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# TRA NEWSLETTER

News affecting Retailers & Grocers in Texas Industry

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## Texas Retailers Newsletter: June 2018

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## Letter from the President

Hello Texas Retailers!

It's June and summer is in full swing. I hope everyone is having a good start to their summer season. Hopefully you have summer vacation plans with family and/or friends, and we here



at TRA hope your plans also include joining us for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Texas Retailers Forum in Corpus Christi, in late July. Details about the Forum are below. In addition to gearing up for Forum, the TRA team has been busy tracking and lobbying on issues ranging from the Farm Bill to Trade and NAFTA at the federal level; to the Inventory Tax and Paid Sick Leave at the state and local levels. More on all these issues below.

Summer is in many ways a season of transition, from one school year to the next, or from the first half of the year to the second half. The transition theme certainly applies to TRA this year as we have come to the end of an era on our grocery side. Many of you know and have had the pleasure of working with Joe Williams over the years. Joe retired on May 31<sup>st</sup> and is now enjoying the first few weeks of a well-earned retirement from a career in the grocery and food industry which contributed so much to the Texas retail industry. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, TRA and TREF hosted a retirement reception for Joe on the campus of the University of Houston, which many of his family and friends from throughout his career attended. We have included pictures from the reception and the note Joe sent to his industry friends and associates in this month's newsletter.

On the advocacy front, TRA continues to track and lobby for our industry on several key state and federal issues of importance. Any day now, we are anticipating that the U.S. Supreme Court will rule on the e-fairness case which it considered and heard oral arguments on in mid-April. It is our hope that the court will rule in our favor and set the stage for leveling the playing field for all retailers, regardless of presence. Additionally, this continues to be a critical time for trade related issues, such as trade tariffs and NAFTA renegotiation. TRA has now joined with our national partner associations on no less than four separate letters to express our concerns to the Trump Administration regarding their proposed tariffs on trade with China, as well as with our allies with respect to tariffs on steel and aluminum. Although we have been very active in lobbying aggressively for a constructive renegotiation of NAFTA, which does not diminish the spirit of the original agreement, it now seems unlikely that any NAFTA renegotiation will happen this year. We will continue to monitor developments on NAFTA and aggressively lobby against any termination of NAFTA. Lastly, the House version of the Farm Bill was recently voted down on the floor of the U.S. House, after it was essentially taken "hostage" over unrelated immigration issues. TRA formally endorsed the House Farm bill and we were very disappointed at the outcome; however, we remain hopeful that House leaders will reach a deal on the immigration issues which clears the way for a clean vote on the Farm Bill soon. The Senate Farm Bill was introduced late last week and is beginning to work its way through the process on the Senate side. A reminder that the deadline to pass a reauthorization (an

updated version) of the Farm Bill or extend the current Farm Bill (passed in 2014) is September 30<sup>th</sup>.

On the state level, we continue to educate state lawmakers on our priority issues going into next session: the inventory tax and why it is so detrimental to business in Texas, preempting the Austin Paid Sick Leave ordinance and others like it, and Dark store taxing issues. All these issues and more will be discussed in depth at the annual Texas Retailers Forum, which will be July 22-23 in Corpus Christi, so don't miss out! Additionally, we will host our first ever PAC lunch at Forum this year, to raise funds for TRA's political accounts, which help us support retail friendly elected officials.

Our annual educational Forum, hosted by the Texas Retailers Association and the Texas Retail Education Foundation (TREF), will provide retailers with timely, topical and quality program sessions and speakers, in addition to highlighting the work of TREF. Specifically, attendees will hear from experts in tax policy, electoral politics, journalism, national associations, as well as local, state and federal representatives during panel discussions which will focus on the most topical issues facing the retail industry. Additionally, Forum attendees will have the opportunity to meet with retail industry leaders from across the state and nation at networking functions such as our Awards Dinner, networking breaks, and our popular closing night casino party. Registration is filling up fast and sponsorship opportunities are still available, so show your company's support for TRA and TREF by being a Forum sponsor. Make plans now to secure a spot for you and your company at this can't miss annual industry event by [clicking here](#).

As always, thank you for supporting TRA and please feel free to reach out to the TRA team anytime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G.F. K. [unclear]".

President/CEO  
Texas Retailers Association

## 2018 Texas Retailers Forum



The Texas Retailers Forum is at the Omni Corpus Christi Hotel July 22-23, 2018. Our 2018 educational Forum, hosted by the Texas Retailers Association and the Texas Retail Education Foundation, provides retailers with timely, topical and quality program sessions and speakers. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with hundreds of retail industry leaders from across the state at networking functions such as our Awards Dinner, networking breaks, and a closing night party - aboard the U.S.S. Lexington.

**Register for the Texas Retailers Forum!**

**Book Your Hotel Room for the Texas Retailers Forum!**

**Legislative Update**



The results are in for the 2018 Texas Primary Runoff Election that took place on May 22. Election Day turnout was very low, as less than 500,000 of Texas' 21.3 million voting-age adults showed up to the polls. Roughly 2.6 million Texans (just over 17 percent of registered voters) voted in the March primaries — 1.5 million on the Republican side and 1.1 million on the Democratic side. For comparison, turnout for the 2016 presidential election in Texas was 59.4 percent. Overall, it was a good night for moderate, business friendly Republicans. Additionally, two incumbent state representatives will not be returning for the 2019 legislative session: Rep. Rene Oliveira (D-Brownsville) and Rep. Scott Cospers (R-Killeen). Winners of the runoff races will head to the General Election on November 6, 2018.

Following the Santa Fe High School tragedy, elected officials from across the state have focused their efforts and attention on preventing any occurrence of similar events in the future. Governor Abbott immediately held school and community safety roundtables to discuss next actions and potential policy ahead of the 2019 legislative session. Among the invitees were victims, family members and educators from Santa Fe and Sutherland Springs, as well as lawmakers, agency officials, educators, students, advocates for and against more gun restrictions, school safety experts, law enforcement, and mental health experts. Following these meetings Governor Abbott released 40 recommendations and proposals that call for increasing law enforcement presence at schools, strengthening existing campus security programs, enhancing firearm safety, providing mental health evaluations that identify students at risk of harming others, and much more. Legislators have been in Austin a number of days since Abbott's plan was released to take testimony from experts and concerned citizens. While there are rumors circulating about a potential Special Session this summer to address school safety legislation, no exact plans have been released yet. [Read Governor Abbott's School and Firearm Safety Action Plan.](#)

In the Texas House, Speaker Joe Straus (R-San Antonio) recently announced that Rep. J.D. Sheffield (R-Gatesville), will serve as co-chair of the Joint Interim Committee on



Prescribing and Dispensing Controlled Substances. Reps. Donna Howard (D-Austin) and DeWayne Burns (R-Cleburne) will also serve on the committee. Lt. Governor Dan Patrick had previously announced that Sen. Charles Schwerter (R-Georgetown) will serve as co-chair. Sens. Dawn Buckingham (R-Lakeway) and Kirk Watson (D-Austin) will also be on the panel. The committee will study how the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances is monitored in the state.

The panel's charges include:

- Studying the number of prescribers and dispensers registered to receive certain prescription information electronically; and
- Evaluating how regulatory agencies access that prescription information to monitor people to whom those agencies issue licenses, certification, or registration.

Lawmakers are continuing to hear updates on Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts as well as tackle the multitude of interim charges prior to developing comprehensive interim reports before the upcoming session. Comptroller Glen Hegar continues to provide promising news on state revenue collections, however, it is believed that extra state expenses from both Hurricane Harvey recovery and public education will equal or surpass any new funding available to the Legislature.

Texas Senate and House committees will continue to hold interim hearings throughout June on a variety of topics. You can find a full list of upcoming House hearings [here](#) and Senate hearings [here](#).

## Partner Spotlight: Avalara



Avalara helps businesses of all sizes achieve compliance with transaction taxes, including sales and use, VAT, excise, communications, and other tax types. The company delivers comprehensive, automated, cloud-based solutions designed to be fast, accurate, and easy to use. The Avalara Compliance Cloud® platform helps customers manage complicated and burdensome tax compliance obligations imposed by state, local, and other taxing authorities throughout the world.

Avalara offers more than 600 pre-built connectors into leading accounting, ERP, ecommerce and other business applications, making the integration of tax and compliance solutions easy for customers. Each year, the company processes billions of indirect tax transactions for customers and users, files more than a million tax returns, and manages millions of tax exemption certificates and other compliance documents.

A privately held company, Avalara's venture capital investors include Sageview Capital, Battery Ventures, Warburg Pincus, Technology Crossover Ventures, Arthur Ventures, and other institutional and individual investors. Headquartered in Seattle, Avalara has offices across the U.S. and overseas in the U.K., Belgium, Brazil, and India. More information at [www.avalara.com](http://www.avalara.com)

Email Tracy Jones at [tracy.jones@avalara.com](mailto:tracy.jones@avalara.com).

## Retirement Reception for Joe Williams



Thank you to everyone who joined us at the University of Houston for Joe's retirement reception on Thursday, June 7th.



**Read Joe's Retirement Announcement**

## **NEW TREF Website Page**



The Texas Retailers Association is currently building a new website page for the Texas Retailers Education Foundation. This new page will include a "Retail Job Center" for high school and college students to find retail jobs in their area. Members interested in having their job website pages linked should email Justin Williamson at [jwilliamson@txretailers.org](mailto:jwilliamson@txretailers.org).

## **Same FedEx Service. Lower Cost**





If you could get the same service from FedEx that you do today, but for a lower cost, wouldn't you jump at the opportunity? Through the **TRA Shipping Program**, you can. When you enroll for this free TRA member benefit, you can ship FedEx the same way you do today. The only difference you'll notice will be the positive impact on your bottom line. Enroll today to **save up to 27%\* on select FedEx services**.

Visit [PartnerShip.com/01tra](http://PartnerShip.com/01tra) for complete program details. If you have any questions call 800-599-2902 or email [sales@PartnerShip.com](mailto:sales@PartnerShip.com).

**ENROLL NOW!**

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Get the right insurance from insurance professionals who know retailers. At ANCO Insurance, you'll find:

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**We go the extra mile for you!**



Agents Cassie Doolittle  
and Gina O'Hara



ANCO insurance is TRA's endorsed provider for the full range of insurance coverages for your business, including property, general liability, auto, workers compensation, occupational accident, life, group health and disability. You can count on an insurance program customized for your business with a commitment to serving TRA's membership and

providing personal attention to each client. ANCO is known for superior customer service standards, quick response times to calls & emails, along with individual care.

Contact: Gina O'Hara, [ohara@anco.com](mailto:ohara@anco.com) or

Cassie Doolittle, [doolittle@anco.com](mailto:doolittle@anco.com), 512.330.9836 x 6340

[www.insuranceforretailers.com](http://www.insuranceforretailers.com)

## FMI Legal Conference

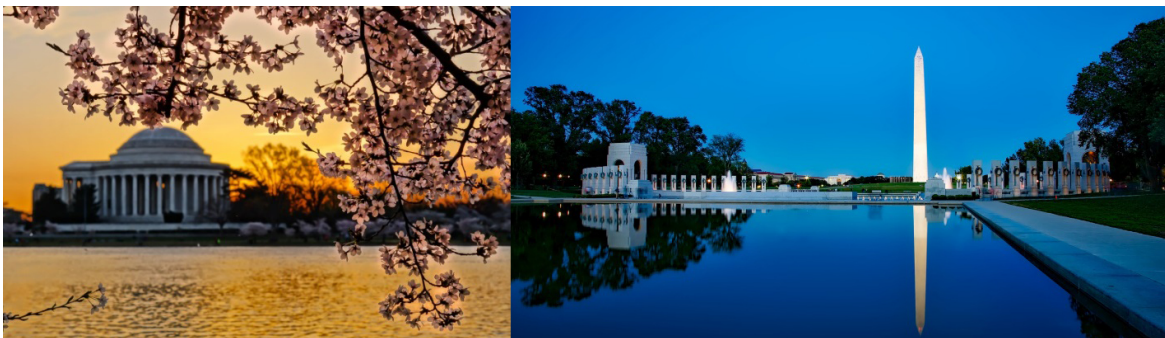


### Please Join Us - FMI Legal Conference 2018

The food retail industry continues to face new regulatory challenges, many of which we will discuss in great detail at [FMI's 2018 Legal Conference](#) to be held June 24-26th in Washington, DC. The conference will be held at the [Mandarin Oriental](#), which overlooks the beautiful DC Tidal Basin and is walkable to many popular hotspots.

Regarding topics, many sessions will address the current outlook of regulations and issues you have likely been following, such as FSMA enforcement, food labeling, employment and labor for food retail, antitrust concerns, customer privacy and data, and more. Additionally, we will also spend a significant portion of the conference discussing legal issues that you will likely face as customer demands and wishes continue to morph over time. In particular, we will have detailed dialogues with subject matter experts on both the food side and the business side of industry trends such as meal kits, an increase in prepared foods, online sales, and home delivery services.

We are pleased to offer you the following discount code for 15% off conference registration. Simply use code **LEG18** on the payment screen.



In addition to some great sessions, we are excited to have you join us at the fabulous Mandarin Oriental on the DC waterfront. One of the best times to visit the DC monuments is at dusk and nighttime, and the FMI Legal Conference is located only a quick walk from many of the most popular monuments. In particular, the World War II Memorial and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial have water features that are particularly beautiful when lit up at night. Finally, if memorials and history are not your thing, the Mandarin Oriental is also an easy walk the recently remodeled [District Wharf](#), which houses boutique shops, restaurants, ample outdoor seating area to relax by the water, and even views of the capitol building from select bars.

We hope to see you in June!

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## Register for FMI Legal Conference

# MBA Retail Scheduling Survey

University of Dallas

MBA Retail  
Scheduling Survey

Click here ►

The University of Dallas MBA Capstone class requests your participation in their labor management software survey. The survey will assist the students in their funded research project and takes only 5 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous. The goal of the survey is to find out how retailers are using or not using labor management software to make employee schedules and forecast labor demand. For questions regarding this survey, contact Amanda Domaschk or Professor Bruce Evans

at [adomaschk@udallas.edu](mailto:adomaschk@udallas.edu) or [bdevans@udallas.edu](mailto:bdevans@udallas.edu).

## MBA Retail Scheduling Survey

# Grocers Corner - In the Cart

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## What's Keeping Grocery Execs Up at Night - and How They are Responding: Annual Report

As grocery retailers attempt to better cater to younger consumers, they're apparently concerned with having the appropriate workforce to keep them on the right path. With Millennials' purchasing power continuing to grow and Generation Z's not far behind, retailers are going to need to make the grocery industry more attractive as a career choice so that their talent within reflects the audience to whom they need to appeal. Please click [here](#) to read the article from Progressive Grocer's 2018 Annual Report.

## SNAP Program Statistics Update

Please contact Gary Huddleston [ghuddleston@txretailers.org](mailto:ghuddleston@txretailers.org) or 972-670-6814 if you have any questions regarding the statistics update.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Ave per Case</u>
Apr 18	1,620,359	3,736,499	\$421,644,473.00	\$264.00
May 18	1,577,628	3,694,977	\$416,476,131.00	\$264.00

### **Twelve Month Running Average**

6/17-5/18	1,667,057	3,927,240	\$449,523,820.00	\$269.00
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**Look Back To Last Year (2017) at This Time**

April 17	1,614,563	3,807,266	\$436,122,969.00	\$270.00
May 17	1,620,494	3,823,612	\$438,660,725.00	\$271.00

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## About the Texas Retailers Association

The Texas Retailers Association (TRA) is a 501(c) 6 non-profit organization dedicated to keeping Texas “retail friendly” for business owners through legislative advocacy. Since 1926, our diverse membership has represented every segment of the retail industry throughout Texas – from the smallest neighborhood store to the largest corporate chain. Recognized as the Voice of Texas Retail, TRA effectively advocates for Texas retailers at the State and Federal level while providing value-added services and partner programs for its members. Visit [www.txretailers.org](http://www.txretailers.org) and join today!

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\*TRA Members

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