THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE AND CANNABIS BOARD

In the Matter of:		
Friendship Heights Convenience Store, LLC	Case No.:	25-CC-00027
	License No.:	ABRA-122502
	Order No.:	2025-1070
Summary Action Retailer Class B at premises 5252 Wisconsin A, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20015		

BEFORE: Donovan Anderson, Chairperson
Silas Grant, Jr., Member
Teri Janine Quinn, Member
Ryan Jones, Member
David Meadows, Member

PARTIES: Friendship Heights Convenience Store, LLC, Respondent

Negash Hailemaryam, Respondent [1]

Earle W. Douglass, Counsel, for the Respondent

74 Chevy Chase Owner, LLC, Property Owner

Christopher N. Southcott, Assistant Attorney General,
Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia

ORDER SUSPENDING RETAILER CLASS B LICENSE AND AFFIRMING SUMMARY CLOSURE

INRODUCTION

On October 29, 2025, the Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Board (Board) issued a Notice of Summary Action against Friendship Heights Convenience Store, LLC (Respondent). Pursuant

[1] Only one Respondent appeared at the Summary Action hearing. There was no request for a hearing filed by the other parties.

to D.C. Code §§ 25-822 and 25-826, the Board initiated a summarily revocation proceeding against the Respondent's alcoholic beverage license. Furthermore, under D.C. Code §§ 7-1671.08(g)(1), (2)(C), and (2)(D), the Board summarily closed the unlicensed cannabis establishment, Dabbers Club, which was located at the Respondent's premises, and the Respondent.[2]

On November 5, 2025, the Board presided over the hearing for the Respondent related to allegations that the business permitted the illegal sales of non-medical cannabis inside the Respondent's establishment. The Board indefinitely suspends the Retailer Class B License pending the outcome of a show cause proceeding. Furthermore, the Board affirms the summary closure under D.C. Code §§ 7-1671.08(g)(1), (2)(C), (2)(D) (2)(E), and (h)(1).

FINDINGS OF FACT

The following statements represent the Board's findings of fact based on the evidentiary record. In reaching its determination, the Board considered the stipulated facts, evidence, the arguments of the parties, and all documents comprising the Board's official file. The Board credits all evidence identified or cited below unless otherwise stated.[3]

I. Background

1. Friendship Heights Convenience Store is located at 5252 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20015 and retains a Class B license to sell alcoholic beverages issued by the Board. *Proposed Stipulations of Fact*, 1. The convenience store has a main area where the Respondent sells products and an "additional area" at the back of the store. *Id.* The additional area is separated from the main area by a green door. *Id*. Around October 2025, the Respondent permitted an unlicensed cannabis retailer, Dabbers Club, to use the "additional area" to sell unlicensed cannabis product. *Id*.

2. On December 13, 2023, after reviewing evidence that the Respondent illegally stored and sold cannabis products, the Board issued a cease-and-desist order to the Respondent. *Id*. The order required the Respondent to "cease the sale, possession, and distribution of all cannabis and hemp derived cannabis products." *Id*. at 2 citing Board Order No. 2023-702. The order was affirmed on January 10, 2024. *See* Board Order No. 2024-001.

II. Undercover Operation on October 20, 2025

3. On October 20, 2025, ABCA Supervisory Investigator (SI) Jason Peru received information that Dabbers Club was operating and selling cannabis products inside the Respondent's premises. *Proposed Stipulations of Fact*, 2.

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[2] This order pertains to the Summary Action against the Respondent. The Board will issue a separate order regarding any pending actions against Dabbers Club.

[3] The full transcript in this matter was not available at the time this Order was written; however, the Board is sufficiently versed in the evidence and testimony after holding the summary suspension hearing to make the findings of fact and conclusions of law contained in this Order. This action was necessary on the part of the Board, because § 25-826(c) requires the Board to issue an Order within 3 business days of the Summary Suspension Hearing. D.C. Code § 25-826(c).

4. On the same day, SI Peru strategized with Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Narcotics Enforcement Unit (NEU) to conduct an undercover operation at the Respondent's premises. *Id*. The undercover (UC) investigator texted an employee of Dabbers Club who told the UC that Dabbers Club was operating inside the Respondent's premises. *Id*. The employee then instructed the UC to place an order and pick it up at the Respondent's premises. *Id*. When the UC entered the Respondent's premises, he spoke with an employee of the Respondent who told the UC to head back to the "additional area." *Id.*

5. While inside the additional area, the UC paid $70.00 for a 7-gram bag of cannabis flower. *Id.* MPD NEU then took possession of the purchased item and conducted a drug field test, which tested positive for THC. *Id*. It was also confirmed that the product was not from a licensed medical cannabis cultivator, and therefore, had not been tested by a licensed testing laboratory. *Id* at 3. The product also did not contain a label identifying the source of the cannabis. *Id*.

III. Undercover Operation on October 24, 2025 and Summary Closure

6. On October 24, 2025, MPD conducted a second UC buy at the Respondent's premises where the UC paid $100.00 for a 7-gram bag of cannabis flower. *Id.* MPD took possession of the product and tested it for THC. *Id*. Minutes later, MPD executed a search warrant at the Respondent's premises and arrested one individual. *Id.*

7. The execution of the search warrant led to the recovery of various cannabis products, including: 593 THC cartridges (698 grams), 280 mylar packs containing weed-like substance (5166.7 grams), 79 compressed THC substance (509 grams), 59 wax THC sheets (531 grams), 266 jars containing THC wax (14,364 grams), 38 jars containing THC tabs (2109 grams), 53 jars containing THC rock-like substance (2968 grams), 511 pre-roll marijuana cigarettes (511 grams), 8 jars THC edibles (640 grams), 52 bags THC edibles (3640 grams) and $37,866.00 in U.S. currency. *Id.*

8. Following the execution of the search warrant, SI Peru padlocked the Respondent's premises under the notice of summary closure and revocation issued in this matter. *Id.* at 4.

9. Subsequently, the Respondent submitted a remediation plan to the Board. *See* Comprehensive Remediation Plan For: Friendship Heights Convenience Store, LLC (Nov. 5, 2025). The Remediation Plan acknowledges the violations and outlines corrective actions taken and prevention measures. *Id*.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

I. THE BOARD SUSPENDS THE ALCOHOL RETAILER CLASS B LICENSE BASED ON THE ILLEGAL SALE OF NON-MEDICAL CANNABIS AT THE RESPONDENT'S PREMISES.

10. "If the Board determines, after investigation, that the operations of a licensee present an imminent danger to the health and safety of the public, the Board may summarily revoke, suspend,

fine, or restrict, without a hearing, the license to sell alcoholic beverages in the District." D.C. Code § 25-826(a).

> In rendering a decision on a summary suspension hearing, the Board may suspend or restrict the license of the licensee. Additionally, the Board may keep the licensee in the summary suspension proceeding to monitor the licensee to make a determination if the conditions placed by the Board on the licensee are effective.

23 DCMR § 1613.1 (West Supp. 2025).

11. Under D.C. Code § 25-823(a)(1), the Board may fine, suspend, or revoke the license of any licensee if the licensee violates "any of the provisions of this title, the regulations promulgated under this title, or any other laws of the District…" D.C. Code § 25-823(a)(1). The Board may also fine, suspend, or revoke the license if "the licensee allows the licensed establishment to be used for any unlawful or disorderly purpose." D.C. Code § 25-823(a)(2).

12. D.C. Code § 25-822(a)(2) further indicates that the Board

> shall revoke the license of a licensee as a result of any of the following events during the period for which the license was issued:
>
> (2) The licensee has knowingly permitted, in the licensed establishment (A) the illegal sale, or negotiations for sale, or the use, of any controlled substance identified in the CSA, or (B) the possession, other than for personal use, or sale, or negotiations for sale, of drug paraphernalia in violation of the CSA or Chapter 11 of Title 48. Successive sales, or negotiations for sale, over a continuous period of time shall be deemed evidence of knowing permission;

D.C. Code § 25-822(a)(2).

13. In this case, the record shows that two illegal sales of non-medical cannabis products occurred inside the Respondent's premises. Therefore, the Respondent violated D.C. Code §§ 25-823(a)(1), 25-823(a)(2) by allowing their establishment to be used for an unlawful purpose. The record also reflects that the Respondent knowingly permitted the illegal sale of a controlled substance under D.C. Code § 25-822 as it allowed Dabbers Club to operate with impunity inside its premises. These actions by the Respondent present an imminent danger to the health and safety of the public. In light of these facts, the Board indefinitely suspends the Class B license pending the resolution of a future show cause proceeding related to this incident.

14. The Board considered the Government's argument in favor of revocation but decided to impose an indefinite suspension of the license pending the outcome of a future show cause proceeding related to this incident. The Board notes that revocation is a severe remedy and, in a summary proceeding, the resolution of the claim should be sufficient to resolve the imminent danger. In this case, the Board finds that an indefinite suspension of the liquor license is sufficient to resolve the imminent danger; especially, when there is no indica of violence, weapons on the premises, or offenses against underage persons that may merit the immediate revocation of the

license. The Board notes that the show cause proceeding will allow a fuller and more deliberate consideration of the facts, including various potential charges that go beyond the present action.[4] The Board further finds that the indefinite suspension of the liquor license is warranted because the violation of the Board's prior cease and desist order related to cannabis sales at the premises demonstrates that the license holder cannot be trusted to comply with the liquor laws pending the outcome of the show cause proceeding, which may result in the revocation of the Respondent's liquor license.

II. THE BOARD AFFIRMS THE SUMMARY CLOSURE OF THE "ADDITIONAL AREA" AT THE RESPONDENT'S PREMISES BASED ON THE ILLEGAL SALE OF NON-MEDICAL CANNABIS.

15. Chapter 16B of Title 7 of the D.C. Official Code provides in § 7-1671.08(g)(1) that

> Notwithstanding §§ 7-1671.06(b) and 7-1671.06(f), ABCA shall have the authority to inspect the entire premises, inventory, and business records of an unlicensed establishment to determine whether the business is conducting activity in violation of this chapter. If, after an inspection, ABCA determines that an unlicensed establishment presents an imminent danger to the health or safety of the public, as described in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the ABC Board may summarily close and order the padlocking, by ABCA or MPD without a prior hearing, of the unlicensed establishment, and ABCA or MPD may seize all cannabis and cannabis products, Schedule I substances, or products that contain Schedule I substances found at the premises.

D.C. Official Code § 7-1671.08(g)(1).

16. D.C. Official Code § 7-1671.08(2)(C)-(D) makes these sections applicable to the unlicensed establishment in determining whether an imminent danger has occurred. Under D.C. Official Code § 7-1671.08(2)(E), an imminent danger to the health or safety of the public also includes if the unlicensed establishment fails to comply with a cease-and-desist order. Here, the Respondent received a cease-and-desist order in 2023 and failed to comply with the terms by allowing the sale of illegal substances at their premises.

17. In this case, the record shows two illegal sales of non-medical cannabis occurred inside the Respondent's establishment. There is no indication that the cannabis complied with the District's testing or labeling standards as required by the District's medical cannabis laws and regulations. *See, e.g.,* 22-C DCMR § 5607. In light of these facts, the Board affirms the summary closure of the premises.

[4] In particular, this case likely involves additional matters related to the licensee's compliance with Title 25. This includes compliance with D.C. Official Code §§ 25-823(a)(1) and (a)(2) related to allowing violations of the District's cannabis and medical cannabis laws (e.g., D.C. Official Code §§ 7-1671.08(a), 7-1671.12e, 48-904.1(a)(A)-(B), 48-904.1(a)(1A)(A)(i)) and D.C. Official Code § 25-822(a)(2).

ORDER

Therefore, the Board, on this 10th day of November 2025, hereby **AFFIRMS** the summary closure ordered by the Board under Chapter 16B of Title 7.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the remediation plan filed by the Respondent is accepted by the Board pursuant to D.C. Official Code §§ 7-1671.08(f) and 25-826 as a restriction and condition of licensure and attached to this Order. The Respondent is advised that future violations may be subject to the closure of the premises and fines of no less than $20,000 may be imposed under Chapter 16B and other remedies may be pursued under Title 25 of the D.C. Official Code if it is determined that the licensee is in violation of the remediation plan.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the summary closure brought under Title 25 of the D.C. Official Code shall remain in effect until the Board issues its final written Order in a future show cause proceeding related to the incident. The Retailer Class B License shall remain in the custody of ABCA, but the padlock may be removed to allow non-alcohol and non-cannabis activity at the premises.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that if the Office of Attorney General declines to prosecute the matter, the Respondent may request that the Board lift the suspension subject to the conditions expressed in this order.

The parties are **ADVISED** that nothing in this order prevents the District from filing a nuisance claim against the Respondent or property owner pursuant to D.C. Official Code §§ 25-805 and 7-1671.12e as applicable. Furthermore, nothing in this order precludes enforcement of the cease-and-desist order in Superior Court pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 25-829(f). Likewise, nothing in this order prevents the initiation of a proceeding against the landlord in accordance with Chapter 16C of Title 7 of the D.C. Official Code. Finally, nothing in this Order prevents the filing of criminal charges against persons or businesses that participated in the offenses identified in this matter.

District of Columbia
Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Board

Donovan Anderson, Chairperson

Silas Grant, Jr., Member

Ryan Jones, Member

David Meadows

David Meadows, Member

I dissent from the position taken by the majority of the Board. I believe the facts of this case merit the immediate revocation of the license.

Teri Janine Quinn

Teri Janine Quinn, Member

Any party adversely affected may file a Motion for Reconsideration of this decision or other motion permitted by law within ten days of service of this Order. If a motion is filed, the opposing party may file a response within seven days. If a response is filed, the movant may file a reply within three days. All filings should be served on all parties to the matter and delivered to the Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Administration, 899 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 4200-A, Washington, D.C. 20002, or sent by email to abca.legal@dc.gov. Parties are further advised that the failure to properly serve the other parties or to present all matters of record that have allegedly been erroneously decided in a motion for reconsideration may result in the waiver of those matters being considered by the Board. The Board also reserves the right to summarily deny or not consider multiple and repetitive motions.

In addition to filing a Motion for Reconsideration, pursuant to § 11 of the District of Columbia Administrative Procedure Act, Pub. L. 90-614, 82 Stat. 1209, D.C. Official Code § 2-510 (2001), and Rule 15 of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, a party that is adversely affected may have the right to appeal this Order by filing a petition for review, within 30 days of the date of service of this Order, with the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, located at 430 E Street,

N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. Parties are advised that the timely filing of a Motion for Reconsideration stays the time for filing a petition for review in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals until the Board rules on the motion. See D.C. App. Rule 15(b) (2004).

Parties are also advised that the Superior Court of the District of Columbia may have jurisdiction to hear appeals in non-contested cases or in matters where that court is specifically provided jurisdiction by law. Finally, advisory neighborhood commissions (ANCs) are advised that their right to appeal or challenge a decision of the Board may be limited by the laws governing ANCs. See e.g., D.C. Code § 1-309.10.

Comprehensive Remediation Plan For:

Friendship Heights Convenience Store, LLC

Friendship Heights Convenience Store (License No. 122502)

Submitted to: Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Board

Addressed to: Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Administration (ABCA)

Premises: 5252 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20015

Licensee: Friendship Heights Convenience Store, LLC

Date: November 4, 2025

I. Purpose of the Remediation Plan

This remediation plan is submitted in response to the Board's findings in Board Order Nos. 2023-702 and 2024-001, and the subsequent summary revocation and closure order issued in 2025. The licensee acknowledges the seriousness of the violations identified, accepts responsibility for past compliance failures, and proposes corrective measures to ensure the establishment will never again engage in, permit, or tolerate illegal cannabis sales or any other activity posing a danger to public health or safety.

II. Acknowledgment of Violations

1. Cannabis and cannabis products were illegally sold and distributed within the licensed premises.
2. The products lacked proper source and testing labels as required by D.C. Code § 7-1671.08(g)(2)(C)–(D).
3. The establishment failed to comply with a prior cease-and-desist order issued December 13, 2023, and reaffirmed January 10, 2024.
4. Around October 2025 the establishment then permitted Dabbers Club to use a separate space in the rear of the convenience store to run their online pickup store.
5. These actions created an imminent danger to public health and safety.

III. Immediate Corrective Actions Taken

- Termination of all cannabis-related operations: All cannabis, hemp-derived, and cannabis-infused products have been permanently removed from the premises and destroyed in accordance with ABCA and MPD guidance. All relationships with Dabbers Club and related vendors have been terminated.
- Physical remediation of the premises: The back room used for illegal transactions has been dismantled. Surveillance upgraded to 24-hour recording with 30-day retention. All paraphernalia removed.
- Notification and cooperation with law enforcement: The establishment has fully cooperated with ABCA Investigators and MPD, and will provide written confirmation of product destruction and inspection results.

IV. Long-Term Compliance and Prevention Measures

- Compliance Training and Certification: All employees and management will complete ABCA-approved Responsible Alcohol Service and Compliance Training within 30 days prior to reopening. Quarterly compliance audits will be documented.
- Compliance Consultant: The owner of the store, Haile Negash, will personally perform semi-annual audits for two years, with reports submitted to ABCA.
- Revised Employee Policy Manual: A zero-tolerance policy for illegal substances and non-compliance has been adopted. All employees will sign acknowledgment forms.

- Security and Monitoring Enhancements: Installation of interior/exterior surveillance cameras, ID-verification technology, and weekly managerial compliance checks.

V. Verification and Reporting

Within 30 days of ABCA approval of this plan, a full compliance inspection by ABCA investigators will be requested. Quarterly progress reports for 24 months will summarize staffing, security logs, compliance audit findings, and any corrective actions.

VI. Future Licensing Conditions (Proposed)

6. Strict prohibition of any cannabis, hemp, or any THC-containing products on site.
7. Mandatory quarterly compliance reporting for two years.
8. Automatic revocation upon any substantiated future violation.

VII. Statement of Accountability

"I, Hailemaryam Negash, acknowledge the grave nature of these violations and the Board's duty to protect the public. I am committed to restoring trust through transparent cooperation, documented compliance, and permanent elimination of all unlicensed or unlawful activities at my premises."

VIII. Attachments

- Photographs showing physical remediation of the back-room area
- Draft employee policy manual excerpt
- Proposed ABCA inspection checklist

Submitted by: _____

Name: Hailemaryam Negash

Owner of Friendship Heights Convenience Store, LLC

5252 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20015

Email: Hailenegash05@gmail.com | Phone: 202-421-7356

Date: November 4, 2025