a graduate certificate in PACs and Political Management from George Washington University, and B.A. in Political Science from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. George is also a graduate of the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base and the Defense Information School at Fort George G. Meade.

George lives in Fairfax, VA, with his wife and their two daughters.



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Keith sits on the Blue Dog (Democrat) Coalition Steering Committee, is President of the Pennsylvania Society of Washington, DC, serves on the Board of Directors for the non-profit Making a Difference of Lebanon, PA, and is a recipient of the Patrick Henry Award for his outstanding and exceptional service to the Armed Forces of the United States and the National Guard.

Keith holds an M.A. in Public Management from Johns Hopkins University and a B.A. in Political Science from American University.

**Katie Hazlett**, CSP's Vice President for Government Affairs, served for 14 years working for the **Chairman of the Full House Committee on Appropriations as Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the Committee**. She staffed the Congressman as his top advisor for all 12 Appropriations subcommittees and through multiple leadership posts at various subcommittees including Defense; Energy and Water Development; Homeland Security; and Commerce, Justice, and Science. During her time on Capitol Hill, Katie was involved in all aspects of the legislative process and developed in-depth knowledge of an array of issues including transportation, homeland security, environment, energy, and infrastructure projects.

Prior to CSP, Katie served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Department of Energy (DOE), where she led DOE's relationship with Congress including the Committees on Armed Services, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. In that role, she supported the Secretary of Energy, the Department, and the Administration's policies before the Senate and House of Representatives, while managing and overseeing the external affairs engagement activities and the intergovernmental relationships with state and local governments. Katie also served as Chief of Staff for COE's Office of the Chief Financial Officer, which is responsible for the formulation and execution of DOE's nearly \$40 billion annual budget with an office staff of over 100 employees.

Since joining CSP in 2021, Katie has worked with a municipal client on their efforts to rehabilitate a train station and make it a multi-modal transportation hub. In Fiscal Year 2023, CSP helped secure \$4 million in congressionally directed funding for this project through the Federal Transit Administration. CSP has also identified multiple Department of Transportation (DOT) grant opportunities to assist the municipality. Katie has guided the client through the grant process including editing an \$800,000 award winning grant proposal under the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods program, securing meetings with administration officials and the Congressional delegation for one-on-one collaboration sessions and grant reviews.

Katie also made great strides for a construction company that had not retained a federal lobbying firm in recent years. Prior to CSP's involvement, the company primarily relied upon the trade associations it was a part of for most of their lobbying efforts. The client brought in CSP to help identify federal funding opportunities through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the annual appropriations process. For funding efforts for this client, CSP identified a Department of Energy Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunity to assist the



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### References

#### **City of Aberdeen, Maryland**

Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning and Community Development

60 North Parke Street, Aberdeen, MD 21001

phyllis@aberdeennmd.gov

410-272-1600

Project Name: Aberdeen Station Square Improvements Project

Project Date: 2021 to Present

#### **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of the Governor**

TJ Yablonski, Secretary of Legislative Affairs

508 Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120

tyablonski@pa.gov

717-787-2500

Project Name: Representation to U.S. Congress and Executive Branch

Project Date: June 2015 to January 2023

#### **Granite Construction**

Gary Johnson, Vice President, Land and Quarry

AK Location: 11471 Lang Street, Anchorage, AK 99515

gary.johnson@gcinc.com

760-578-2407

Project Name: Decarbonization Upgrades and Improvements to Asphalt Production Facilities funding project, and Military Construction Contracting Improvements legislative language.

Project Date: 2023 to Present

#### **John Latini**

Executive Director of Federal Relations

University of Alaska (UA) System

jalatini@alaska.edu

202-253-4691

444 N. Capitol Street NW, Suite 334, Washington, DC 20001

*Disclaimer: John Latini is a personal reference and does not reflect or imply any endorsement on behalf of the University of Alaska System.*



## COMMONWEALTH STRATEGIC PARTNERS

- Assist Dillingham with developing relationships with relevant federal government agencies, including, but not limited to:
  - Department of Transportation
  - Department of Energy
  - Environmental Protection Agency
  - Department of Education
  - Department of Defense
  - Department of the Interior
  - Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Facilitate conference calls, letters, emails, and other necessary communications to key Members and staff with the latest updates regarding the City's ongoing work in Dillingham.
- Advise the City on opportunities to enhance regular communications with Members and staff to share key findings regarding recently introduced or amended legislation, feedback on policy-based initiatives, providing nonpartisan research analyses, etc.
- Plan and execute legislative visits to Capitol Hill each year for Dillingham officials to develop priority relationships with members of the Alaska delegation and others.
- Plan and execute events in Dillingham to host Administration officials and Congressional members to highlight the City's needs.

### **Legislative Monitoring & Reporting**

- Monitor and report the activities of the House and Senate related to the City's public policy goals, including key committees of jurisdiction.
- Assist the City in formulating a list of federal legislative advocacy items.
- Provide continuous assessment of the political landscape to help guide Dillingham's lobbying strategy.
- Report on Administration initiatives of interest to Dillingham.
- Provide a written monthly report to the City that will provide updates on developments in Congress that align with Dillingham's priorities, including, but not limited to:
  - A summary of all recent activity undertaken by CSP to further Dillingham's goals such as meetings and communication with key officials.
  - Summary of status and movement of key legislation affecting Dillingham's public policy goals.
  - Summary of developments on key grant programs of interest to the City.
  - Analysis of any newly introduced or amended legislation affecting Dillingham's public policy goals.
- Participate in a scheduled bi-weekly call between the City and CSP to strategize, organize objectives, funnel questions, and report on congressional and administrative initiatives of interest to Dillingham.
- Travel to Dillingham twice a year to meet with the City Manager, City staff and Council.





## **COMMONWEALTH STRATEGIC PARTNERS**

### **Fee Schedule**

In consideration of the performance of the aforementioned scope of work, Commonwealth Strategic Partners will be paid a retainer of \$3,000.00 a month (\$36,000.00 annually) for services. This fee will remain consistent for one year.