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## Shumaker Advisors Adds Veteran Wireless Lobbyist In DC

By **Jack Rodgers**

Law360 (June 29, 2023, 2:27 PM EDT) -- Shumaker Advisors has added a former 15-year veteran of the Cellular Telephone Industries Association, days after President Joe Biden announced a plan to divvy up some \$42.5 billion in federal funds to bolster American broadband connectivity.

Chris Salemme joins Shumaker Advisors in Washington, D.C., as senior vice president of federal affairs, the firm announced on Wednesday. Along with his experience with the CTIA, Salemme is the former vice president of government and strategic affairs for Airspan Networks, which helps develop telecommunications hardware, such as radio access network technology, according to its website.

Shumaker Advisors adds Salemme after the Biden administration **announced a plan** for the division of federal funds from the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program. States like California and Texas were awarded more than a billion dollars to help bring broadband infrastructure to underserved communities, with each state getting \$100 million minimum.

At the CTIA, Salemme was pivotal to helping manage the organization's U.S. House and Senate Democratic portfolio. He's worked with the Biden administration, the Federal Communication Commission, and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

Salemme is also the former campaign manager for John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign, Shumaker Advisors said. Most recently, Salemme had his own consulting firm, Salemme Strategies.

Ryan Walker, Shumaker Advisors' senior vice president of federal affairs, said in a statement Thursday that Salemme is "an energetic leader and problem solver who can work across the aisle."

"Chris is a fixture on Capitol Hill and is widely regarded as one of the most respected and trusted strategists in the industry," Walker said. "We are thrilled to have him join us at Shumaker Advisors."

In an interview with Law360 Pulse Thursday, Salemme said he decided to leave his solo work behind because he realized he worked better with a team. When he met Shumaker Advisor members like Walker and Jason Ouimet, he connected with his new colleagues and realized the platform was the right fit for him, he said.

Salemme added that Shumaker Advisors had a collegial nature that wasn't focused on outperforming other lobbyists or colleagues, which also attracted him to Shumaker Advisors' platform.

Salemme said that while the broadband funding the Biden administration detailed last week would focus on fiber, wireless, on which Salemme's work largely focuses, will also play an important role. That's especially true in areas of the country where building out connectivity with fiber might be challenging, he said.

"I think that there's going to be a lot of opportunity there, as this money's rolled out in a lot of areas of the country that are going to be tough to kind of dig into that fiber side of things," Salemme said. "I'm ready to help ... On trying to kind of push what wireless can bring to get 5G to those communities that are so underserved in this country."

Salemme said he most enjoyed working with lawmakers on solutions to broadband connectivity and cultivating those relationships.

"For me, it's pounding the shoe leather to the floors of Congress ... tapping into the relationships I've built over the years on the committees of jurisdiction and beyond, and tapping into those broadband offices," he said.

Salemme added: "This influx of money is going to certainly help. The technology is always changing, too, so there's a lot going on in this space."

--Additional reporting by Nadia Dreid. Editing by Scott Russell.

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