

GROWERTALKS

JZ on D.C.

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AmericanHort at the National Plant Board Meeting

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AmericanHort at the National Plant Board Meeting

In late July, AmericanHort participated in and presented at the annual meeting of the National Plant Board, held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Plant Board represents the state plant regulatory officials who license, inspect and certify nurseries and manage plant health and quarantine programs. Federal partners, including the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service and Customs and Border Protection, also attended.

Pictured from left: Patricia McAllister, Kamron Newberry, Dale Deppe, Craig Regelbrugge and Jeremy Deppe discuss advocacy issues at Spring Meadow Nursery in Michigan.

The meeting is a strategic advocacy opportunity for AmericanHort to build key relationships, and

troubleshoot problems and conflicts that can disrupt the national and regional horticultural marketplace. The organization's formal remarks covered the state of the industry, box tree moth, the Ralstonia program for geranium growers, emerging pests like Thrips parvispinus, a legislative update on the Farm Bill and the Systems Approach to Nursery Certification (SANC) program. It also gave them the opportunity to visit leading member growers, including Walters Gardens and Spring Meadow Nursery, where the AmericanHort advocacy team was joined by Patricia McAllister of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, allowing them to work on several cross-border trade challenges.

—Source: AmericanHort's Capitol Wire newsletter

Business Leaders Urge Senate to Delay Corporate Transparency Act Filing Deadline

AmericanHort, along with 119 other organizations representing millions of small businesses, urged the Senate Banking Committee to support amendments to the FY2025 National Defense Authorization Act that would delay the Corporate Transparency Act's (CTA) filing deadline by one year.

The amendments, sponsored by Senators Tim Scott (R-SC) and James Lankford (R-OK), aim to provide additional time for small businesses to understand and comply with the new reporting requirements, thereby avoiding steep fines and penalties. The delay would also allow for the resolution of ongoing legal challenges and align with Congress's original intent to grant businesses a full two years to comply. This measure is critical, as the current compliance rate is less than 10% due to a lack of awareness among business owners.

—Source: AmericanHort's Capitol Wire newsletter

House Republican Leadership Pull Bills and Floor Time

In late July, House Republican leadership had to pull three FY2025 Appropriations bills from the floor—Agriculture, Energy and Water, and Financial Services due to dysfunction in the party. With such a small majority in the house, 220-212, Republicans can only lose four votes. And with a group of 10 to 15 Republicans who are only in Congress to vote no and be disruptive, it makes it extremely difficult to move legislation.

This delay increases the likelihood that there will be a temporary spending bill or a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government until after the elections or even into early next year. AmericanHort continues to engage with lawmakers to promote its key priorities, including increasing funding for the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative and the IR-4 Program. Both programs are increased in the committee-passed version of the House FY 25 Agriculture Appropriations bill and funding at last year's level in the Senate version of the bill.

The House had passed the FY 25 Interior and Environment bill that funds EPA just before adjournment in August. It includes level funding for EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs and helpful report language related to EPA Endangered Species Act proposals. As of press time, the Senate was focusing on passing appropriations bills.

—Source: AmericanHort's Capitol Wire newsletter

Getting to Know Them: J.D. Vance & Kamala Harris

(Editor's note: As of press time in August, both of these candidates were in the race. As with our nature of politics, this could have very well changed by the time you read this.—JZ)

Ohio Senator J.D. Vance was chosen as Donald Trump's running mate for the upcoming November presidential election. Known for his opposition to mega-mergers and concerns about foreign takeovers of U.S. manufacturers, Vance supports stricter filing rules for mergers and has collaborated with Democrats to end tax breaks for large corporate mergers. Despite limited experience in the agricultural sector, Vance has gained support from Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and agricultural organizations like the Ohio Farm Bureau for his commitment to addressing key issues such as inflation and border security.

Top Capitol Hill Republicans, including House Agriculture Chair G.T. Thompson (R-PA-15) and Senate Agriculture Committee ranking member John Boozman (R-AR), believe Vance's Appalachian background will strengthen rural support for the Republican party.

In terms of agricultural legislation, Vance has co-sponsored bills such as the "Protect Farmers from the SEC Act,"

which would prohibit the SEC from requiring disclosure of greenhouse gas emissions related to agricultural products, and the AFIDA Improvements Act, aimed at tightening reporting disclosures for foreign investors in U.S. agriculture. He also supported the Spotted Lanternfly Research and Development Act, a bipartisan bill focused on eradicating the pest.

However, Vance has been a strong proponent of building a wall on the southern border and other measures to reduce illegal immigration, opposing legislation that would allow illegal immigrants to become legalized workers.

Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee for president, has had a varied, but relatively low-profile, involvement in national food and agricultural issues throughout her political career. During her tenure as California Attorney General, she gained notable visibility by defending state laws aimed at improving animal welfare, including a ban on foie gras and regulations on egg-laying chicken enclosures. Harris also introduced legislation to bolster farmworker protections and co-sponsored the Agricultural Worker Program Act, which aimed to provide a path to citizenship for undocumented agricultural workers.

As a Senator, Harris advocated for climate-related measures, supporting the Green New Deal resolution, and promoting legislation like the Water for Tomorrow Act and the Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act, though both bills did not pass. She's also expressed support for environmentally friendly food choices and the impact of climate change on rural communities. Despite mixed reactions from farm groups and limited interaction with some agricultural organizations, Harris has been endorsed by farm labor groups like the United Farm Workers for her advocacy on worker protection and COVID relief. As she gears up for the presidential race, the agricultural community remains watchful of how her policies might evolve.

—Source: *AmericanHort's Capitol Wire newsletter*