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Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America Hires Christopher Tampio to Lead State Affairs

The trade group said the longtime government affairs executive will oversee state legislative advocacy on alcohol distribution rules nationwide.

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Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America said Monday that it has hired Christopher M. Tampio as vice president of state affairs, adding a longtime government affairs executive to lead the group’s work on state legislative advocacy.

The Washington-based trade association said Tampio will report to Dawson Hobbs, its executive vice president for government affairs, and will work with state wholesaler associations and member companies on legislative and regulatory issues affecting wine and spirits distribution. The group represents distributors and brokers in the alcohol industry and said its members account for more than 80% of wine and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States.

The appointment comes as trade groups across the alcohol industry continue to focus on state-level policy, where lawmakers and regulators set many of the rules that govern licensing, distribution, retail access, delivery, and market structure. WSWA said Tampio's role will center on those state issues and on supporting what it described as the family-owned businesses that make up much of the three-tier system for alcohol distribution in the United States.

In announcing the hire, the association pointed to Tampio's background in trade associations, corporate advocacy, and multistate campaigns. According to WSWA, he has held positions representing the National Restaurant Association, the Retail Industry Leaders Association, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Association of Convenience Stores, and the American Dental Association.

The group said that while at the National Association of Convenience Stores, known as NACS, Tampio represented convenience and fuel retailers before both federal and state governments. It also said he expanded the association's state government affairs and grassroots programs during his time there.

WSWA said Tampio most recently served as vice president of government affairs at Heartland Dental, where he oversaw state government affairs across a 40-state footprint. In that role, according to the association, he worked with state licensing boards and professional associations. Before that, WSWA said, he was a partner at Parquet Public Affairs, where he directed 50-state issue campaigns for industry associations and Fortune 500 companies.

The association also said Tampio built working relationships with several national state-government organizations, including the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, and the National

Association of Attorneys General. At the federal level, WSWA said, he served as interim senior vice president leading the American Dental Association's Washington office after previously spending eight years as the group's director of congressional affairs.

Hobbs said in the announcement that Tampio's experience inside trade associations and his work in multiple states made him a strong fit for the position. He said Tampio knows how to turn member priorities into action in state capitols and before regulators, and that his background should help strengthen partnerships with state associations.

Tampio said state policy decisions play a central role in determining how wine and spirits reach consumers and said he plans to work with WSWA members and state association partners so policymakers hear directly from businesses involved in the distribution system.

The hire adds an experienced lobbying and advocacy professional at a time when statehouses remain central to alcohol policy debates. While federal agencies regulate some parts of the beverage alcohol market, many of the practical rules that shape how products move from suppliers to retailers are set state by state. Those rules can affect wholesalers, retailers, restaurants, and consumers, as well as the balance among producers, distributors, and sellers.

WSWA, founded in 1943, said it has more than 380 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia. The organization represents the wholesale tier of the wine and spirits business, which sits between producers and retailers under the three-tier system that became the dominant structure for alcohol distribution after Prohibition. The association has long argued that the system promotes accountability, tax collection, and product oversight, while critics in some parts of the industry have pushed for changes in areas such as direct shipping and other sales channels.

The organization's announcement did not say when Tampio officially started in the role, but it was issued Monday from Washington. His new position places him in charge of helping coordinate the association's response to policy proposals in states across the country, where legislatures and regulators continue to weigh changes involving alcohol sales, licensing, and distribution.

For WSWA, the appointment signals an effort to deepen its state-level advocacy operation with a veteran of national associations and multistate government affairs work. For Tampio, it marks a move into one of the most active trade policy arenas in consumer goods, where state decisions can quickly reshape how alcohol reaches stores, restaurants, and other licensed sellers.