



## **MEDIA CONTACT**

Michael Bilello  
Executive Vice President, Strategic Communications & Marketing  
[michael@wswa.org](mailto:michael@wswa.org) | (202) 716-4805

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

05/23/2023

## **Rep. Nancy Mace Opens WSWA Panel Discussion on Federal Cannabis Reform**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., 05/23/2023** – Yesterday, Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) hosted an in-depth panel discussion on the federal legalization and regulation of adult-use cannabis on Capitol Hill. Representative Nancy Mace (R-SC) opened the event urging bipartisan cooperation on the issue, a sentiment echoed by panelists in the discussion that followed.

“I applaud the States that have legalized [cannabis] in a responsible way. But we're at this sort of turning point in time,” said Rep. Mace during the event. “This could be one of the few areas where we have bipartisan consensus ... The problem isn't in the House; the problem is in the Senate.”

The panel was moderated by WSWA Executive Vice President of Government Affairs Dawson Hobbs and featured Senior Vice President of Public Affairs at the U.S. Cannabis Council David Culver, Director of the Center of Excellence at the Coalition for Cannabis Policy, Education and Regulation Shanita Penny, and Research Director of the Reason Foundation Geoff Lawrence. The discussion covered a range of topics including how the current disconnect between federal and state laws puts Americans at risk, the current regulatory and enforcement hurdles, potential federal regulatory agencies, and what a successful federal excise tax structure could look like.

**The discussion in its entirety can be viewed [HERE](#).**

“Cannabis is legal and growing in popularity in states across the nation, but federal law is stuck in the 1950s,” said Culver. “That's why it's critical for the regulated cannabis industry to learn from its counterparts in the alcohol industry who promote responsible use and a unified agenda. As the U.S. continues on the path to federal legalization, the alcohol industry will be a valued partner and important voice on getting cannabis regulation right.”

“In the absence of both Congressional and Executive action at the federal level, marijuana already has been de facto legalized, but markets are siloed into individual states where they are often monopolized by insiders,” said Lawrence. “Although federal law enforcement grants discretion against prosecuting state-licensed businesses, a broad swath of other federal restrictions remains in place arbitrarily, preventing licensed businesses from accessing financial services and many insurance markets. Consumers are deprived of meaningful choice and producers are restricted to intrastate markets. These are exactly the conditions the U.S. Constitution was written to prevent. A federal regulatory structure for interstate commerce in marijuana is inevitable and Congress should act before federal courts declare state prohibitions on interstate commerce unconstitutional and force a national market.”

“I would urge folks to embrace radical collaboration in a real way,” said Penny during the panel discussion. “There's no way we get this done if we aren't at least collaborative and on the same page in terms of what it is that we want. Whether we are addressing incremental policy reform or if we have the chance to go after something that is more comprehensive ... [I]f we can wrap our heads around embracing advocates and industries of all kinds, and leveraging the experiences, the relationships and the resources that they have, we can be successful. We have to stop the infighting. We can't be a distraction from lawmakers,” she added.

“The current lack of federal regulation of cannabis puts communities and consumers at risk,” stated Hobbs. “The time has come for Congress to regulate cannabis and they need look no further than the federal system of alcohol regulation for an effective model.”

#### **About Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America**

WSWA is the national trade association representing the distribution tier of the wine and spirits industry, dedicated to advancing the interests and independence of distributors and brokers of wine and spirits. Founded in 1943, WSWA has more than 380 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia. To learn more, please visit [www.wswa.org](http://www.wswa.org) or connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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