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# Special Interests

Judy Sarasohn



## Coalition Pushes Social Security Accounts

By Judy Sarasohn

Thursday, April 7, 2005; Page A29

Even though there's a decided lack of momentum on Capitol Hill for President Bush's proposal on Social Security private accounts, business supporters are sounding quite upbeat.

Today, CoMPASS -- the Coalition for the Modernization and Protection of America's Social Security -- unveils its membership list, boasting that it has expanded to 116 associations and advocacy groups in "just 45 days."

"We're not disappointed at all. I'm thrilled," said **Jade West**, senior vice president of government relations at the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors and chairman of CoMPASS's informal membership task force. "Our focus to date has not been with the Hill but out in the grass roots outside the Beltway."

West acknowledged that CoMPASS and a sister advocacy group have lost a couple of members. But she said, "This is a tough issue."

CoMPASS is making its membership list public in conjunction with a new advertising campaign in support of creating personal accounts and not raising payroll taxes as part of a plan to fix Social Security.

CoMPASS said some of the new members include the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, Associated General Contractors of America, the Minority Business Roundtable, the National Restaurant Association and the National Retail Federation.

Some of the early members: the Business Roundtable, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.

### Gray, Gorelick to Chair Wilmer Practice

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**Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr** has pulled together a new public policy and strategy practice to be co-chaired by two of its biggies -- Republican **C. Boyden Gray**, former counsel to President George H.W. Bush, and Democrat **Jamie Gorelick**, former deputy attorney general in the Clinton administration.

In addition, three of its former lawyers are returning and joining the public policy practice: **Robert M. Kimmitt**, former ambassador to Germany; **Edward T. Tobin III**, former executive director of the Republican Governors Association; and **Reginald J. Brown**, former special assistant to President Bush.

Kimmitt, who also served as general counsel to the Treasury Department, most recently was executive vice president for global public policy at Time Warner Inc.

Tobin earlier was chief secretary to then-Republican Massachusetts Gov. William Weld and deputy general counsel for corporate affairs at Microsoft Corp.

Brown, the lead lawyer for the White House Office of Political Affairs through the last presidential campaign, served a stint at Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co., and as deputy general counsel to Florida Gov. Jeb Bush (R).

**William J. Perlstein**, managing partner of Wilmer, said the firm decided "to pull together the various strands" of public policy and strategy work to form a single practice "in recognition of the importance" of providing strategic advice to clients that deals with legal, public policy and political concerns.

The firm rarely lobbies directly, Perlstein said, but instead helps craft legislative solutions and find the right professional lobbyists for a client.

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