



April 30, 2020

## **Support the Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption (PRIME) Act, H.R. 2859 and S. 1620**

On behalf of FreedomWorks' activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and senators ask them to cosponsor the Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption (PRIME) Act, H.R. 2859 and S. 1620, introduced in the House by Reps. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) and Chellie Pingree (D-Maine) and in the Senate by Sens. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Angus King (I-Maine). The PRIME Act would directly help address currently-breaking meat supply chains.

Federal regulations have directly led to a massive centralization of the meat processing industry. In 1967, when Congress passed the Wholesome Meat Act, there were more than 10,000 meat processing facilities in the United States. The new federal law preempted state regulation by requiring either that a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspector be present at any meat processing site, or that states enact inspections regimes "equal to" USDA requirements - even for meat not intended for sale outside of the state.

These inspection requirements imposed costs that many small processors were unable to bear, and now fewer than 4,000 slaughter facilities exist. As a result, small livestock farmers often have to drive their stock hours to get to the nearest state-approved slaughterhouse, imposing costs upon them as well that drastically favor their large competitors and make supply chains both more centralized and more fragile.

Smaller, custom slaughter and processing facilities can operate locally only if their products are intended for individual consumption or that of family and friends - but not for retail. The PRIME Act simply lifts this restriction so that meat processed by state-licensed facilities can be distributed for retail -- within that state's borders only -- without USDA input.

Of his bill when it was introduced in May 2019, Rep. Massie said, "It is time to open our markets to give producers the freedom to succeed and consumers the freedom to choose." It was time then, and it is even more so time now. Early on in the coronavirus crisis, Rep. Massie warned of

the inevitable meat shortages that our country was due to face, which insight he has as a cattle-raiser himself with intricate knowledge of how meat supply chains work.

“I’ll tell you why there will be shortages. Right now there aren’t shortages because there was a supply of meat that was destined for restaurants, and the demand at the restaurants was curtailed when they were shut down,” Rep. Massie explained to Breitbart. “It’s frozen meat, and [restaurants] are repackaging it and diverting that supply to the grocery stores. That supply is going to run out.” Now, it is recognized more broadly that this is in fact becoming a reality.

By simply allowing individual states the freedom to permit intrastate distribution of meats to consumers, including restaurants and grocery stores, the PRIME Act would result in smaller meat processors filling in many of the gaps that have been created in the meat supply chain.

Avoiding food shortages at all times, but especially during this crisis, is essential to the integrity of our nation. Fortunately, much that is in the way of avoiding a meat shortage is government regulation that can be undone by the common sense bipartisan and bicameral PRIME Act.

For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and ask them to cosponsor the Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption (PRIME) Act, H.R. 2859 and S. 1620.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adam Brandon  
President, FreedomWorks