



Chris Jones, MSCC Launch Speech

I'm just going to say this clearly, that without the National Grocers Association and the NCPA, this coalition would have never come together.

So please give Doug and Laura another round of applause. I think it's hard to find a stronger foundation for a Main Street coalition than independent grocery and pharmacy.

These industries provide access to food and medicine for millions of Americans, particularly in rural communities, small towns, and underserved urban neighborhoods that much of their corporate counterparts have long abandoned.

And interestingly, this is not the first time these groups have come together.

In fact, nearly a century ago, our predecessor organization, were responsible for forming an Alliance to confront the growing power of chain stores, both in grocery and pharmacy, and the discriminatory pricing practices that put them at a disadvantage.

That Alliance helped secure passage of what one former FTC chair called the Magna Carta of small business. the Robinson Patman Act. And now, nearly 90 years later, this is the 90 year birthday of the RPA, here we are again.

And once again, we're confronting an economy where dominant firms increasingly use their size, their leverage, their political influence, not simply to compete, but to entrench their power, to eliminate rivals, to dictate terms of commerce across entire industries.

And once again, independent grocers and pharmacists are helping to lead the fight back.

But before I explain where this coalition is going, I want to recognize something important: Our work here as stakeholders and advocates for our industries, it's only one part of the movement for competitive markets.

Organizations from both the left and the right, like the American Economic Liberties



Project, Open Markets Institute, American Compass, along with many scholars, advocates, journalists, lawyers, and public officials across the ideological spectrum,

helped lay the intellectual groundwork for the competition renaissance we are now witnessing.

They helped rebuild the architecture for a serious anti-monopoly movement in America that continues to build momentum today. We're proud to build on that foundation, and we intend to be partners and force multipliers with them in the work moving forward.

Because today is about taking those ideas and bringing Main Street to the table.

Organized coalition rooted in actual businesses and agricultural producers living with the consequences of market concentration. single day.

America is at a crossroads.

Populism is now the defining feature of our politics, yet one of the defining features of Washington remains a system built to resist those pressures and preserve the status quo.

And increasingly, Americans across the political spectrum are realizing the economy is simply not working the way it should, and this issue is not partisan.

As you can see this morning with our bipartisan keynote speakers, this is a genuine 80/20 issue in American politics.

And poll after poll shows that broad bipartisan concern about excessive corporate power and growing support for antitrust enforcement. Americans increasingly believe large corporations wield too much influence over markets, politics, and their everyday lives.

And at the same time, Americans consistently rank small businesses as the most trusted institutions in our society, with large corporations at the very bottom of the trust index, according to the Pew Research Center.



Because people instinctively understand something very important.

Competitive markets are not just economic structures, they are democratic structures.

They disperse power, they create economic independence, and they create opportunity for everyday Americans and they prevent excessive economic control from being excessive political and social control.

And now, to be fair, the ground was already shifting under successive administrations. After the Obama era we've seen antitrust enforcement begin to reawaken.

It started under the first Trump where we saw intensive scrutiny of Big Tech.

And ever since then, we've seen a wave of antitrust enforcement here in Washington.

And merger challenges expanding across sectors ranging from grocery, pharmacy, agriculture, alcohol, e-commerce, technology, entertainment, and so on.

The anti-monopoly movement is clearly on the rise in the halls of power, but if you're a small business owner competing in a consolidated market, you know we've got a long ways to go.

And that is because our legal and enforcement systems are not designed to keep up with the scale and sophistication of modern market power.

Quite the contrary.

The challenge in right-sizing these systems to today's market challenge is enormous, and there is no single option, no silver bullet.

But we believe one thing is clear, Main Street needs to be better organized around these issues to help accelerate those changes.

That's ultimately the purpose of this coalition, to create a stronger, more coordinated



voice for independent businesses and producers facing common market power problems across the economy.

This coalition grew out of years of previous advocacy work around competition policy, and I want to recognize my friend and thought partner, Matt Seiler, from the NCPA for helping me shape this vision.

Through our work together, we came to a simple realization: None of our individual associations can win this fight on our own.

The battle is happening everywhere; in Congress, in the White House, federal agencies, state legislatures, the courts, academia, economics departments, the media, and increasingly in public opinion itself.

Meanwhile, dominant firms operate across all of these areas seamlessly and simultaneously.

And we also realize something else. Even though different industries experience market power very differently, the underlying dynamics are often remarkably similar.

Discriminatory pricing, exclusionary contracting, buyer power abuses, platform gatekeeping, vertical integration conflicts, regulatory capture, retaliation against smaller competitors.

So instead of fighting this alone, we decided it's better to organize together. Grocers, pharmacists, farmers, retailers, cattlemen, restaurant owners, franchisees, wholesalers, e-commerce sellers, small brands, and other facing similar pressures across the economy.

Because if Main Street organizes around a shared vision for competitive markets, we become extraordinarily powerful.

We may not have the resources of a Fortune 500, but we have something else. We've got numbers, we've got credibility, and we have the community that support us.



We also have an unmatched grassroots capability that corporate America simply cannot replicate.

All we need to do is organize these forces and frankly even as a relatively informal coalition that started in the wake of COVID, we've already helped make history by contributing to the revival of Robinson-Patman enforcement and other unused authorities from the FTC like Secretary So now imagine what we can do if we're fully organized and dedicated to these missions.

So as of today, the MSCC is formally launching as a coalition dedicated to enhancing the competitiveness of independent businesses and agricultural producers across the American economy.

But we cannot do that alone.

We're also working to build a broader legal policy and enforcement infrastructure needed to help small businesses and farmers assert their of their rights in the real world.

That means partnering with think tanks, the plaintiff's side antitrust bar, litigation finance providers, economists, researchers, legal advocates, and others committed to restoring competitive markets.

Because legal rights are only a matter if people can actually enforce them.

And too often, small businesses and farmers based dominant firms with far greater resources, far more leverage, and far more ability to use delay, cost, retaliation, and complexity as weapons.

Part of the MSCC's role is to help close that gap to connect mainstream businesses with the policy of legal, economic, and advocacy support that they need to turn their rights on paper into law; real-world opportunity.

So let me briefly outline where this coalition intends to fight.



First is our broad core agenda.

We support structural reforms that improve the ability of independent businesses and farmers to protect themselves from anti-competitive of conduct.

That includes ending forced arbitration for antitrust claims, protecting whistleblowers and those who expose illegal conduct, preserving responsible litigation finance so smaller players can actually access the courts financially, expanding access to justice for victims of malarkey power abuses, and substantially increasing funding for federal and state antitrust enforcement agencies.

Because dominant firms have nearly unlimited legal resources, Main Street does not.

Second, we're expanding into a broader cross-industry competition agenda and that means in retail and e-commerce we're doubling down on our roots and revitalizing enforcement of Robinson-Pattman Act, while also expanding, while also addressing exclusionary platform conduct, discriminatory pricing, coercive franchise relationships, and abuses of dominance throughout modern retail markets.

Pharmacy and healthcare, we believe competition policy must address PPM practices, discriminatory reimbursement structures, steering, vertical integration conflicts, and exclusionary conduct farming independent farms. pharmacies, patients, and providers.

In agriculture, our platform focuses on three pillars.

- We need fair and accountable input markets.
- We need a robust right to repair our own equipment.
- And we need more competition and marketing opportunities for producers.

Farmers face the same basic problem as independent businesses.

Concentrated firms are using their leverage imposing coercive contract terms and take it or leave it market access conditions.

The details differ, but the pattern is the same.



Dominant firms shift the risk down the supply chain while capturing more of the value for themselves.

Now, I also want to emphasize something important about this agenda.

What we're releasing today is just a foundation.

It reflects the industries who are currently active in a coalition. and the competitive problems they are confronting right now.

But it's not intended to be a closed or static project.

Our goal is to build a true Big Tent main street coalition that welcomes independent businesses, producers across the economy who are facing these same market power challenges.

As we continue to formalize, organize, and grow, this agenda will expand alongside the coalition itself.

We will continue developing more detailed policy prescriptions, enforcement priorities, and reform proposals in collaboration with our members and our partners.

Today, one of the first initiatives of this coalition is issuing a formal letter both to President Trump and congressional leadership calling on Washington to place competition. and antitrust enforcement back at the center of federal economic policy.

The letter makes a simple point.

If policymakers are serious about the affordability problem and economic resilience, then restoring competition must be part of the answer.

And importantly, the letter is not directed at one party or administration.

It's a call for sustained engagement from both parties, federal and state enforcers and



Main Street

COMPETITION COALITION

policymakers across governments to restore competition to its right place- the center of American economic policy.