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## **Podesta Group Announces Addition of Three Key Strategists**

*Firm expands breadth of practice with addition of three public affairs experts*

Kimberley Fritts, Chief Executive Officer of the Podesta Group, announced today that three experienced strategists have joined the firm's roster. Gwen Mellor, Melissa Merz and Jennifer Bowman will bolster the firm's continually expanding public affairs practices, focusing on a variety of issues as principals.

"With the addition of these experienced strategists, the Podesta Group reinforces our mission to provide our clients with a wealth and variety of expertise as a full-service firm," Fritts said. "Gwen, Melissa and Jen possess the policy, political and communications experience that makes them perfect complements to our already stellar team."

Gwen Mellor, an expert Democratic political strategist, returns to the Podesta Group to focus on the firm's financial services and technology clients. Utilizing her years spent on the campaign trail and advocating for clients at the Podesta Group and a DC-based law firm, she advises clients on legislative analysis, policy development and political communications efforts, focusing on outreach to key House and Senate Democratic members and their staffs. In addition, Gwen will work with Fritts on a number of sector management issues, including strategic partnerships and alliances.

Gwen has been involved in numerous political campaigns across the nation, most recently working as a whip in the Democratic National Convention's Office of the Secretary, managing communications with convention delegates and working on the convention floor to certify vote counts. A Delaware native, Gwen was Sen. Tom Carper's (D-DE) campaign field director in 2000, and she began her career in the district office of then-Senator and now-Vice President Joseph Biden.

Melissa Merz, former communications director to Sens. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Ron Wyden (D-OR), will spearhead a variety of the Podesta Group's public relations and government outreach campaigns.

Merz returns to the Podesta Group after spending two years as Vice President of Communications at the DC-based progressive think tank, NDN, where she managed its press operations. On the state level, Melissa served as Communications Director for the successful campaign of then-State Sen. Lisa Madigan for Illinois Attorney General and continued to serve as the spokesperson for Attorney General Madigan until 2006. She began her career on Capitol Hill.

Bringing more than ten years of regulatory policy experience working with both the executive branch and the private sector, Jen Bowman works with Podesta Group's health care clients to provide strategic

*The Podesta Group is a bipartisan government relations and public relations firm located in Washington, DC. Clients include Google, Textron, McGraw-Hill, National Confectioners Association, the Republic of Georgia, Genzyme and Novo Nordisk.*

outreach and advocacy to the Congress and Obama Administration on health care policy, including Medicare and Medicaid, private health insurance and reimbursement for health care providers and medical technologies.

Before joining the Podesta Group's government relations team, Jen was a director at Avalere Health, where she advised Fortune 500 health care clients on public policy and business strategy. Prior to that, she was a health analyst with the Congressional Budget Office, where she analyzed health care legislation and produced cost estimates for congressional committees. She is a contributing author on a number of CBO publications, including cost estimates, studies and congressional testimony.

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