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A Capitol Idea: Second Legislative Fly-In Brings Printing Industry Concerns to D.C.

Last May, the PRINTING United Alliance hosted its first Legislative Fly-In, gathering about 45 print business owners and other industry representatives to meet their elected representatives in Congress and discuss pending or proposed legislation that affects the printing industry. Richard Romano attended as part of the Media Team.

By [Richard Romano](#)

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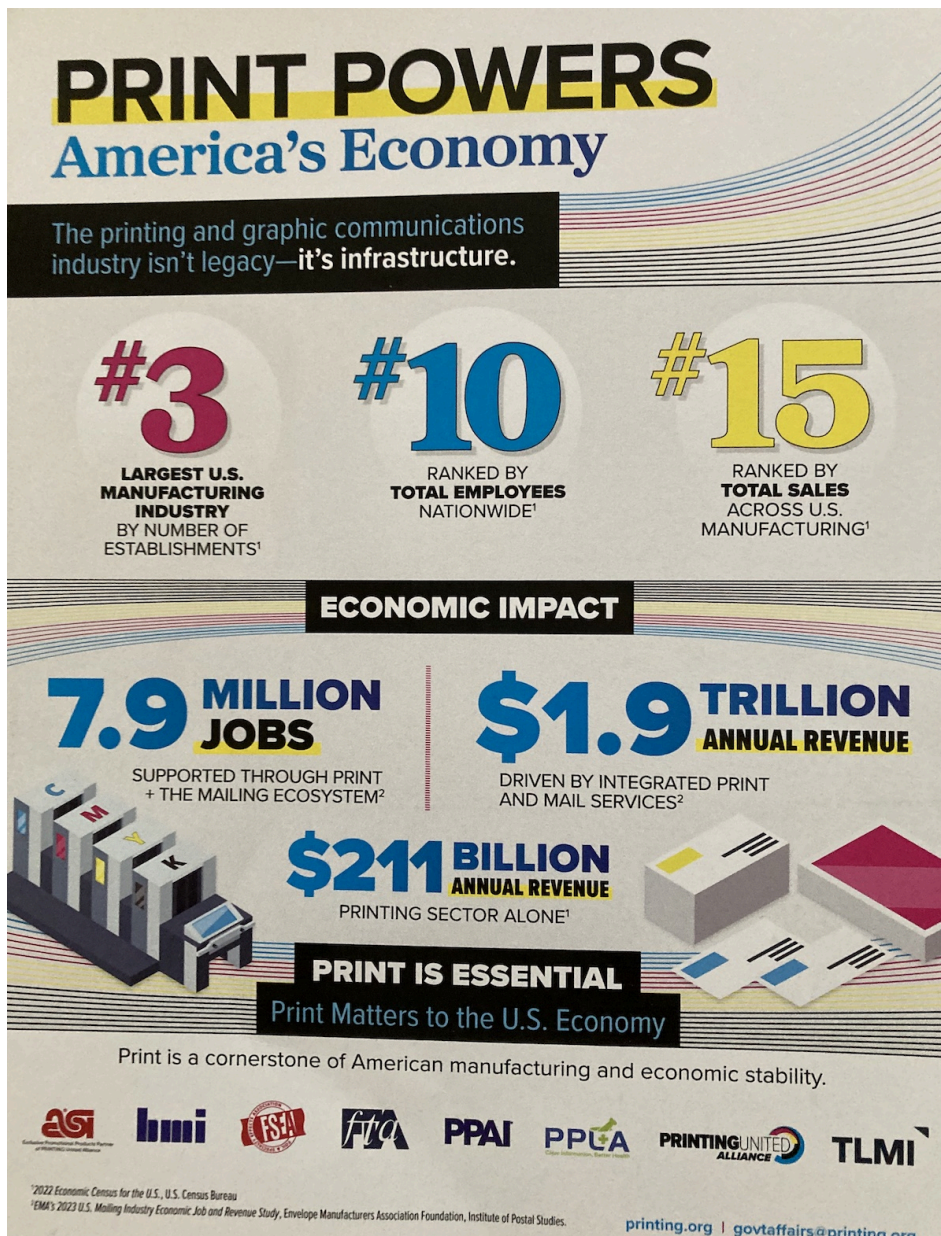


Last May, the PRINTING United Alliance hosted its first “Legislative Fly-In,” a Washington, D.C., gathering of about 45 print business owners to meet their elected representatives in Congress and discuss pending or proposed legislation that affects the printing industry. I had participated as part of the media team, and it was an interesting and educational look at how “the sausage gets made.”

Last week, the Alliance hosted its second Legislative Fly-In, again gathering print business owners as well as vendors—including representatives from the likes of Mimaki, Agfa, Sun Chemical, Heidelberg, and Avery Dennison—industry analysts, and members of the trade press. Some of this year’s attendees had participated last year, but most were newbies. The event was coordinated by ACG Advocacy, which has been working with the PRINTING United Alliance on government lobbying efforts.

As we all know, government action often affects the printing industry in one way or another—whether it be tariffs, potential bans on printing ink components, changes in the U.S. Postal Service, business taxation (equipment depreciation, e.g.), and a host of other issues. So the goals of these fly-ins are to raise awareness of what the printing industry is (i.e., more than “the local Kinko’s”) and how large it is—it’s the third largest manufacturing industry in the U.S. representing a substantial number of voters—as well as describe the impacts that current

and pending laws have on the industry and, thus, legislators' constituents. We are all armed with a fact sheet:



Last year's event was a more abbreviated affair, comprising a single day: the morning included an extensive briefing on the talking points we were to raise, and the afternoon consisted of four or five meetings with Congresspeople and/or their aides. This year, we had a half day briefing on Tuesday and a full day on the Hill on Wednesday—eight hours of walking on mostly marble floors, if nothing else a clear indication of the invaluable contributions of Dr. Scholl to modern society.

The prep session included a welcome from Ford Bowers, President of the PRINTING United Alliance, followed by a recorded message from House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, who

commented that “print is essential and you can help make sure Congress knows that.”

Tim Monahan, Vice President and Managing Director, Government Affairs, for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce then gave a policy briefing, updating the group on the status of some pertinent recent and current legislation:

- The reconciliation that renewed the 2017 tax cuts that had sunsetted, said to help small businesses.
- The SPEED Act, a permitting reform bill that proposes significant changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to streamline the ability to construct new infrastructure projects, which has passed the House and is currently in the Senate.
- The passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026.
- Preliminary attempts to devise an overarching Federal bill to deal with AI and preclude the hodgepodge of potentially 50+ individual and inconsistent state laws.



Tim Monahan, Vice President and Managing Director, Government Affairs, for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Given the sheer number of bills and laws that affect the printing industry, we can't cover everything, so each fly-in concentrates on

two primary “asks”: join the Congressional Printing Caucus (members of the House of Representatives who meet specifically to discuss issues related to the printing industry—it’s up to 17 members) and visit a printing plant in their district (or state, if they are a Senator).

There were three specific policy asks this year:

- Establish a national framework for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging to supersede the patchwork of a half dozen state policies that make it difficult (and expensive) for packaging printers and converters who have customers in different states. We’ve already heard stories about printers getting socked with huge EPR-related bills.
- Co-sponsor H.R. 5133, “The Patients’ Right to Know their Medication Act,” which would ensure standardized, FDA-approved printed medication information, for those who may not have online access or the ability to scan a QR code.
- Urge the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) and the Commerce Department to establish a transparent tariff exclusion process for critical print inputs.

ACG Advocacy’s Julie Philp and Patrick Grant then conducted a role-playing prep session for meetings on the Hill, in which they demonstrated a “good meeting” and a “bad meeting.”

Thus armed, on Wednesday we journeyed to the Hill, taking in the cherry blossoms which, we were informed, were in “puffy blossom stage.” Claritin was highly recommended.

The Media Team this year comprised myself; Alex Marcheschi, Editor-in-Chief of Sign Builder Illustrated; Mike Porter, Contributor to Mailing Systems Technology; Ashley Roberts, Content Director for Printing Impressions; Carly O’Neill, Communications and Content Coordinator for the PRINTING United Alliance; and our “sherpa” for the day was Amanda Kliegl, VP of Public Relations for the PRINTING United Alliance.



The “Media Elite.” L–r: Alex Marcheschi, Ashley Roberts, Richard Romano, Mike Porter.

The day was bookended by visits to two of the co-chairs of the Congressional Printing Caucus. First up was Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (R-NY-24), who has a long background in the printing industry, her family having founded a printing plant in Sherburne, N.Y. (about 50 miles southeast of Syracuse), originally printing newspapers before moving into pharmaceutical printing.

“Printing is a cornerstone of American manufacturing and a critical part of how we communicate, innovate, and grow our economy,” said Congresswoman Tenney. “Having owned and operated a printing business in Upstate New York, I have seen firsthand the

skill, precision, and dedication this industry requires. We are excited to welcome PRINTING United Alliance to Washington for their annual fly-in and to engage directly with leaders across this vital industry. We must ensure the printing industry is recognized, supported, and strengthened as a key driver of jobs and economic growth across our country.”

We then met with Stacy Daniels, Press Secretary for Senate Majority Leader Scott Thune (R-SD); Annie Brody, Director of Business Coalitions for House Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R-MN-06), and Eric Schmitz, Director of Coalitions for House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA-04); and another co-chair of the Congressional Printing Caucus, Mark Pocan (D-WI-02).

Unlike the other groups, the Media Team wasn’t there necessarily to push specific legislation, but rather to talk about our respective publications (at one point we were asked “What’s a trade magazine?”), the printing industry segments we covered, the state of the industry, and how the trade media can serve as a resource for policymakers—and vice versa.

At the End of the Day

After we took a group photo on the Capitol steps, we changed into comfortable shoes and compared notes, the general consensus being that we successfully got our industry’s voices heard and that it was a worthwhile event.

The Alliance says the Legislative Fly-In will be an annual event. If you are a print business owner, participating in these kinds of events may not bear immediate fruit, but most of the folks we met with were attentive and curious about our industry. Naturally, no constituent needs an organized fly-in to contact their elected representatives, and any print owner is welcome to get their voices heard in their own district and state, but there can be power in numbers—as well as get a better understanding of what potentially impactful legislation is currently pending.

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About Richard Romano

Richard Romano is Managing Editor of WhatTheyThink. He curates the Wide Format section on WhatTheyThink.com. He has been writing about the graphic communications industry for more than 25 years. He is the author or coauthor of more than half a dozen books on printing technology and business. His most recent book is “Beyond Paper: An Interactive Guide to Wide-Format and Specialty Printing.

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