



December 11, 2018

Key Vote NO on the Conference Report for the Agriculture and Nutrition Act, H.R. 2

On behalf of FreedomWorks activists nationwide, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and urge them to vote NO on the conference report for the Agriculture and Nutrition Act, H.R. 2, otherwise known as the “Farm Bill.” This bill expands millions in wasteful and unnecessary subsidies, and contains no conservative reforms on work requirements for food stamps.

One of the key features of the House-passed Farm Bill was that it reinstated work requirements for beneficiaries of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), otherwise known as food stamps. This change would have helped move Americans from poverty into sustainable, paying jobs. Despite passing the House of Representatives, this important reform was stripped out in the conference report, leaving one of the only conservative victories out of the final text.

Another conservative reform left out of this conference report was a provision to require that subsidy recipients actually be farmers. Instead, this bill allows farms and agri-businesses to designate numerous “farm managers” to be eligible for up to \$125,000 per year in subsidies, even if they have not stepped foot on a farm all year. It also doubles down on waste by allowing all first cousins, nieces, and nephews of farmers to be eligible for this money as well.

Hard-earned American taxpayer dollars are being used to fund people who have done no farming at all.

Proponents of this Farm Bill argue that it will help hard-working small farmers across the country. However, conferees refused to lower the adjusted gross income limit (AGI) on farmers who can receive subsidies. Now, farmers who make up to \$900,000 per year, or \$1.8 million for married couples, can still receive government handouts from this Farm Bill. This is not helping our nation’s farmers. It is pure welfare for wealthy agri-businesses and joint ventures.

Currently, 94 percent of farm support flows to only six commodities, which only account for 28 percent of production. This means roughly two thirds of the agricultural sector operates with minimal or no government support and does just fine. Furthermore, 60 percent of subsidies go to the top 10 percent of farms in terms of size. Continuation and expansion of these programs does

not serve to help small family farms. It serves to line the pockets of special interests, and prevent small farms from gaining access to market share and affordable land. This is the predictable result of central planning such as this.

Also, given our current out-of-control government spending, American taxpayers cannot afford to continue to use billions of dollars to prop up failing agri-businesses. The subsidies programs, as bloated and wasteful as they are now, will increase in cost by over one billion over the next ten years. This is inexcusable given our crushing national debt.

The process used to usher in this Farm Bill should also concern all members of Congress and all Americans. Congress scheduled votes on this bill mere hours after the conferees released hundreds of pages of dense bill text. There has been no time for anyone to get into the weeds of what else this bill might entail. Congressional leadership has decided to win key debates over reforms in back rooms, instead of on the floor of either chamber in the public eye.

FreedomWorks will count vote for this bill on our 2018 Congressional Scorecard. The scorecard is used to determine eligibility for the FreedomFighter Award, which recognizes Members of the House and Senate who consistently vote to support economic freedom and individual liberty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks