



/12.19.23/

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- The introduction of the Grocery, Farm, and Food Worker Stabilization Grant Program.
- News from our department including our State Legislative Agenda and information about our upcoming Legislative and Political Conference.
- News and updates from around the nation.

National Legislative and Political News



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National Legislative and Political News

- The Federal Trade Commission and Justice Department [released modern merger guidelines](#) reflecting new realities in today's economy. You can find [the full guidelines here](#).
- We have released our State Legislative Agenda! You can find it here: <https://www.uncw.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/61/files/2023/12/State-Legislative-Issue-Summaries-December-2023.pdf>
- UFCW applauded the introduction of legislation, sponsored by Sen. Brown (D-OH) and Rep. Budzinski (D-IL), establishing [the Grocery, Farm and Food Worker Stabilization Grant program](#).
 - [President Perrone said](#), "Our members are on the front lines of our food supply chain, packing and processing meat, making sure that shelves are stocked, and helping customers get the food and goods they need to take care of their families. Until now, there has not been a dedicated fund to safeguard essential workers during natural disasters. We applaud Senator Brown and Representative Budzinski for introducing this vital legislation that will provide critical funding for essential work during times of crisis and strengthen America's food supply chain over the long run."
- As we are planning this year's Legislative and Political Conference, we want your input! Please fill out our survey here: <https://rb.gy/nqginc>
- The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) launched the [SNAP EBT Modernization Technical Assistance Center](#), a new resource that will help retailers to setup for using SNAP online purchasing.
- House and Senate [appropriators left D.C. for the holidays without a deal on topline spending numbers for the FY 2024](#), which is necessary for appropriators to write the spending bills before the continuing resolution expires on January 19.
- The Labor Department's (DOL) Wage and Hour Division [issued a blog post detailing its efforts to protect workers during fiscal year 2023](#) in industries across the supply chains including grocery, retail, warehousing, and agriculture.
- Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) led a letter with several other Republican senators [attacking the Department of Labor's \(DOL\) recently proposed H-2A rule](#), which would allow unions to participate in H-2A employee disciplinary meetings and to speak with workers about whether they want to form or join a union.
- The USDA FNS announced a new, permanent summer nutrition assistance program for children. The [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(Summer EBT\)](#) will assist several states and tribal nations to provide grocery benefits to eligible families during the summer months.
- 6 lawmakers [sent a letter to the Federal Trade Commission opposing the Kroger-Albertsons](#) merger, saying it will hurt consumers, suppliers and workers.
- A report from the US Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board determined that [the deaths of six workers at a Foundation Food Group chicken processing plant in Gainesville, Georgia](#) was caused by asphyxiation by nitrogen gas that was attributed to a cascading set of mechanical and planning failures.
- House Education and the Workforce Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA) [introduced the "Workers Protecting Our Wage Earners' Rights \(POWER\) Act."](#) that seeks to equip the Department of Labor with the resources needed to tackle

- federal labor law violations including child labor, wage theft, and workplace health and safety violations.
- A bipartisan group of U.S. senators and representatives released a [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) on paid leave that will inform the ongoing bipartisan efforts in the House and Senate to devise a policy framework for expanding access to paid leave.

News From Around the Nation

REGION 1

- New York's highest state court ruled that the state must [redraw its congressional boundary](#) lines, giving that authority to the majority Democrat-controlled state legislature. New York Republicans are expected to challenge the newly drawn maps.
- The former president of the New Jersey Senate, Steve Sweeney, who unexpectedly lost his seat in 2021, announced that he will be [running for Governor of New Jersey](#) in 2025.

Region 2

- In Pennsylvania, Democratic candidate Shamaine Daniels deployed what is believed to be the [first artificial intelligence campaign tool](#). The generative AI system developed by Civox, made calls to voters and was introduced as "Ashley...an artificial intelligence volunteer for Shamaine Daniels' run for Congress."
- Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin has identified two policy areas that he would like to see increased funding for: childcare and early childhood education. Youngkin is calling for over \$440 million annually to be spent over the next two years [to expand access to childcare](#) facilities and afterschool programs.

Region 4

- Kentucky Supreme Court [upheld the congressional boundaries](#) passed by GOP-led legislature. The court rejected Democratic claims that the majority party's map making amounted to gerrymandering in violation of the state's constitution.
- Michigan is the first state in the nation to [restore voting rights automatically](#) to people who are released from prison. State officials say it helps when former inmates return to society.

Region 5

- Despite concerns that they may be breaking a law that protects nonwhite voters, Georgia Senate Republicans [passed a new map](#) that will allow them to hold majority control over their congressional districts.
- The Florida legislature will consider a [bill that would prohibit the sale](#) or production of lab-grown meat in the state.

- State Senator Jay Collins (R-Tampa) has proposed a bill that [would ask the state for \\$25 million](#) to help the Tampa General Hospital build a multifamily housing project for health workers in the region.

Region 6

- Illinois has [spent almost \\$1 billion on migrant care](#) and services over the past 15 months, Chicago has been one of the main cities receiving tens of thousands of migrants. Gov. JB Pritzker (D) is asking legislators to consider a supplemental appropriations bill in January to boost migrant care funding.
- Gov. Tony Evers says he would veto a GOP bill that [abolishes the Wisconsin Elections Commission](#) and transfers election authority to Wisconsin's secretary of state. "We've got a good system. We've got a good leader in the system, and I'm going to veto anything that moves us in a different direction."
- A year after Gov. Kristi Noem vowed to eliminate the state sales tax on groceries, and several months after lawmakers failed to deliver on her promise, a strong majority of South Dakota voters [still support dropping the sales tax](#) on food. A new statewide poll co-sponsored by South Dakota News Watch showed that 60.6% of registered voters support a proposed statewide ballot measure that would eliminate the 4.2% state sales tax on groceries.

Region 7

- Republican Rep. Ken Buck of Colorado on Wednesday announced he will [not seek reelection](#) next year, saying he was "disappointed" in his party, and disillusioned by political gridlock in Congress.
- Beef country of origin labels [\(COOL\) to be an important issue](#) in Montana US Senate race next year.

Region 8

- Former Speaker Kevin McCarthy's [announcement that he would resign from Congress](#) at the end of the year throws his own political future — and the fates of vulnerable California Republicans — into murky territory.
- Officials in a rural Arizona county who delayed canvassing the 2022 general election results [have been criminally charged](#). The indictment marks a rare instance of criminally prosecuting people connected to the vote canvassing being dragged out last year in six Arizona counties.
- California Assembly member Evan Low [launched his run Tuesday](#) to represent wide swaths of Silicon Valley in Congress, offering himself as a new generation of leader with close ties to law enforcement. The five-term lawmaker established himself as a prominent voice on 2SLGBTQ+ rights, violence against Asian Americans and tech industry issues. His endorsements include a progressive stalwart from a neighboring district, Rep. Ro Khanna, as well as California Democratic Reps. Judy Chu and Mark Takano.