



June 26, 2026

Welcome to your **ABL Friday Happy Hour** ... 562 words ... 2-3 minutes. Here's the latest on legislative developments, litigation, and other news affecting beverage alcohol retailers.

1. ABL Joins Letter Ahead of House Payments Hearing

ABL joined fellow members of the Merchants Payments Coalition (MPC) in a [letter](#) to House Financial Services Committee Chairman French Hill (R-AR) and Ranking Member Maxine Waters (D-CA) ahead of Wednesday's [hearing](#) on the future of payments. The coalition urged lawmakers to advance reforms that would bring greater competition, transparency, and fairness to the payments marketplace.

- **Why it matters:** ABL has long advocated for legislation to increase competition in the credit card market and reform swipe fees, helping lower costs for Main Street businesses and the consumers they serve.

2. Liquor Store Owner Loses Congressional Primary

Despite spending approximately \$25 million on his campaign, former Congressman and Total Wine & More owner David Trone (D-MD) lost his June 23 Democratic primary challenge to Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-MD) in Maryland's 6th Congressional District.

- **Why it matters:** This marks Trone's second consecutive high-profile Democratic primary defeat, following his unsuccessful 2024 campaign for the party's U.S. Senate nomination in Maryland, where he also significantly outspent his opponent.

3. FTC and Southern Glazer's Move Toward Settlement

On June 18, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits (SGWS) informed the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California that they had reached a memorandum of understanding to resolve the FTC's Robinson-Patman Act [lawsuit](#). The court has stayed the case for 45 days while the parties finalize a settlement agreement.

- **Why it matters:** The FTC alleges that SGWS violated the Robinson-Patman Act by depriving independent retailers of access to discounts and rebates, making it more difficult for them to compete against large national and regional chains. Once the settlement is filed, ABL will review its terms and evaluate any implications for beverage alcohol pricing practices, supplier-distributor relationships, and future Robinson-Patman Act enforcement.



4. ABL Files Amicus Brief in Illinois Retail Shipping Case

On June 22, ABL and the Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) filed an amicus brief with the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in *Freehan v. Berg*, supporting Illinois' authority to maintain its alcohol regulatory framework. The brief focuses on states' ability to require in-state physical presence and regulate retailer direct-to-consumer alcohol shipping.

- **Why it matters:** *Freehan v. Berg*, together with *Block v. Canepa* in Ohio, represents one of the final major post-*Tennessee Wine* constitutional challenges working through the federal courts. A favorable ruling for Illinois would reinforce other federal appellate decisions recognizing states' authority to preserve core elements of their alcohol regulatory systems.

5. White House Urges Congressional Action on Hemp

On Wednesday, Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought sent House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) a [letter](#) urging Congress to ensure the "fair treatment of hemp products." The Administration asked lawmakers to either adopt legislation based on Rep. Andy Barr's (R-KY) comprehensive hemp regulatory proposal or, at a minimum, delay implementation of the federal hemp redefinition scheduled to take effect in November.

- **Why it matters:** The Administration has moved beyond simply supporting regulatory reform and is now actively urging Congress to enact legislation establishing a federal framework for hemp products—or extend the November implementation deadline while lawmakers continue their work.