PRINTING UNITED ALLIANCE

INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

FALL 2026

QUARTERLY DIGEST

Workforce Development Month: Building Print's Next Generation

Each September, National Workforce Development Month offers industries across the country a chance to recognize the people, partnerships, and training pathways that keep America's economy moving. For the printing industry, that message is especially timely. Printers continue to navigate changing technology, evolving customer expectations, and a competitive labor market — all while looking for the next generation of skilled, motivated employees who can help businesses grow.

PRINTING United Alliance is meeting that challenge head-on by investing in education, training, and career development designed specifically for print. Through iLEARNING+, the Alliance brings together industry-relevant courses and certifications in one accessible platform, helping employers onboard new team members, upskill current employees, and create a culture of continuous learning. iLEARNING+ is built to prepare learners for today's production environments and tomorrow's opportunities.

The Alliance's workforce commitment also reaches classrooms. The Alliance provides free membership to students and educators, giving future industry professionals barrier-free access to learning resources, credentials, and professional connections. The Alliance currently supports 63 educational institutions worldwide, and more than 2,200 students and educators. And at the annual PRINTING United Expo, Student Day provides emerging talent free access to the companies and people shaping the future of the industry.

For print businesses, Workforce Development Month is more than a calendar observance; it is a reminder that talent development must be intentional. Companies that invest in training, mentorship, internships, apprenticeships, and partnerships with schools are helping secure the long-term health of the industry. They are also giving employees clear pathways to build skills, earn credentials, and see a future in print.

"Workforce development isn't a side initiative for our industry; it's a strategic imperative," said Ford Bowers, CEO, PRINTING United Alliance. "From foundational courses like Print 101, to critical disciplines like color management, to emerging areas like AI, we're focused on giving students and educators access to the same high-quality, industry-aligned training used by leading print companies. By offering free membership and investing real dollars into education, we're not just talking about the future of print; we're actively building the talent pipeline that will sustain it. iLEARNING+ is career development available right at your fingertips."

As the industry celebrates Workforce Development Month this September, the Alliance remains focused on building a skilled and more resilient workforce. By connecting students, educators, employers, and employees with meaningful training and professional resources, the Alliance continues to strengthen the talent pipeline needed to support the future of print. ■

WHY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MATTERS:

The Manufacturing Institute, the workforce development and education affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), projects that manufacturers may need as many as 3.8 million new employees between 2024 and 2033 — and that 1.9 million of those jobs could remain unfilled if skills and applicant gaps are not addressed. NAM's 2025 Q4 Manufacturers' Outlook Survey also found that 52.1% of manufacturers identified attracting and retaining talent as a primary business challenge.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS UPDATE

Federal E-Delivery Proposals Threaten Printed Communications

Two federal regulatory proposals would expand electronic delivery of critical financial and health plan information, raising concerns about consumer choice and the potential impact on the printing and mailing industries.

SEC PROPOSES ELECTRONIC DELIVERY DEFAULT

On July 16, 2026, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission proposed Regulation E-Delivery, which would make electronic delivery the default for many investor communications. Paper is currently the default unless an investor opts-in to electronic delivery. The proposal would allow financial firms to switch investors to electronic communications without affirmative consent, making it harder for seniors, rural residents, and families without reliable internet to receive essential information.

DOL EXPANDS E-DELIVERY FOR HEALTH PLANS

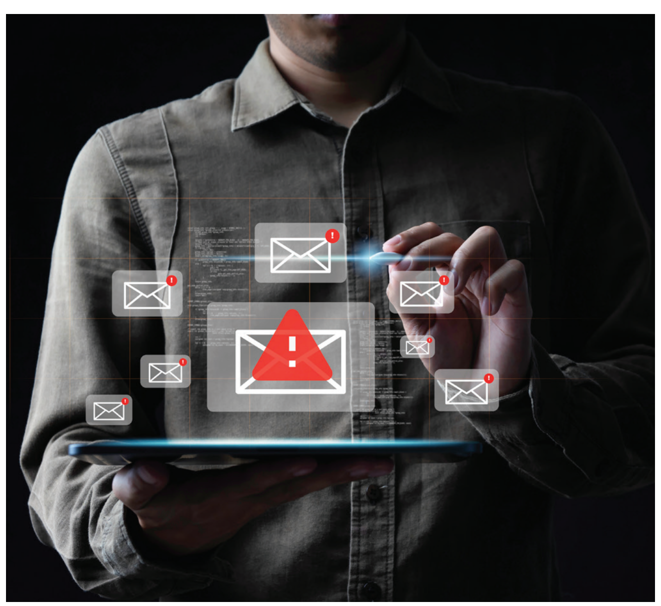
On July 23, 2026, the Department of Labor proposed a new electronic disclosure safe harbor for ERISA-governed group health plans. Plan administrators could provide required notices by email or through online portals. Unlike the SEC proposal, participants could opt-out. The DOL estimates that these plans currently print and mail up to 11 billion sheets annually.

ALLIANCE ADVOCATES FOR PAPER AS THE DEFAULT

When digital delivery becomes the default, reduced paper volumes affect the entire value chain—from U.S. printers producing financial and health plan documents to the U.S. Postal Service, which depends on this mail as a revenue source.

Paper remains a trusted, secure, and accessible option for millions of Americans. The Alliance is working with the Coalition for Paper Options and plans to submit comments on both proposals before the September 21 deadline. We will continue monitoring and reporting on any developments, particularly when, and if, a final rule is published by either agency.

Thank you to everyone who used the Alliance's Action Alert to ask Congress to urge the SEC and DOL to reconsider these proposals and preserve paper as the default. Every voice counts; thanks for lending yours.



Getty Images: Teera Konakan

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Scan the QR code to visit the Alliance's Advocacy Center and sign up to become a Printing Industry Advocate.

SCAN HERE

CONGRESSMAN HERB CONAWAY, MD VISITS PERFECT COMMUNICATIONS

The Honorable Herb Conaway, M.D. (D-NJ-3) visited Perfect Communications in Moorestown, New Jersey, on August 22, 2026. Joe Olivo, president and co-owner of Perfect Communications and a member of the PRINTING United Alliance Legislative Affairs Committee, led a facility tour and introduced the congressman to employees. Rep. Conaway learned how the family-owned company, founded in 1979, uses modern print manufacturing to support local jobs and economic growth. The Alliance thanks Joe for hosting the visit, strengthening the industry's relationship with Rep. Conaway, and showcasing the value of print.

2026 MIDTERM ELECTIONS AND THE ALLIANCE VOTE

As the 2026 midterm elections approach, voters will play a critical role in shaping the future of Congress. All 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 35 seats in the U.S. Senate will be on the ballot, along with several special elections held throughout the year to fill congressional vacancies. Election Day is set for **November 3, 2026**, with vote certification and transition activities continuing through early January 2027. Once results are finalized, newly elected members will prepare to take office, congressional leadership will be selected, and the 120th Congress will convene in January 2027. To help industry professionals stay informed and prepared, the Alliance Vote serves as a nonpartisan, one-stop resource for the printing industry, providing quick access to important information through official state election resource centers. Visit printing.org to learn more and plan to vote on November 3, 2026.

POSTAL REFORM LETTER

PRINTING United Alliance and the National Newspaper Association joined forces to send a letter to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs outlining recommendations to address the U.S. Postal Service's financial and operational challenges. The recommendations include developing a plan to reduce labor costs, suspending nonemergency capital expenditures for at least two years, maintaining affordable postal rates, and strengthening accountability and transparency. A grassroots call to action led to 70 Alliance member companies joining the letter in support of common-sense postal reform. Thank you for participating. The full letter will be featured in the digital version of the *Industry Advocate* on September 8, 2026.

Alliance Joins Coalition

CALLING FOR PAUSE OF CALIFORNIA'S SB 54

BY STEPHANIE A. BUKA

PRINTING United Alliance joined a broad coalition of businesses, manufacturers, and trade associations urging the California Legislature to pause implementation of SB 54, Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act, an extended producer responsibility law before lawmakers adjourn on August 31, 2026.

In an August 17 letter, the coalition warned that the program's fees and compliance requirements could significantly increase costs for businesses and consumers while failing to meet the law's recycling mandates. The letter cites an estimated $17.2 billion in producer fees and $78 billion in total compliance costs over five years. It also notes that Circular Action Alliance, the organization responsible for administering the program, has indicated that certain statutory targets and timelines cannot be met.

The coalition is asking lawmakers to pause implementation and revisit SB 54 next session to develop a more practical and cost-effective framework. By joining the letter, the Alliance is advocating for policies that advance sustainability while providing regulatory certainty and protecting printing and packaging companies from unworkable mandates and excessive costs.

"We respectfully ask the legislature to protect California families, businesses and workers, already hyper-sensitive to affordability issues, by acting this session to pause the program and come back next session to substantially repair it."

The Alliance submitted its own letter to the California Legislature asking them to pause implementation of SB 54 noting that approximately 95% of print shops are small businesses, many operating on tight margins with little ability to absorb significant new costs. For California families, the cost would be up to $1,000 per year in higher consumer good prices.

"We respectfully ask the legislature to protect California families, businesses and workers, already hyper-sensitive to affordability issues, by acting this session to pause the program and come back next session to substantially repair it."

The hope is that the pause will take effect before the legislature adjourns its regular session on August 31, 2026.

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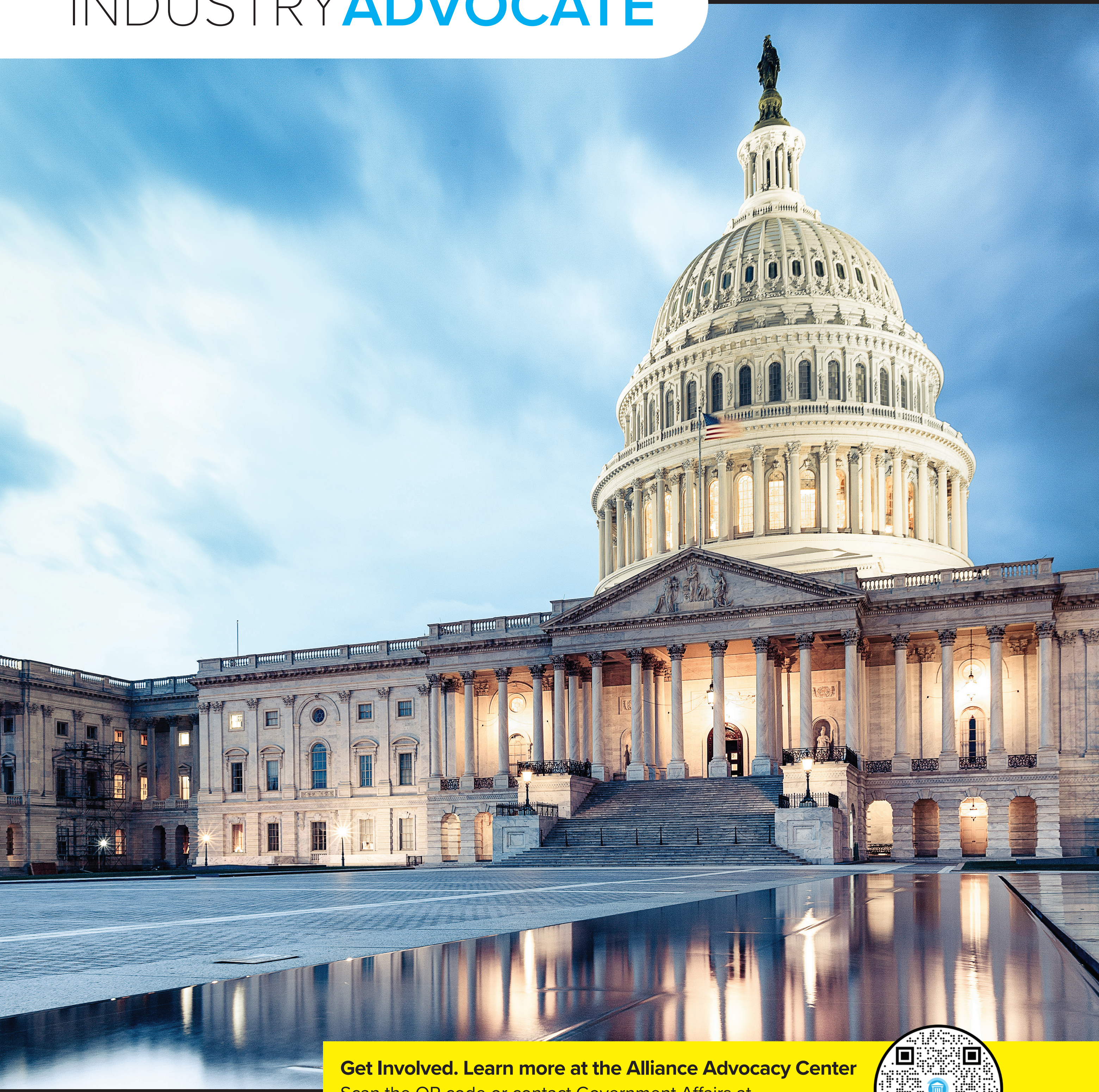

Get Involved. Learn more at the Alliance Advocacy Center

Scan the QR code or contact Government Affairs at govtaffairs@printing.org to learn more.