House Agriculture marks Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026

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Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, good evening. Everybody being for a gavel in If you'd allow me that just want to offer, offer a little prayer over our members and our and the proceedings of that we're engaged in here, most Heavenly Father, we, we thank You for Your protections and your guidance. Lord, this evening, we, we lift up with mournful hearts our friend Doug LaMalfa, and Lord, we take comfort in fact that he was a man of God and a man of strong faith, and we know that he is in your loving arms. We pray for his family.

We lift up the the Jackson family and Jonathan and his family with the loss of his father. And we do we, we just, we also lift up the Baird family and lift up Doctor Baird with the passing away of his wife, this in the last couple days, and be with you know, Lord, be with them. Be with all those families and provide them comfort during the difficult times. Lord, we, we lift up our our the folks in this country that provide us food and fiber and energy, the American farmer and rancher we, we know they're struggling.

We know they're having some difficult times. Lord, I lift up every member of of this committee, your scripture says, you know our prayers before we speak them. And I just ask that you, you know, minister to each one whatever those needs might be, and provide us discernment as we engage in the incredible work of as members of the Agriculture Committee, of really being stewards of of what you have provided us through through agriculture. And I pray all this in the name of my savior, Jesus, Christ, Amen, right.

Here we go. The meeting will come to order. We're meeting today to consider H.R. 7567 the food farm and National Security Act of 2026 I note that a quorum is present, and each member has before them copies the material on our agenda today at their place on the rostrum, without objection, the Chair may recess the committee subject to the call of the Chair

at any point during this meeting, I now recognize myself for an opening statement. Good evening, everyone.

Today we will consider the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 I appreciate all of you for your flexibility and dedication and rescheduling this mark up after last week's bad weather before we begin once again, want to acknowledge the empty seat in the room. Mr. Doug LaMalfa was a staunch advocate for agriculture and a dear friend, and his presence today is dearly missed. Also want to thank Mr. Newhouse for stepping up as our new Chair for the Subcommittee on forestry and horticulture. Would also like to say, Send my sincere condolences to Congressman Baird after the untimely passing of his wife, Denise Jim, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

And I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the passing of the father of a great member of this committee, Jonathan Jackson, whose father was a civil rights Leader Reverend Jesse Jackson. Jonathan Penny and I lift you and your family up in prayer for the loss of your father. The importance of what we're doing today as a committee cannot be overstated. I.

It is clear that the policies of 2018 are no match for the two Cha for the challenges of 2026 and an update to the 2018 Farm Bill is long overdue. The bill we're delivering today didn't spontaneously appear in the halls of Congress. It was formed in the fields, pastures and town halls of our country. We visited 43 states and one territory, probably over 150 different listening sessions altogether out while crafting the new Farm Bill and every provision is directly informed by what we learned from our stakeholders.

This is evident by the overwhelming support this legislation has received from the broad stakeholder community. To date, over 200 organizations have come out in support of this bill, the farm food and National Security Act, 2026 is very similar to its namesake in 2024 with key updates for 2026 the provision span across all 12 titles of the Farm Bill and building on the historic agriculture investments, including working families tax cuts this past summer, this bill restores regulatory certainty in the interstate marketplace, expands investments in rural communities and bring science based backed management back to our national forest Farm Bill programs will Improve risk management tools for specialty crop producers low energy costs in rural America and prioritize American commodities in the global

stage. Importantly, the new Farm Bill will also expand producers access to credit, promote new technologies like precision agriculture, and enhance conservation programs for working lands. Most of all, this is a practical Farm Bill that provides real and workable solutions.

It is inspired by 149 bipartisan marker bills this in addition to the many bipartisan priorities included in the Farm Bill that didn't have formal marker bills filed. And I'm proud of the input and contribution to this bill for members on both sides of the aisle since releasing the text of this legislation, this legislation has been mischaracterized in the press at times, and one of the most common misconceptions is related to the nutrition title. So I like to clear up any confusion about that. Now, several investments across nutrition programs in 2024 bill, we're not able to be include this bill due to budgetary constraints and the inability to have bipartisan dialogue on offsets.

This includes several my priorities, including exemptions earned from employment and training programs and and from adult children in the household, from counting towards SNAP eligibility. We also were not able to restore access to SNAP for certain formerly incarcerated individuals. Other provisions left out included crucial changes to strengthen program integrity and SNAP unfortunately, I was formed that none of these provisions were a priority of the Ranking Member and that's why the bill before us today is different than a bill two years ago, and while we have not abandoned these priorities, more work is needed to ensure these investments are responsibly funded. It is irresponsible to move forward a bill that increases mandatory spending with no offsets.

Also need to address the recent misguided reporting of conservation funding. Let me be clear, there are no cuts to the conservation title. Anyone saying otherwise is improperly analyzing the CBO score through the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, Republicans provide a historic investment into the permanent baseline of the conservation programs and proxy 24% increase to the baseline legislation before you can contains an increase across the board in conservation funding, compared to the farm food and National Security Act of 2024 and the 2018 Farm Bill, while we were limited in the reconciliation process, this proposal includes the Bipartisan Policy improvements to assist beginning farmers, advanced soil Health Initiatives

protect private forest lands and fund advancements in conservation technology. This title is widely supported by farmers, ranchers, foresters, sportsman and the environmental community.

There's a lot of good being done here in this bill, across all 12 titles, and for the good of the people we represent, I encourage all of you to vote based on what is in the bill, instead of based on what is not in the bill.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

You know the Ranking Members to announce this bill because it doesn't contain year round e 15, doesn't provide emergency assistance for farmers and doesn't change the tariff policy. I'm very supportive of all three of those things. It's just not our jurisdiction. If we were to broach those topics, we would need to be not the Agriculture Committee, but Energy and Commerce appropriations, and ultimately, Ways and Means Committee.

And those are items outside of our jurisdiction, not that I wouldn't like to see them get done in this Congress. Throughout the creation of this Farm Bill was an open and honest process. My door was open to anyone who had practical, actionable items for. Improving AG policy, every member was given the opportunity to provide input, and if I didn't receive your priorities, that comes down to a breakdown in party leadership.

However, this weather display has been a blessing in disguise. After hearing claims from over 300 democratic priorities that were not brought forward, I was shocked when my outreach to identify this list was ignored, I took action. So over the last week, I've been able to work individually with many of my Democratic colleagues to hear priorities that were not communicated to me over the last eight months of negotiations. I believe your dialogue will be fruitful for our process.

Today, if you are disappointed a priority is not addressed in the text, please know that I understand as the bill is missing many of my priorities as well, but we must not let perfect be the enemy of good. Today, I hope the committee will work its will to improve this legislation and incorporate additional feedback from the many voices we represent. Members on both

sides will offer amendments with policies I support. However, I will reluctantly have to oppose any proposal that is not additive to the process and violates my goal of a bipartisan, cost neutral Farm Bill.

Today is a step forward among many more to come. I commit to work with everyone who approaches the table in good faith, and all as I have always done as we meet the moment for our farmers, ranchers, foresters and consumers again, thank you all for your work and engagement. Thus far, our farmers, ranchers and rural communities are relying on us to step up and advocate for them as we work through 12. The 12 titles of this bill now recognize distinguished Ranking Member the gentlelady from Minnesota, Ms. Craig for any opening remarks that she may have.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Chairman, before I begin my opening remarks, I'd like to take a moment as well to acknowledge the unfortunate and track it tragic loss this committee and its members have experienced in recent weeks. Doug LaMalfa, who is no longer with us, but will always be with us. Jim Baird is attending, of course, to his family due to the recent passing of his wife, Denise and Jonathan Jackson, whose father, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, also died recently, my heart and the minority committee, our heart goes out to them and their families.

I'd also like to take a moment to acknowledge the brave men and women of the US Armed Forces currently in harm's way, and the six who have already tragically lost their lives in the war with Iran. Mr. Chairman, as we consider this legislation, it's important for us to stay take stock of where we are today. And I just want to say I'm not going to get in a rebuttal of process here, but 10% of our priorities that were handed to you were actually included into this bill. And over the last several weeks, instead of coming to committee, staff or myself, your committee has gone straight to our members for some of those priorities we gave to you months ago to try to cut a deal to get them to support an absolutely flawed Farm Bill.

So we don't need to get into it this early into a Farm Bill mark up. But I think perhaps your committee staff, and the fact that they never actually handed

us this text in this entire process, we saw it the night before the public did, and only because I complained publicly about seeing it at the very same time. Tells everyone what this is. It is not been a bipartisan process.

So with that, I want to start by saying, when you talk to farmers or farm groups, people who buy groceries or nutrition groups, the message we hear everywhere is the same, American AG and rural communities are hurting, despite the administration's claims, all is not well in farm country, commodity prices are well below the cost of production. Farm incomes are declining. Input costs remain high, and farm bankruptcies are up 46% over last year. Americans of all walks of life are facing an affordability crisis, and much of this is the result of economic and trade policies enacted by this administration and enabled by Republicans in this Congress, Mr. Chairman, it didn't have to be this way.

The Republicans could have rejected the administration's global trade war that's devastated family farms and businesses across the country for the past year. The Supreme Court has now affirmed what we already knew, Congress, not the President, has the authority to levy tariffs. The President's trade war has been illegal this entire time, and Republicans have given up their power. My Republican colleagues should have fought to expand domestic markets not allow our largest trade partners to be pushed into the arms of our biggest agriculture competitors.

And Republicans should have worked with Democrats to pass a five year, 12 title Farm Bill. Instead, we are here to mark up a so-called Skinny Farm Bill, the last pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of a Farm Bill. It didn't have to be this way. There are many policies this Congress could undertake to fix what bad policy and partisanship have caused.

Despite making massive cuts to title four in the so-called Big Beautiful Bill and extending and modifying additional farm programs outside the regular process, Democrats entered into good faith negotiations with the majority. It was my sincere hope that we could agree on what we could agree on, and leave out the more controversial elements of this bill that present issues for support for both some Democrats and Republicans. Today, we could move forward with the farm and family Relief Act. Today, we could pass year round e 15 today, we could amend and remove the poison pills in this bill.

Sadly, Republicans seem determined to continue down the partisan path which leads us to the bill before us today and that we are about to mark up. To be fair, there are some bipartisan provisions in this bill, which I appreciate because I led efforts on them, codifying the reconnect program to expand broadband access for rural Americans, making crop insurance more affordable and accessible for our veterans and the pace act to improve credit and increase USDA loan limits. But despite those bipartisan elements of this bill, it represents a missed opportunity to address the most pressing challenges that our family, farmers and our families are facing, and it contains those provisions that we know many Democrats will not support, and for the record, that many Republicans are hearing from the MaHA community about as well, this bill will not restore lost export markets or lower input costs. It doesn't help American children, seniors and veterans afford their groceries, or states and counties avoid an unfunded mandate that we this body, Republican led body, shifted those SNAP costs to them.

The bill ignores hemp farmers in Minnesota and elsewhere who followed the law and innovated in a new marketplace and whose entire supply chains and businesses are now under threat. It rolls back provisions from the 2024 Farm Bill that provide tribes with more access to USDA programs. My sincere hope is that the Senate will provide us a product that better meets the needs of the American farmer and rural communities, and that in the end, we can get a bipartisan product signed into law. I cannot vote for this bill today, but I remain hopeful that in the end, we will get the product that America's farmers and working people deserve Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back the bill. H.R. 7567 the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 is now before the committee for consideration, without objection. The first reading of the bill will be waived, and it will be open for an amendment on a title by title basis, and after that for amendment at any point, I'd like to remind members that only amendments germane to the subject matter before us today shall be in order, no motion or proposition on a subject different than that under consideration shall be submitted Under the color of amendment pursuant to committee Rule three, aye and House Rule 11, clause 2, the Chair may postpone further proceedings today on the question of approving any measure or matter or adopting an amendment

which is recorded, which a recorded vote is ordered, and, without objection, we will vote on amendments using an electronic voting system. I now recognize myself to offer a manager's amendment to H.R. 7567 which is at each member spot on the rostrum.

This this amendment includes amendments that are technical nature or to address scoring implications, without objection. The reading of the amendment is waived as any member wish to speak on the manager's amendment?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Off to a good start, seeing none. The question is now on the manager's amendment. All in favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed by saying no, in the opinion of the Chair the ayes have it and the manager amendment is agreed to moving on to general debate, any member who wishes, who wishes to speak on the bill will be recognized under the five minute roll.

Do members have remarks on the bill?

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want to take a moment and reflect on just how important the Farm Bill process is to our constituents and the American people. Just two weeks ago, massive wildfires ripped through Western Oklahoma and up into Kansas. Hundreds of thousands of acres were burned, homes, community centers were destroyed, and first responders in my district were injured on the job. It was truly devastating.

But this is certainly not the first time a disaster of this magnitude has occurred in Oklahoma, and I know I'm not the only member here whose district has been devastated by wildfires or other natural disasters. But

events like these serve as reminder to us that the programs we get to review in the Farm Bill discussions matter in more ways than we often realize. The permanent livestock program like Li P and LFP provide financial relief to producers who experience livestock and pasture losses through no fault of their own. Without these programs, producers would suffer undue economic hardship when they need assistance the most.

However, we have an opportunity today to vote for a bill that goes much farther than just disaster recovery. The bill before us is 802 pages of policy that is aimed at making life better back home, to name a few provisions among many, this bill reauthorizes a suite of critical research, rural development and credit programs that will invest in our communities and create rural resiliency for decades to come. This bill also focuses on expanding and investing into market access programs of bar r and it ensures that voluntary conservation programs continue to reflect the needs of producers. The bottom line is, all of these programs under review today make a difference.

I want everyone in this room and those who are listening online be reminded just how much this bill will impact you, your neighbors and our friends across the country. I've had the honor of serving on this committee since May of 1994 and since then, I've authored one Farm Bill and parts of four others. I've set through a total of eight markups, and I've endured sweet victories and some very painful losses. So I know firsthand that the journey we have before us will not be easy, but it will certainly be worthwhile.

I thank the Chairman for bringing forth this bill today, and I look forward to getting it across the finish line. And with that, I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chairman. Gentleman yells back, now recognize Congressman David Scott for five minutes.

Rep. David Scott (D-Ga.)

Well, thank you. Thank you baby. Thank you. Chairman Thompson, first of all, it's absolutely crucial that our committee pass a Farm Bill that first of all helps our farmers, our farmers are suffering, and also provides stability and ensures food security for our great nation.

However, as written, I believe this bill fails on both our administration's disastrous trade policies are causing a farm crisis. Reckless tariffs have resulted in multiple trade wars and a staggering loss of international markets, buyers have already abandoned our American farmers, and instead, they've turned to our competitors like Brazil and Argentina. Unfortunately, this bill does not provide additional economic assistance for our farmers, for our producers who were hurt the most by these tariffs and further the bill continues the majority's attacks on federal nutrition programs like SNAP, ladies and gentlemen last year, Republicans cut $187 billion in funding from SNAP, the single largest cut to a nutrition assistance program in American history. However, instead of return storing the 180 $7 million in SNAP cuts passed in H.R. 1, this Farm Bill removes positive investments, including in the.

House 2024 Farm Bill. And at a time when families are facing higher prices at the grocery store, the bill eliminates increased funding for the emergency food as program and Gus NP, and Lord knows, I'm extremely disappointed that this Farm Bill does not make our history making 1890s Student Scholarship Program permanent. Ladies and gentlemen the 1890 land grant colleges and university are an important part of the history of our great nation. Let me tell you, this scholarship fund is an incredible example of what we Democrats and Republicans can achieve through bipartisanship.

You all were here and when we created the amendment to make the scholarship program permanent and to increase the funding, and since it was created in 2018 the 1890 scholarships have helped African American students earn degrees and begin their degrees in Agriculture and Food Sciences. It is crucial that we ensure that this program goes into the future. It is the greatest example of black members of Congress, white members of Congress, Republican members of Congress, Democrats of members of common doing one of the greatest achievements in the history. It tells the greatness of our nation.

When William Tecumseh Sherman tore up the South, he said, went to President Lincoln and said, We got to restore it. And William Tecumseh Sherman and President Lincoln got together and they established the state colleges. But in the 1890s separate, but eco came, and everywhere in the south, they had put a white college, they put a black one. That is what we have here.

Now, I also want to thank you and this committee. President Trump endorsed it, and I hope Chairman you and maybe some of my Republican friends will give me an opportunity to speak with the President. Thank him, but he always talks about the work he's done on this bill. We got to get it done.

Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman's time has expired. Now recognize the other gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Austin Scott, for five minutes,

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank you for your work on H.R. 1, which included some historic wins for American farmers. And I want to highlight a few of those wins, the committee achieved the first meaningful investments of the farm safety net since 2002 in H.R. 1. These investments were long past due and necessary to help producers respond to increased cost of equipment, fertilizer and fuel through H.R. 1, we increased reference prices between 10 and 20% and we enhanced agriculture Risk Coverage Program authorized 30 million new base acres and made a $6 billion investment in crop insurance. With H.R. 1, we're able to extend a much needed helping hand to the American farmer.

Now here's how this additional language will help credit. As we've seen in the last five years, higher interest rates have driven up borrowing costs and narrow production margins for producers around the country. In the credit title. We enhance financing options for producers through updates to loan limits, expanding access to ensuring faster turn around times.

We support beginning, young and small farmers by streamlining access and cutting red tape. We reauthorize and improve the heirs property relending program, based on my colleague from Georgia Representative Sanford Bishop's bill, the heirs act. We create an expanded approval pilot program that streamlines access to capital, which includes provisions from a bill that I authored, H.R. 7475 that addresses the bridge loan gap that was highlighted during Representative Davids in my subcommittee hearing on financing farm operations in July, we have a lot of special. Crop wins.

As you know, specialty crop producers have been a historically underserved group due to challenges in developing a specialty crop safety net through the establishment of a specialty crop Advisory Committee and especially crop coordinator, this Farm Bill will help address the gaps in the safety net and enhance the effectiveness of programs, as well as improve and expand insurance program for our specialty crop producers. I also want to mention the ready to use therapeutic foods. I'd like to mention a letter from the American peanut, dairy and soy producers thanking the committee for the inclusion of language that advances the use and procurement of American made ready to use therapeutic foods, also known as R u TF. This provision allows us to continue saving the lives of children around the world while supporting American jobs and American growers.

I have seen firsthand the critical role R u TF plays in addressing global malnutrition, and I am proud to have manna, one of the leading suppliers of this nutrition in my district. They are the largest R u TF manufacturer in the United States of America. I want to talk about the bipartisanship of this bill, specifically titles one, five and 11. Some on the other side of the aisle have called this bill partisan.

They've said it's full of poison pills. I want to set the record straight for the Americans that are watching this. My subcommittee, the subcommittee I'm privileged to Chair, the general farm commodities, risk management and credit subcommittee works on titles one, five and 11. Title One commodities includes language from five bipartisan bills and no partisan bills.

Title Five credit includes language from eight bipartisan bills. Title 11 crop insurance includes language from four bipartisan bills. Now, unlike what some Democrats would have you believe, this bipartisanship continues throughout the rest of the titles, this may go down for people who actually

look at the facts as the most bipartisan Farm Bill ever, Mr. Chairman, I'm committed to work with anybody who will work in good faith, as I know you are to include additional provisions in this bill. I want to thank you for your leadership.

Chairman Thompson, I want to thank you for the work you did in H.R. 1, and I want you to know that I look forward to working with you to carry this bill the rest of the way across the floor and have it signed into the law. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back now. Please recognize gentleman from California, Mr. Costa, for five minutes. Thank you very much.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I want to associate my comments with the Chair and the Ranking Member for the families of LaMalfa Baird and Jackson, we mourn in their losses and pray for them and the men and women who are serving in harm's way during this action of War. Let me begin by saying that folks are hurting in farm country. As a third generation farmer, I can tell you, every week I go home and I interact with my farm community, and times are tough and bankruptcies are up, and normally, I think most of you, I would hope, know that I'm enthusiastic.

I try to be enthusiastic about American agriculture, but I'm not enthusiastic about this markup. I can't help but restate that the damage that's been done, I think, over this last year, to our democracy under this administration, includes a failed tariff strategy, taking away SNAP and demolishing agencies dedicated to diplomacy like us, I aid and other humanitarian efforts, just to name a few. It's unfortunate that we have to be in this room less than a year to debate whether it's right to cut programs to ensure Americans have access to food people who are food insecure. It's not right, Mr. Chairman, we must restore regular order and think that that's part of America's safety net, Compounding this ill advised reorganization that is happening with the United States Department of Agriculture, and yet we have not had one single oversight hearing to receive.

And I am receiving calls with regards to farm service agency offices that are not fully open or staffed or even closed, as to this riding the USDA to urge them to make sure that they remain open. This is a vital link, a lifeline for our AG communities to farm programs. It's our job today, I think that we sit here and debate the pros and cons of this bill that sits before us with the recent Supreme Court ruling on tariffs, Congress must not continue to abdicate its role as a coequal branch of government. It's time that stops.

Congress has the power of the purse, which is why we must restore the SNAP funding that was cut and provide resources not only to our farmers, our ranchers, dairy men and women that desperately are in need in my district, California's 21st it's the number one staff. Snap district in California, with nearly 30% of the households participate an interesting dichotomy and credible agricultural production, but a lot of people who are food insecure, and therefore it's important to note that through the entire state, there's 5.5 million people in California that rely on SNAP as a part of their safety net. Think about that as always I said, food is a national security issue, and we must look at each title as a foundation to Americans production of food and fiber. It's imperative that we find a path forward to restore the food safety no net programs along with the commodity programs, and it's the glue that has kept the Farm Bill together since 1973 whether we can put that toothpaste back in the tube remains to be seen.

It's also America's safety net in the state of California, our farmers and ranchers dairy men and women are produced half the nation's fruits and vegetables. 20% of our dairy production in the country comes from California. 80% of the citrus production specialty crops, clearly, is California leading with over 400 different commodities we produced last year, 61 and a half billion dollars at the farm gate, and over 24 billion was exported. These tariffs are hurting our farmers throughout the country, and I cannot comprehend how it is a plan in this United States Department of organic reorganization plan that we really locate DC based staff to five regional hubs, five regional hubs, yet not one of those hubs.

Includes California, the number one agricultural state in the nation, the top AG exporting state in the nation, and the top nation recipients of SNAP Give me a break, Madam Secretary of Agriculture, come before this committee and justify your reorganization effort and explain to us what the purpose and what the efficiencies will achieve. I'm at a loss. I would like to submit for the

record, Mr. Chairman, two letters that I've submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture to come and explain what her reorganization plan is all about Without objection. Thank you.

Let me close by saying that it's imperative that we try to work together. This is my fourth Farm Bill, and I think we have to try to find a path forward over the next several months between efforts that are going on in the Senate, and I think some of the some of the land mines that we have in this bill here, or some people call points and pills, hopefully, will be worked out. It's my intent to continue to try to work on a bipartisan effort so that we can sustain the agriculture economy in America, which is food is a national security issue, and I yield back the balance of

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

My time. Thank you, and gentleman's time has expired. Now recognize gentleman from Martin saw

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

Mr. Crawford for five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the sake of time, I've uploaded my opening statement to YouTube page.

I'm going to encourage my colleagues to go and look at it's awesome. And I support the bill and encourage my colleagues to do the same yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. And I'll be sure to check that out. Now. Please recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. McGovern, for five minutes.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to speak directly to the MaHA movement, to the millions of Americans who voted to make America healthy again. I'm a Democrat. I know we don't agree on everything, but I think we share some common ground, because I share your outrage.

I think it is wrong that ultra processed junk is cheaper than fresh food, and I'm sick and tired of Big AG profiting off pesticides while small family farms get squeezed out of business. I'm disgusted by corporations pumping toxins into our air and water. Chronic disease and cancer are sky rocketing while our government cheers them on. And I believe the direction this Farm Bill is going, the direction this country is going under Republican leadership, is a betrayal of Maha I can point to example after example, P fast, toxic forever chemicals, they're linked to endocrine disruption, decreased fertility, lower sperm counts.

I've been working on eliminating PFAs for years after my constituents got cancer from PFAs in his fire fighting gear. Maha moms and influencers thankfully helped propel PFAs into public debate, and instead of siding with Maha What did this administration do? They delayed setting limits for PFAs in our drinking water. Who knows?

Why? Maybe ask the chemical companies. A lot of people don't know this, but a lot of pesticides have PFAs in them. How about how about glyphosate?

For years, many of us have been sounding the alarm. It's another toxic chemical sprayed on our food. It's the main ingredient and Roundup, there's dozens of class action lawsuits, because we now know that for decades, chemical companies hid the fact. That roundup causes cancer again, many in MAHA have rightly spoken out.

So can a single Republican on this committee tell me why Donald Trump issued an executive order to expand production of glyphosate and now, big surprise, we have a Farm Bill that doubles down. This bill grants corporate immunity to the chemical companies. Look it up, title 10, section 10 205 section 10 206 goes on to prevent localities from regulating pesticides. Section 10 207 allows more toxic chemicals to be dumped into our water.

Section after section of this bill, one giveaway after another to the pesticide companies. What lobbyist asked for this was that drafted in the Monsanto board room or something, follow the money. Follow the money. Big AG and chemical companies are two sides of the same coin, all part of the same corrupt machine.

One makes the chemicals, the other profits from driving family farms out of business. Both sides buy off politicians, and both sides profit when the rules are rigged against the little guys, and that's exactly what this Farm Bill does. The chemical giveaways are tied at the hip to a larger, more structural problem with this Farm Bill, it does nothing to improve our food system. Now let's move on to nutrition, because I have limited time here.

Seniors who take pills on an empty stomach wind up in the emergency room. Working people who can't afford to buy healthy food end up with chronic disease. Kids who are hungry don't learn so clearly, clearly, hunger and health are intricately linked, which is common sense, you can't be healthy if you're hungry. But this Farm Bill, instead of addressing our hunger crisis in this country, 42 million Americans who can't afford food, this bill makes the crisis worse.

Last year, Republicans made the largest cut to nutrition assistance in American history, veterans, family with teens, seniors, people aging out of foster care, all kicked off food assistance in Massachusetts, thousands of people are losing access to food this month because Republicans took their food assistance away in order to give billionaires another tax break. And by the way, when it comes to students, I've introduced a bill to boost school meal reimbursement rates. That would mean more scratch cook meals, more local foods in our cafeterias. Not a single Republican will co-sponsor it.

Your Farm Bill rewards the same broken system that made America sick in the first place. Your Farm Bill empowers big AG and enables them to keep dumping toxins in our food. Your Farm Bill tells local farmers to get bigger get out. Your Farm Bill makes food less healthy and more expensive.

In short, your Farm Bill is a betrayal of Maha now, I'm not here to pretend Democrats are perfect in every issue, but when it comes to standing up against big AG and chemical companies combating hunger and fighting for healthier food. We are a hell of a lot better on these issues. A hell of a lot better this Farm Bill is corporate control with a wellness label slapped on top. And to be blunt, it sucks and the pesticide loop holes and the cuts and nutrition assistance and oppose this Republican Farm Bill, it's a blank check to those who want to protect the broken status quo, and none of us should be complete gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Now recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Rouzer, for five minutes.

Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank you for your leadership. I want to thank the staff for all their work. There's no question agriculture is suffering some dire times. No question about that whatsoever.

And this bill holistically addresses every issue you could possibly address to rectify that situation, other than the issues outside the jurisdiction of the committee. And so I commend you for that. And you know some of our friends on the other side of the aisle, at least, based on what I've heard so far, none of my growers would agree with all that. And in fact, I've got a letter here from the North Carolina Farm Bureau strongly supporting passage of this Farm Bill that I'd like to include for the record.

And with that,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yells back, now recognize gentlelady, Dr. Adams from North Carolina for Friday, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

And before I begin my comments, I do want to express my concern for the and sympathy to all of our members and those who have suffered. And I thank those of you who have expressed concern regarding the loss of my sister. I'm just returning from New Jersey, but thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I've been talking with farmers and families across my district, and what I'm hearing is concerning.

Farmers are facing a lot of uncertainty. Markets are swinging up and down the cost of fertilizer, fuel. And equipment keeps rising. Trade policies have disrupted export markets they spent years building.

Economists warn that costs are climbing. Crop prices are weak, and more farms are going bankrupt, which is not exactly the golden age that was promised. The numbers are stark. Farm bankruptcies Rose 46% in 2025 USDA says 15,000 farms were lost last year alone.

In Pennsylvania, there were 10 farm bankruptcies in 2025 up from just two in 2024 those aren't just numbers. They're family farms shutting down generations of hard work coming to an end, and communities losing part of their foundation. As US farmers struggles, struggle with with shrinking export markets, competitors like Brazil and Argentina have strengthened their foothold, aided by us, bailout initiatives, market share bills over decades have been lost, and this bill does nothing to help farmers win it back right now, farmers are sitting across the table from their bankers trying to secure loans for for the next planning season. They're making big decisions in an unstable environment.

The administration's bailout is not enough, and repeated bailouts are a sign that the underlying system is broken. To make it even more unstable, after the Supreme Court struck down Trump's tariffs last month, he immediately said he was going to impose at 10% global tariff. Then said he it would be 15% and then there was the $175 billion question, unanswered, what's going to happen to the money the government has already collected in import taxes now declared unlawful. Farm groups have been clear they need steady, reliable support, and this bill doesn't provide it, and it's just not farmers who are struggling.

Families feel it every time they go to the grocery store. In my district, the average monthly grocery bill is now over $1,000 the cost of fruits and vegetables alone has gone up more than 5% wages aren't keeping up, and more families are falling behind. Yet this bill doesn't offer offer meaningful help to working families, to seniors, to veterans or people with disabilities trying to afford basic food. But we shouldn't be surprised.

Over the summer, Republicans cut SNAP by $187 billion and shifted more of the costs on to states and counties that are already stretched thin. Governors and state lawmakers, Democrats and Republicans are scrambling to figure out how to keep people fed after 20 years in the General Assembly of North Carolina, I can tell you that states cannot absorb cost like this without cutting other services. And even though this committee heard from

governors and expert witnesses about this issue, this bill does nothing to undo those cuts or delay cost shifts. However, this bill does call for a GAO study on rising SNAP administrative costs, but when Republicans require states to pay 25% more of those costs, the reason is obvious, states don't need another study.

They need resources, and these issues are connected. Nutrition programs aren't just for farmers, for families. They also support farmers, and whether a person uses SNAP to buy food at the local store or farmers markets or USDA purchases commodities through tfap, that money moves through the supply chain. It supports the truck driver, the producer, the grocer and the farmer.

Farmers need customers. Families need food. These programs link the two. In North Carolina alone, more than 9000 individuals and families filed for bankruptcy last year.

That's an 11.4% increase when both farm bankruptcies and family bankruptcies are rising. That's a clear warning sign something isn't working. And beyond what this bill fails to do, we should look at what it includes. It strips states of their right to regulate agriculture by overturning voter approved animal protection measures, even though the Supreme Court already ruled on this issue, it gives broad liability protections to large pesticide companies, limiting the ability of farmers to families, even states to seek accountability.

It's not strong, forward looking Farm Bill that farmers and families deserve, and it does not meet the serious

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Time now recognize the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Kelly, for five minutes.

Rep. Trent Kelly (R-Miss.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your leadership, for bringing this Farm Bill to mark up. I also want to send out my prayers and thoughts with Doug LaMalfa. He'll tell me Hello, Admiral every time he sees me anymore Jim

Baird and his wife and Jonathan Jackson and his beloved Father, this legislation reflects what matters most to Mississippi's farmers, foresters and rural communities, we are blessed with remarkable producers in our state, men and women who work long hours to feed, fuel and clothe this nation. Despite serious economic pressure over the past several years, they have faced one of the toughest farm economies in decades, high input costs and high interest rates that have squeezed margins across the board.

Mr. Chairman, farm or food security is national security. A strong Farm Bill is about more than farm policy. It is about the future of rural America. In Mississippi, agriculture and forestry are economic engines.

They support small businesses, sustain local communities and provide jobs across the entire state. When farmers hurt, rural town hurt, when agriculture is strong, rural America is strong. Title One is foundational. I appreciate that the reference prices were increased in the Big Beautiful Bill.

That was an important step forward. This bill builds on that progress and strengthens the farm safety net to better reflect today's economic realities. I am proud this bill includes H.R. 5468 the community college agriculture Advancement Act. This legislation ensures that community colleges can successfully compete for federal grants to carry out agricultural education, research and outreach activities.

It helps to modernize equipment and infrastructure, supports professional development for faculty and encourage collaboration with land grant universities and other institutions. It also promotes apprenticeships and work based learning opportunity so students can gain hands on experience and move directly into the work force. In rural states like Mississippi, community colleges are often the front door to opportunity, and this bill strengthens that pathway. It also includes H.R. 3476 the forest conversa conservation easement program Act legislation authors create a dedicated tool to keep working forest as forest while remaining privately owned and productive, a major priority for forestry states like Mississippi.

Finally, I want to recognize the leadership of President Trump and USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins, their commitment to rural America and restoring

stability in the farm economy matters. I appreciate the Chairman's leadership, and I proudly support this Farm Bill. Mr. Chairman, I yield back. gentleman yields back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Now recognize the gentlelady from Connecticut. Ms. Hayes for five minutes.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I first like to say I plan to use every second of my time. My constituents have been waiting years for a Farm Bill. They've been waiting for us to get this done, and it is literally our jobs.

So trying to gavel out early in the interest of time is a disservice to the people who have been waiting for us to get this done. Today, we are considering a Farm Bill that fails to address the needs of farmers and families across the country. The Farm Coalition was one that WORKED strengthening our farmers and feeding hungry people. This committee created and reformed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to be the most effective anti-hunger program in the history of this nation, feeding 42 million Americans across the country and lifting millions out of poverty, out of poverty.

Unfortunately, last year, when Republicans advance H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill, it cut SNAP by $187 billion and it was a betrayal of the Farm Bill coalition. But I was not surprised. From the Fiscal Responsibility Act to the 2024 Farm Bill to the reconciliation bill, it has been a top priority for Republicans on this committee to take food away from hungry families, children, veterans and everyone in between. The Farm Bill we're going to mark up is unacceptable and does not meet the moment.

It is filled with partisan poison pills, like a blanket liability exemption for a million dollar pesticide corporations, rolling back the environmental quality initiatives, pro incentives programs, and it includes nothing to address the administration's tariffs and trade wars that are deeply impacting our farmers. Additionally, this legislation does not address the 180 $7 billion in SNAP cuts, which have already seen individuals lose access to benefits during the government shutdown. Many of my colleagues spoke about how their districts were deeply impacted by provision by people not getting their

SNAP benefits, and yet, we come back to this committee and introduce a Farm Bill that does nothing to close that those gaps or address what we learned during that time. This bill does not take into account any feedback from the states and the counties who have been sounding the alarm about the cost shift provisions and the impact Act on the viability of the program in their states.

States will have to make difficult decisions if they want to keep their SNAP programs running, including raising taxes or restricting eligibility. I will be offering a series of amendments to address restoring food security for Americans the administration cost shift to states and the lack of crop insurance provisions for small farmers and others, because there's still time to address these things and improve this legislation before we vote it out of committee. I look forward to productive discussions tonight and tomorrow and the next day and as long as it takes for this markup to conclude, and I hope that we find some bipartisan agreement that improves this bill before we send it to the House floor. And with that, I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Generally yells back, now recognize general from Nebraska, Mr. Bacon, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

I too, we're all going to miss General malfa, his wisdom, his wit, his friendship, and I know he's always played a value, valuable role on this committee. And I too, also offer our condolences to Mr. Baird and to Mr. Jackson. I speak in favor of the Farm Bill. I was here in the 1/15 Congress when we passed the last Farm Bill.

The new one is now two years over date. The last Farm Bill was great, but it's out of date. It needs to be made current again, and this Farm Bill definitely does that. Now, Nebraska, we're the number one of 50 states for beef production.

We're in the top five for pork, corn, soy beans, ethanol, pop corn. It's important. I represent Omaha. It's more.

We got some AG on the sides of Omaha and particularly in Sanders County, but we have tons of agribusiness, and the health, the financial health of our farmers and ranchers directly impact all these agribusinesses in Omaha. So this Farm Bill is also important to this business community. Some of the highlights in this bill, it's going to help out our Nebraska hog producers. It's gonna provide regulatory certainty to various manufacturers.

It's going to transfer Food for Peace to the USDA, and returns the program to its original attempt of addressing the global hunger crisis through the purchase of us grown commodities. It reduces barriers for beginning farmers trying to gain access to credit, first generation farmers who want to get in the door to help them get started, and also incentivizes further research and adoption of precision agriculture technologies. Some of my initiatives include helping farmers navigate the FSA loan application process, financially supporting the Future Farmers of American 4h students, great organizations, enhancing the cybersecurity of our agriculture supply chains more effectively tracking foreign farmland purchases and streamlining the administration of the SNAP program. I am pleased that many of these initiatives have garnered bipartisan backing, and want to thank both my Republican and Democrat colleagues for their support.

I look forward to listening to the debate on these amendments. I look forward to hopefully increasing the bipartisanship with the final bill here. But let's not be fooled. We got to get this Farm Bill passed for our farmers and ranchers.

I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back, now recognize gentlelady from Ohio. Ms. Brown for five minutes.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, the Farm Bill is our opportunity to address the real issues facing farmers and families across the country, yet this effort feels like we're just going through the motions, not doing the hard, thoughtful work the committee owes the people we serve. There was no meaningful

effort to negotiate and put forth a bipartisan product. The bill ignores the alarm bells from farmers and families in red and blue states that our nation's most effective anti-hunger program is at risk after the financial rug was pulled out from under them in H.R. 1, and there's a large, Stark gap between what's in this bill and what producers and growers are experiencing on the ground. The farm economy is under real strain.

Net farm income has fallen sharply. Input costs are up. Export markets have been destroyed thanks to the current trade war, and bankruptcies reached 15,000 last year, with the crisis hitting the hardest in the Midwest. Don't just take my word for it, a group of 27 trusted former USDA and farm group leaders sent a letter to this committee last month expressing concerns about and I quote, harmful and compounding effect that administration policies are having on our farmers.

Mr. Chairman, I request unanimous consent to enter that letter into the record, without objection. Thank you. I share their concerns. Staffing cuts and reorganization at the USDA, continued delay in passing year round e 15 cuts to food aid, both international and domestic, persistent labor challenges, lost markets, deteriorating trade relationships.

These are the same. Concerns I hear reflected on the ground, and this bill fails to address any of them. And of course, we can't talk about the state of the farm economy without talking about tariffs for farmers. The Supreme Court's tariff ruling comes after much of the damage is already done.

For months, they've been operating in chaos markets they spent years building disappeared almost overnight, and it's just like in 2018 buyers are turning to countries like Argentina and Brazil. That's not theoretical, that's lost contracts, lost income, and real uncertainty heading into planting season, producers, growers and ranchers, don't want handouts. They want stability. They want to know that if they grow it, they can sell it.

So when we sit here and talk about what this Farm Bill should do, it ought to start with that reality at the same time, rural communities like those in Southeast Ohio, northern Pennsylvania and central Illinois are being hollowed out by hospital cuts, child care shortages and small business closures. This is not spin. This is the lived reality for farmers and rural families and communities trying to hang on, and this crisis runs from the

farm gate to the dinner plate While farmers struggle to stay afloat. Families in Cleveland are paying more and getting less at the grocery store.

Prices continue to climb for the one in five households in my district who depend on nutrition assistance, that means impossible choices. We haven't had a hearing in this committee on anything touched by the Farm Bill in nearly six months, and the result is a bill that leaves small producers, specialty crop farmers, families and tribal communities behind. And this bill takes new aim at the very partners helping hold communities together. It shifts cost on to charitable food networks like the gold star standard Cleveland Food Bank in my district that already is stretched thin.

It undercuts conservation programs that farmers rely on to manage risk. It short changes research institutions and land grants, including by missing the opportunity to make 1890 scholarships permanent for schools like Ohio's Central State and it is impossible to divorce what we are considering here today from the cuts that Republicans made in H.R. 1 at a time when 47 million Americans are food insecure. This committee chose to crack the Farm Bill coalition in half and use food assistance as a pay for the Farm Bill is supposed to be the foundation of both farm stability and food security, we should be focused on rebuilding the coalition's that reflect the full system and pushing for durable, bipartisan solutions that actually meet the moment. That's how we rebuild trust.

That's how we break this cycle of gridlock, and that's how, after years of delay, we deliver a Farm Bill that actually works for the people it's supposed to serve. Sadly, this bill, and this process falls well short of that standard. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Julie yields back. Now recognize the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Bost for five minutes.

Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the work you've done on the Farm Bill and the positive changes that this will bring to the AG industry, especially folks in my district. I'm proud to represent over 10,000 producers

in one of the most diverse AG districts in Illinois, which is why I look forward to voting in favor of the 2026 Farm Bill and the AG first policies. It includes the 2026 Farm Bills Off, off off the historic investments made in the working families tax cut act include 56 billion into our commodity programs, 6 billion for crop insurance affordability, 285 million per year for AG trade and market Development and the elimination of the death tax our farmers, producers, who produce the food, fuel and fiber that this nation runs on, they play an estimated role in our commodity communities, and it's on only right that we support them and their and have their backs at this time, at The times they need it. That's why this Farm Bill exists.

It isn't for good times, but it is for bad my district is home to stables like corn, soy beans, but also livestock, dairy, specialty crops like peaches, apples and grapes. We have rice. We also are just recently started growing cotton since the night last time we had that was since 1920s while these commodities are very different, they share many of the same goals, including access to credit. Today, producers still face barriers when seeking access to USDA loans, especially fam operated operations.

Family operations, where multiple siblings farm under a single entity. This often leads to unnecessary barriers when applying for USDA loans. I was happy to see that the introduction of my bill, the USDA loan Modernization Act to address this issue and provide increased access to credit for farming families. Now I'm also pleased that the bit The bill has the solar Act, has been included in the Farm Bill, because we've got to do what we can to allow farmers, our land owners, to do whatever they need to do with their own property, but not subsidize them twice, one whenever they put in a solar bill and solar plant, but also by taking prime farmland out of production.

We've got to get this problem straightened out. Large solar panel tracks are eating up acre after acre of prime farmland in rural America. And my constituents have had enough. We need to establish guidelines for solar panels, protecting and ensuring local communities have a say in the approval process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for working with me on this important issue and including a legislative fix in the Farm Bill. Another one of my priorities is to ensure that our producers are able to not only feed our folks at home, but around the world in 2024 Illinois exports were more than 6 billion worth of

corn and soy bean. Map and FMD play a critical role in moving my producers commodities from their fields to foreign markets, the Farm Bill doubles funding for these trade promotions and makes access programs. Lastly, I would like to voice my support for finding a legislative fix to proposition 12 state ballot initiatives should not be able to impose standards for livestock produced across state lines.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to passing the Farm Bill out of this committee, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote yes. I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields now recognize gentlelady from Kansas. Ms. Davids for five minutes.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Chairman, and thank you to our Ranking Member for putting this mark up together, it's been nearly eight years since Congress passed the long term Farm Bill. In that time, the economic reality facing our farmers has changed dramatically. Input costs are up. Markets are unstable.

Interest rates are higher. Kansas producers are operating in a completely different environment than when the last bill was signed into law in my home state of Kansas, agriculture is our largest economic driver, from wheat the wheat fields in Western Kansas to cattle operations and other row crops across the state, agriculture powers our rural communities support small businesses and feeds families across the country and across the World. Kansas has a long history of agricultural leadership in Congress, because we understand that when agriculture is strong, our entire economy is strong. That's why it's deeply frustrating that we've seen a delay and lack of prioritization of this bill farmers plan in seasons and years, not in short term extensions.

It's wrong for leadership to keep pushing this off. The folks I talked to back home aren't asking for political games. They're asking for stability right now, what many of them feel instead is pure chaos. When those costs go up for farmers, they go up for families at the grocery store too.

Just last year, nearly 700 farms in Kansas closed farm bankruptcy rates were up 46% over the previous year. If that's not a warning sign that federal policies are failing our neighbors, I don't know what is before our last markup, former Republican Senator Pat Roberts joined me for a Farm Bill discussion, and he said, and I quote, we know that the most important thing when you get down to it, is to get a bill passed to provide farmers certainty and predictability that hasn't changed. He also warned that too many lawmakers were favoring ideology, ideology and partisanship over getting a bill done that actually benefits the agricultural professionals that we're supposed to be serving. Last year's budget law upended the traditional Farm Bill coalition by cutting nearly $200 billion from the nutrition title, these historic cuts to the nutrition title jeopardize the path forward for this bill and for future Farm Bills the nutrition title, the nutrition title's bipartisan Foundation began with a senior Republican from my state Senator Bob Dole.

He put it plainly by saying, American agriculture is neither democratic nor Republican, farm legislation is usually developed in a bipartisan basis. He was right then and he is right now. You cannot decimate a core title of the Farm Bill and expect bipartisan support to continue to hold, just like you would not be able to cut crop insurance and expect bipartisan support to continue to hold. You can.

Not cut things like crop insurance and insurance and expect producers to feel secure. The coalition only works if everyone at the table is actually respected. I want to be clear, there are constructive provisions in this bill, but there are also sections that need improvement, key gaps that can and should be addressed. Over the next few days, I'm going to work in good faith to make those adjustments.

My goal is simple, to pass a bipartisan bill out of this committee that works for all producers, from family farms to large operations, row crops, lives, stock, commodity and specialty crops. And that's going to maintain the coalition that made the Farm Bill durable for decades, after years of delay, farmers and ranchers need certainty and predictability. Rural communities need stability. Families need to be able to afford groceries.

That only happens when we do the hard work of building a bipartisan bill. The Farm Bill has not and should not be a partisan exercise. As a Midwesterner and a Kansan, I'm going to keep pushing to uphold our state's

tradition of pragmatic, bipartisan agricultural leadership, because our producers, our communities and our country are counting on us to get this right. Thank you.

I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yells back, now recognize the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Mann for five minutes.

Rep. Tracey Mann (R-Kan.)

Well, thank you, Chairman Thompson, for holding today's markup and pure leadership throughout this process, this bill is a result of countless farmer listening sessions that you and others, all of us, conducted all over the country, including in our state of Kansas. And I appreciate all of your work on that. Agriculture is the backbone of the big 1st District of Kansas and of our country. The big first is home to over 60,000 farms and ranches, and each one represents a family business navigating real economic pressure.

These farmers and managers do not ask for handouts. They ask for policy that reflects the realities they face every day on the ground and regulatory certainty so they can continue to work to feed, fuel and clothe the world. The farm economy is in a difficult place. Over the last five years, input costs have drastically increased.

Interest rates have made borrowing more expensive, and Mother Nature has proven, once again, to be an unreliable business partner. Despite this, our AG producers answer their calling each day to feed fuel and clothe the world, and they deserve a Congress that answers that call alongside them. Last summer, we secured we secured historic agriculture investments in the working family tax cuts. That legislation strengthened the farm safety net, updated reference prices and bolstered crop insurance so producers could better manage risk in increasingly volatile world today.

We build on that foundation. The Farm food and National Security Act focuses on the next set of challenges facing rural America. This bill expands access to credit, giving producers more options to invest for the future,

including provisions from the investing in rural America Act, legislation I co-sponsor to ensure capital flows to the communities that need it most. It strengthens rural development programs, lowers energy costs, promotes innovation in bio fuels, supports broadband expansion, protects rural healthcare access and invest in water infrastructure.

When rural America thrives, the rest of the country does as well, and this legislation provides and support our communities have asked for and needed for years. I'm also proud that this Farm Bill will build upon legislation I introduced and work done by the Trump Administration to permanently move the Food for Peace program to USDA, its rightful home, to ensure it prioritizes American grown commodities and remains focused on its original intent. Food for Peace was born in Kansas from generous farmers who believed they could use their excess crops for global good. For decades, it has shipped American grown commodities to a hungry world while strengthening our national security and supporting producers right here at home.

This legislation provides that support needed for programs like Food for Peace and McGovern dole to deliver life saving aid, all while increasing accountability for taxpayer dollars and supporting American farmers, this legislation will reduce trade barriers and open new markets for Kansas producers who rely on trade relationships to efficiently sell their commodities to willing buyers. It advances precision agriculture. Supports research at our land grant universities and promotes voluntary locally led conservation programs like EQIP and CRP without adding unnecessary and needless regulations. President Eisenhower, who hailed from the big for district of Kansas, Kansas used to say, quote, farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're 1000 miles from a corn field.

Too often, federal policy is written far from realities of rural America by bureaucrats with little knowledge of our farmers day to day lives, this committee has vowed to do the opposite. We have listened to producers on the ground, taken their feedback seriously and provided certainty without getting in their way. That is what this Farm Bill is all about. The world does not wait for Congress.

Our global competitors are not slowing down. Rural communities are counting on us. Today, we have the opportunity to strengthen national

security, invest in rural America and ensure the next generation of farmers and ranchers can continue to feed, fuel and clothe the world. It is time to take that opportunity and make it a reality.

I've been on the floor of the House of Representatives 34 times as part of my Farm Bill impact series to argue for a fiscally conservative five year Farm Bill that delivers certainty without over expanding the scope of government. I'm proud to see that priority becoming reality. I'll be voting for the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 and I look forward advancing this legislation for the farmers, ranchers and rural communities in Kansas and that we all represent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields now, please recognize the gentle Lee from Oregon Congresswoman Salinas for five minutes.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Thank you, Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Craig. The people of Oregon six districts sent me here to represent their interests and needs, and since I first arrived to Congress in 2023 I have consistently advocated for the economic and safety net priorities of Oregonians, despite some positive provisions for Oregonians in this Farm Bill. Reauthorization, when taken as a whole, this bill is unacceptable. It fails to meet the needs of Oregonians and should in no way be considered a bipartisan compromise.

My district is home to a wealth of agricultural diversity, from Christmas trees to hazelnuts and of course, our world famous Willamette Valley wine grapes. I have fought to ensure all our producers needs, including specialty crop growers, are prioritized in the Farm Bill. I'm pleased to see the text establishes a specialty crop Advisory Committee and creates a framework for future specialty crop disaster assistance. As Ranking Member of the forestry subcommittee and representing a state that boasts 30 million acres of some of the world's most productive forests, I've made it my goal to invest in our wildland fire fighting workforce, timber industry and forest recreation, research and management priorities as such.

I'm grateful that the Chairman's proposal includes parts of my bill, the timber innovation for building Rural Communities Act, which would reduce the match requirement for the wood Innovation Grant Program by nearly half and establish a platform for measuring and tracking carbon emissions sequestration and storage of wood products. Even with some of these welcome additions to the Farm Bill, they do not make up for all the ways this bill is lacking to start my home state of Oregon is nearly 50% forested. With that comes the reality of forest fires, which are increasingly frequent and more devastating. Despite this reality, the Farm Bill would actually turn back the clock on the best practice wildfire mitigation strategies by requiring the Forest Service to suppress fires within 24 hours under what is known as the 10am policy, this practice is so outdated that our own government, Forest Service website calls the 10am policy a in quotes a strategy of the past that unfortunately helped create the wildfire crisis of today.

Instead of bolstering our wildland firefighting workforce through this Farm Bill, we are instead making the job of firefighters more difficult through outdated and rejected fire science policy. On top of endangering our firefighters with illogical mandates, this administration has also cut 4000 workers from the Forest Service, and has gone as far as green lighting detentions on firefighters by ICE this past August, my constituent, who is here legally on a U Visa, was arrested at a fire camp during an active fire on the Olympic Peninsula. Tell me what message this sends to our firefighters about how much we value the life saving work they do on our behalf. Across the board, families and farmers are struggling to make ends meet, and this bill does little to nothing to make up for the harm caused to farmers from the Trump Administration's hostile trade policies and the harm caused to families when this committee slash nearly $200 billion from SNAP last year, I recognize this Farm Bill is repurposing dollars from from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act to fund market access and foreign market development programs, but the impact of that funding is blunted by the tariffs that have led to nearly $44 billion in agricultural trade deficit And skyrocketing input costs.

Let's not forget that the funding for these programs was off the backs of millions of people who would be kicked off their SNAP benefits at a time when grocery prices are only sky rocketing. In fact, these cuts to SNAP will cause nearly 800,000 Oregonians to lose their food benefits. Of these Oregonians, one in four are children, and one in eight are seniors in less than

a year, every state will also be required to pick up double the cost of administering the SNAP program. In Oregon, that's $80 million the state is expected to absorb.

As Ranking Member of the horticulture subcommittee, I have consistently said that specialty crops have been left behind for too long. The majority's Farm Bill does not do nearly enough for the specialty crop growers in my district. There's no new money for disaster assistance, no enhancements to specialty crop insurance, and nothing to address the head winds producers are facing from rising input costs and labor difficulties. This bill only perpetuates the status quo, leaving specialty crops behind.

And I'm not finished. This bill comes up short in. So many other ways. It does not include direct disaster relief for farm workers who keep our food systems running.

It does not include summer food delivery for hungry children in rural communities. It does not include my bipartisan and bicameral domestic organic Investment Act that would give organic producers tools to increase capacity, modernize their operations and expand their businesses. I could go on, my colleagues and I in the minority understand that compromises must be made to get a Farm Bill passed. None of us expect to get everything on our wish list.

At the very least, we expect good faith engagement and a good faith proposal that matches our commitment to bipartisanship. Instead, we were locked out of this process and only given five business days to review the text, consult stakeholders and prepare for this one sided hearing. The only reason we ended up with more time to review the bill was because of a blizzard, not bipartisanship. Farmers deserve better.

Families deserve better. Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Now recognize the gentleman from Iowa, Ms. Finster for five minutes.

Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-Iowa)

Thank you so much. Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Craig and the committee staff for all their hard work in bringing this bill before us today, I come from Iowa, where agriculture is the backbone of our economy. I'm proud to represent one of the most productive agricultural states in America, the state that leads the nation production of pork, eggs, corn, soy beans and bio fuels farmers and ranchers across our country, feed our families, power our industries and anchor our communities. Since I came to Congress, I have heard one thing loud and clear, farmers need Washington now more than ever to do its job and pass a strong Farm Bill that is workable as I stand here today, farm country is in a lot of challenges and under a lot of pressure.

Producers are dealing with volatile markets, tightening margins and growing uncertainty. This bill before us builds upon the historic work this committee has done during the working families tax cut and delivers farmers the tools they need to meet these challenges. This bill includes more than 15 bills that I have sponsored or Co-led as a result of the years of listening to the farmers, rural communities and working families in Iowa, to highlight just a few of these bills this this Farm Bill includes farmland act to keep China away from our farmland. Iowa.

Farmland belongs to the Iowa farmer. It includes a SAFE Act to ensure we strengthen our response to animal disease outbreak while protecting our agricultural markets. It includes the fridge act to open new export markets for our producers abroad. And it also includes prop 12, making sure that we preempt states like California from hurting our hog producers today, this legislation expands on investments in rural communities, restores regulatory certainty and promotes agricultural research and innovation.

It also gives American farmers and rural communities the tools they need to feed America and the rest of the world. I didn't come to Congress to leave problems for the next generation. Our producers can afford more delay. They need Congress to act now.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill and deliver certainty, Investment and Opportunity that American agriculture deserve. Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Now, please recognize for five minutes a gentleman from Hawaii. Ms. Tokuda,

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you. Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we always have a choice, and today, the choice before this committee is whether we uphold the legacy of the Farm Bill or we weaken it. For generations, Congress understood something fundamental.

Feeding families and supporting farmers are not competing priorities. They are inseparable. The Farm Bill has endured because lawmakers on both sides of this Dais recognize that agriculture policy and nutrition policy rise and fall together. Farmers need customers.

Families need food, and when we invest in both, America is stronger. That is a tradition we inherited, and it is a standard this bill must meet. As the only member of Hawaii's congressional delegation serving on one of Congress' agricultural committees, I come to this markup carrying the voices of communities where the connection between agriculture and hunger are impossible to ignore. In the weeks leading up to today, I traveled across every county in Hawaii holding Farm Bill listening sessions.

I met with farmers facing skyrocketing costs and shrinking margins. Ranchers worried about shipping expenses and market instability, indigenous producers working to sustain traditional crops central to our culture and food security, their message to me was clear, farmers are struggling to stay afloat. Ranchers are thinking about selling off their cattle and closing their businesses. Families are struggling to afford groceries, and hunger is growing.

Whether Washington chooses to acknowledge it or not. At the same time, unnecessary tariffs imposed by this administration have added pressure on both ends of the food system. Farmers are paying more for equipment, feed and supplies, while families are paying more at the checkout line. These policies squeeze producers and consumers alike, making an already difficult moment worse.

This is the reality in which this Farm Bill is being written. So let's be honest about what this bill does and what it also fails to do. Completely disregarding egregious cuts to SNAP does not mean hunger has suddenly disappeared. Eliminating food insecurity Statistics does not mean families are suddenly food secure.

Ignoring the problem does not solve it. It simply leaves struggling Americans hungry in the shadows. Nutrition programs are not an add on to farm policy. They are part of its economic foundation.

Snap supports farmers, grocers, truckers and rural communities nationwide, when families can afford food, farmers have stable markets, weakening nutrition programs, weakens agriculture itself and process. Process matters too, taking pieces of democratic priorities, placing them into a draft bill and calling it bipartisan without meaningful engagement with our Ranking Member does not make this legislation bipartisan. Bipartisanship is not selective inclusion. It is genuine negotiation and shared decision making that has not happened here now there are provisions in this mark that I fought for and that I support.

The tropical plant health initiative provides long overdue recognition for crops vital to Hawaii and other tropical regions. Reauthorizing Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native serving institution grants strengthens indigenous producers and agriculture education, expanding rural hospital technical assistance recognizes that food security and community health go hand in hand. These provisions matter, but they cannot outweigh the larger failures before us. This draft walks back progress towards fairness in the Thrifty food plan for my state Hawaii, it scales back food security for micro grants, it weakens tools that allow non-contiguous states to purchase local food, and it fails to meaningfully address the disproportionate cost faced by farmers separated from markets by thousands of miles of oceans.

Once again, non-contiguous states and territories are treated as an afterthought. Hawaii is not an afterthought. Our farmers are not expendable, and our families should never be collateral damage. The Farm Bill has always represented a promise that America will support those who grow our food and those who need help putting it on the table.

That promise is why the bill has historically earned broad bipartisan support. But the legislation before us today fails to meet this moment. If we want the farm Bill's legacy to continue, if we want future congresses to view it as the rare opportunity where Americans can come together to solve real problems, then we must do better than this. We must write a bill that confronts hunger, honestly, supports farmers meaningfully, and reflects the full partnership that has defined this committee at its best, because preserving the tradition of the Farm Bill does not happen by invoking history.

It happens by living up to it, and today we are not yet there. Thank you, Mr. Chair and I yield back. Gentlelady yields back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Now recognize the gentlelady from Illinois. Ms. Miller, for five minutes.

Rep. Mary Miller (R-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this markup on a much needed Farm Bill. Our farmers cannot wait any longer. We need to pass a Farm Bill now, not six months from now, not a year from now. Now.

It's long overdue. The men and women who feed and fuel our nation deserve certainty. They need to know what's ahead in order to properly plan for future crop years. Delays in Washington create real consequences in rural America.

As many of you know, I'm a third generation family farmer in Illinois who understands the daily challenges of maintaining a family farm. AG issues are personal to me, and more than that, agriculture is the heartbeat of the communities across my district. To give you perspective, my state is proudly home to America's most hard working farmers and best fertile farm ground. Nearly three quarters of Illinois land mass is prime AG land that produces 15% of all US soy beans and 13% of US corn.

My district alone has 21,000 farms that comprises over 8 million acres. All of this contributes to 31% of the state's agriculture sales. Given all of this, I am thankful that we finally have a president who understands the issue. Facing

our farmers under the previous administration, our producers were left behind, crushed by over regulation record inflation and bureaucrats in this town who have never stepped foot on a working farm.

Standing up for agriculture has been a major priority for President Trump and House Republicans this committee was able to secure historic wins for our farmers and the working family tax cut by directing billions toward farm safety net programs, including money for disaster assistance programs, trade promotion programs and agricultural research programs. Yet there is still much to do this Farm Bill fills in the missing pieces by providing over $1 billion to specialty crop programs, clarifying that California's Prop 12 cannot and will not be imposed on producers outside of California. It ensures access to credit for beginning farmers, and codifies President Trump's reforms into the national dietary guidelines, this bill will hold Congress to its promise to deliver policies that support agriculture. Now is not the time to play politics with our food supply.

Food Security as national security, plain and simple, I encourage my colleagues to stand with America's farmers and get this bill across the finish line. Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Now, please recognize gentlelady from Illinois. Ms. benzinski for five minutes.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to be very clear the outset of this markup, this conversation is bigger than the bill text in front of us today, it's about whether we are serious about meeting the moment for American agriculture and rural communities, or whether we are simply checking a political box. Midwestern farmers are the best in the world at what they do.

They feed, fuel and power this country every single day. But right now, even the best are struggling because policy hasn't kept up with reality. Input costs continue to soar. Markets are tight, and farmers across the Midwest are saying the same thing.

They don't want ad hoc assistance, they want to take pride in their work and earn a living from what they grow, and this Farm Bill doesn't get them there. That is the heart of this issue. Farmers in my district aren't asking for handouts. They're asking for functioning markets.

They're asking for fairness in input costs. They are asking for risk management tools that reflect what they are actually planting. They are asking for conservation programs for producers that protect the land for the next generation, and they're asking for research and innovation that keeps America competitive. This bill does not rise to that challenge.

Instead of building a forward looking bipartisan, truly bipartisan Farm Bill in 2023 when we have the opportunity to do it the right way. We are now debating what feels like the leftovers after so much was jammed into the big, ugly bill. We are left with a narrow proposal that fails to confront the real pressures facing farmers and families. It does not meet the moment and it reflects a broader pattern.

This bill is a perfect example of how this majority in this Congress works. It ruptured the historic Farm Bill coalition by decimating SNAP, and now that they've broken it, they're not even willing to acknowledge it needs to be fixed and negotiate with Democrats to find a viable path forward. For decades, the strength of the Farm Bill has been this coalition, farmers and families, rural and urban production, agriculture and nutrition policy working together. That coalition wasn't an accident.

It was a recognition that agriculture policy and food policy are deeply connected when you break that coalition for partisan gain, you weaken the entire bill. What Republicans broke they don't even have the courage to fix. And we've seen this partisan divide play out in real time nationwide, year round. The 15 is a perfect example of this.

We rocked right up to the finish line with bipartisan support, with a common sense solution that would expand markets, lower fuel costs and strengthen rural economies, instead of getting it done, leadership chose to punt. That's not governing, that's not that's avoiding hard choices. Meanwhile, farmers are still dealing with fertilizer price volatility. They're still dealing with seed and chemical costs that are far higher than where they were just a few years ago.

They're still facing unpredictable export markets and rural communities are still waiting for meaningful investment. This bill is a vanity project what should have been a bipartisan Farm Bill and. 2023 is now an underperforming partisan bill in 2026 so that Republicans can say they worked on a Farm Bill without seriously grappling with whether it actually solves the problems in front of us. I believe very deeply in a Farm Bill.

I believe in what it represents, stability, partnership and a long term commitment to rural America, but that means we have to be honest when we're falling short. While this Farm Bill misses the mark on helping our communities, we still have a chance to get it right. If this community, this committee is serious, truly serious about delivering for farmers, rural communities and families, then now is the time to roll up our sleeves and fix these glaring issues. That means negotiating, that means listening, that means putting politics aside and building something durable.

The farmers in my district don't want sound bites. They don't want performative votes. They want policy that works, and they deserve nothing less. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

La Chair

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yields back, now recognize the gentleman from Minnesota. Mr. Fence, said for

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

Five minutes, thank you, Mr. Chairman, I first want to thank you and your staff for the leadership in creating and crafting this strong, bipartisan Farm Bill that is written by farmers and for farmers by rural communities, and for rural communities, not by DC, for DC, and it builds upon our accomplishments in H.R. 1. As a fourth generation farmer raising the fifth generation, I know firsthand that the farm economy and farmers across southern Minnesota have faced compounding challenges over the past several years, including decreased commodity prices, bad trade deals or no trade deals, increase input costs and the trade disruptions. The agriculture title of the working families. Tax Cut made the most significant investment

in the farm safety net since the 2002 Farm Bill boosted conservation funding doubled funding for trade and market access programs made crop insurance farmers, number one risk management tool, more affordable.

The legislation before us today builds upon those successes, and it reflects the bipartisan priorities of priorities of farmers in southern Minnesota and across the country. I was pleased to see the bill include several pieces of legislation I entered you introduced to ensure farmers in rural communities have access to the credit necessary necessary to succeed, including the pace Act, which I introduced with Ranking Member Craig to modernize FSA loan limits and ensure farmers, especially beginning farmers, have access to the financing they need to maintain and improve their operations. Rural communities across southern Minnesota rely on partnerships between the Farm Credit System and local lenders to build and improve essential facilities like rural hospitals. The investing in rural America Act, legislation I worked on with Congressman Davis, was included in this bill, and will ensure rural America has access to the capital it needs to remain the best places to live, work and play for generations to come.

Moreover, I was honored to work with Congressman gray to introduce the USDA Express Loan Act, legislation that will cut red tape and enable timelier, more efficient credal credit approval and delivery. I commend the Chairman for his focus on the importance of Food and Farm Security to our national security throughout this bill. This bill also doubles funding for map and FMD, critical tools for expanding international markets for agriculture, American agriculture in southern Minnesota, in Minnesota with over 3000 pig farms, our producers use the best animal care standards in the world, if not addressed, California's Prop 12 will continue to cause significant harm to small and medium size producers, and it will increase market concentration. Our legislation will protect the producers I represent from other states.

Use of political science to mandate wrong headed production standards. I look forward to working with members of the minority party who are focused on passing a bipartisan Farm Bill, because it's the right thing to do for farmers in rural America, not focused on running for higher political office and a job promotion as we begin this process. Let me be clear, this legislation delivers for farmers in rural communities in the state of Minnesota. With me today, I have letters and statements of support from farmer led organizations from across Minnesota, including the Minnesota

Farm Bureau, the corn growers, Minnesota soy bean growers, pork producers, Turkey growers, cattlemans and the Midwest Dairy coalition.

I even have a letter of support from the Midwest Council on agriculture, which is led by the Democrat former AG Chair Colin Peterson, every American is affected by the Farm Bill, and this legislation responsibly addresses their needs across all 12 titles. I look forward to the markup before us today, and I encourage my colleagues to find it in themselves, to rip the D and the R off our sweaters and stand shoulder to shoulder to bring this bipartisan product across the finish line for farm country and every American across this country, I. Thank you again. Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Now, please recognize the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Sorensen, for five minutes.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, 649 days. The majority had 649 days to invite us to the table to work together to effectively respond to a farm economy that no longer resembles the one that we had the last time that this bill was before us. And I'm thankful that I've always had farmers and AG stakeholders by my side in 2023 they helped me get to a yes, because the majority worked with me on the important things that I needed to provide for the people in my district.

But this is different today, because farm bankruptcies went up 46% just in the last year alone. Input prices are at levels never seen before, and American farmers are losing billions because of a global trade war, and today, their voices are not being heard by this committee. And no matter what your politics are, the statistics don't lie. Fewer than half of farms today will be profitable this year.

Instead of creating good policy, the administration double down on trickle down economics that give tax tax cuts to the ultra wealthy in the hopes that something will trickle down to Middle America. You may be surprised to learn that the number one driver of the economy in Illinois is not what

happens in Cook County, it's what happens in Carol County and Fulton County and McDonough County. It's agriculture. It's why I'm so proud to be one of five members of this committee, and sitting next to my sister from down state, Illinois, Congresswoman Budzinski, we have five fighters from Illinois in this committee that we fight for hard, working, humble people who just want an honest and fulfilling life, people like Tom Miller, a corn and bean farmer from Taylor Ridge who's been farming for more than a half a century.

He told me that the cost of fertilizer and seed has skyrocketed, but the sale price for his crops have plummeted. Export markets continue to shrink, and access to Conservation and Research is out of reach, and he fears for farmers like him, who will go out of business down the road in Illinois city Phil for he is also feeling the pinch. His costs aren't just unaffordable at the gas pump and at the grocery store. He's now paying through the roof for nitrogen and phosphorus and needs policy that will explain the market for what he grows.

He's a big supporter, as I am of year round e 15, and he doesn't want a hand out. I listen to my local farmers just today, and they understand that this is not a perfect bill. But I say, why can't it be a perfect bill? I fought for years for better crop insurance and appreciate the expanded loan caps for producers that's in this bill.

But why aren't we restoring and expanding domestic markets by providing mandatory funding for local food procurement or allowing year round e 15? Instead of finding solutions here, we're just shoving an incredible burden onto the states to ensure our vulnerable neighbors can eat where's the meaningful direct funding for conservation programs like equip that provide essential service to our farmers. Trump's trade wars destroy the international markets. Where's the policy that will restore and increase our markets for our farmers?

Funding levels in this bill don't even account for inflation, paired with FSA and NRCS cuts, these programs are going to struggle to succeed. It's like saying to a farmer that the 2018 Farm Bill has enough funding for what you need here in 2026 it only gives the illusion of certainty, and it certainly will not be enough. As this Farm Bill ages five years, our farmers and agribusiness should not have to accept just the minimum. 64,000 families in my district have to find food through SNAP.

The folks at the save a lot on West State Street in Rockford tell me that if people lose their SNAP, they may not be able to stay in business. They're going to create a food desert in the area. Additionally, our farmers are going to lose $30 billion in SNAP revenue. Our farmers and our farm towns deserve better.

This markup gives us a chance to amend the bill and save farmers from losing their livelihood. Let's include the amendments that will do real good, not a second rate lack luster, hope that something will trickle down to Middle America or a struggling parent. We have to provide investments to revive our food systems, restore and strengthen domestic markets and make agriculture of America the force to be reckoned with around the world. We're so much better than this bill, and I look forward to a great markup, a great debate.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Now recognize the gentlelady from Florida. Ms. Cammack, for five minutes.

Rep. Kat Cammack (R-Fla.)

Well, thank you. Mr. Chairman, I am so happy that we are finally here working on this much needed Farm Bill. It's been a long time coming. Farmers and producers across the country have been operating in limbo for years, and that spans across a lot of different administrations.

That uncertainty makes it hard to plan, invest, and, quite frankly, even survive. The Farm Bill is not just another piece of legislation. It is the backbone of American agriculture, food security and our rural communities for Florida, this markup comes after years of compounding challenges. Our producers have endured hurricanes three in my district alone, historic flooding and most recently, a brutal historic freeze that hit specialty crops, citrus and nursery operations particularly hard.

These are not one year losses for perennial crops like citrus trees, you lose decades of work overnight and recover. Recovery is not quick. It takes time,

flexibility and a safety net that actually reflects how farming works today. Now tonight, it's early in the night, but I've already heard an incredible amount of blaming being thrown around the room and pointing of fingers of which administration to blame.

You know, the farm economy, it is hurting, but candidly, our producers don't care who broke it. They just want it fixed. Decades of over regulation, high input costs, labor issues, broken systems and natural disasters have made it damn near impossible to produce a crop. That is the reality.

Now, no bill is perfect, and no bill ever will be perfect, but I am really proud of this Farm Bill, and as the only member of Congress representing Florida agriculture in both the House and the Senate, I want to say that there are some tremendous wins for my home state, the Sunshine State. First, I want to highlight improvements to the tree Assistance Program. This legislation modernizes tap to recognize economic realities covering trees and plants are no longer product that are no longer productive after a disaster, not just those that are completely destroyed. This gives producers the flexibility to replant different varieties or move operations if needed, and more importantly, it requires USDA to make decisions within 120 days.

That kind of accountability, certainty and flexibility matters, and I dare any member in this committee to challenge that. It also allows for upfront tap payments, and that's huge. When a hurricane or a freeze hits, growers don't have extra cash sitting around to replant first and then hope that help comes later. There is a critical cash flow that is and there is critical cash flow needs and relief when needed when disaster strikes, especially after freezes and hurricanes.

Secondly, I'm very encouraged by the creation of the specialty crop emergency assistance framework. Specialty Crops are high value, high input, and historically, under served by disaster programs designed around row crops. Now, of course, I may be biased, because I represent Florida, which is home to over 300 specialty crops, and in the winter months, I must remind everyone, feeds 193 million Americans. This framework in particular directs USDA to calculate assistance based on prior year specialty crop sales, and explicitly considers higher input costs and diverse business structures.

That recognition matters. It matters to producers who grew, who grow fruits, vegetables and tree crops and who have too often been forced into one size fits all disaster programs. Now, just as importantly, the bill provides higher payment flexibility for full time producers, those who derive at least 75% of their income from farming, ranching, and for many Florida specialty crop producers, this change will make the difference between meaningful recovery or no recovery assistance at all. Third the continuation of the specialty crop block grants and market news funding gives states the flexibility to respond to producer driven priorities.

In Florida, these programs support everything from disease research to marketing food safety and export readiness, and they are a critical tool for keeping our specialty crop sector competitive. I'd also like to highlight the incorporation of key provisions of my bill, the rural internet Improvement Act. These provisions will bring rural development and broadband investments, including the Reauthorization and expansion of USDA broadband programs in rural Florida. Connectivity is not a luxury.

It is essential for precision agriculture, disaster response, telemedicine and workforce retention. These provisions help ensure that rural communities are not left behind. Now I want to note the important. Of stability across the safety net, provisions that ensure USDA can continue servicing sugar loans during lapses in appropriations provide the certainty that those producers need, regardless of what is happening in Washington.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, No, Farm Bill is perfect, but this bill reflects a real effort to listen to our producers. I encourage my colleagues to support and with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Time has expired. Now recognize the gentleman from New Mexico, Mr. Vasquez, for five five minutes.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's a lot going on in the headlines today, from overseas wars to rising costs, but when you get right to it, I think we can all agree that most of our families are still most worried about the basics,

like putting food on the table after a long day of work, and the food on the shelves in our grocery stores doesn't just magically appear. It gets there because of the tireless work of our farmers, farm workers, ranchers and growers, serving on the House AG Committee is a true honor. It's something that I chose when I came to Congress, not something that was handed to me, and it comes with great responsibility.

It's our duty in Congress to support our farmers and rural America, to ensure that American people don't go hungry and keep our rural economies strong and competitive. But I won't sugar coat it. Congress has been falling flat in meeting those objectives. We've been kicking the can down the road for three years now, and I'm tired of it, because at the end of the day, our farmers and ranchers are the ones who have paid the price.

In New Mexico alone, we've lost over 200 farms. That's 200 family legacies. Lost 200 local employers gone and 200 reminders to this committee that inaction and instability have irreparable consequences. Many of these farms in my home state might still be open today if our farmers had the certainty and support that they deserve from Congress.

And of course, we've got to address the big elephant in the room. It's shameful that this Farm Bill does nothing to reverse the 180 $7 billion cut to SNAP made by the Republican tax law. One in four New Mexicans rely on SNAP benefits, including many people with disabilities, seniors, veterans and children. A majority, 62% of them are folks who work and SNAP doesn't just help families put food on the table, it supports our local grocers, farmers and rural economies.

Every $1 invested in SNAP generates nearly $2 in local economic activity, supporting everyone from farmers to truck drivers to local grocers. Cutting SNAP hurts producers and working families. That's why the bill before shouldn't be about partisan politics. It should.

It should be about whether we're going to support our farmers and keep this country fed. As a Representative of New Mexico's 2nd District, I have the privilege of representing thousands of chili farmers, onion farmers, dairy producers, cattle growers, tree nut producers, AG, supply chain operators, Food Bank operators and more. Now, two weeks ago, I met with many of them in my district, members of my New Mexico Agricultural Advisory

Group, and the concerns I heard from them are the concerns that I'll be raising in this room over the coming days. We've got to step up and get the job done for our farmers and the hard working American people who rely on food assistance.

That's going to take compromise. It's going to take listening. It's going to take open mindedness from everyone in this room. Now I'm proud to have worked across the aisle with our Chairman, with the Ranking Member many of you to secure critical bipartisan wins for our producers and constituents, and have faith that we can do the same in this Farm Bill.

That's why I filed common sense bipartisan amendments to provide financial support and resources to farmers, ranchers and producers to create wildlife corridors on their land that benefit benefit both wildlife and agricultural productivity, to stop this administration's effort to prioritize Argentinian beef at the expense of our American cattle growers, to honor our veterans and Stop disrespecting their service to our country by rolling back harmful SNAP red. [IN PROGRESS]

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

And granting much needed stability to our rural counties by extending secure rural schools funding for five years. So no county is left wondering how it's going to pay for its critical roads and education services. There is bipartisan support for each of these measures across my district and across the country and hopefully in this committee, and there's no reason that we can't put politics aside past these common sense solutions to make life better for our farmers, ranchers and producers, not to mention everyday folks who are at the grocery store. Now we can't let perfect be the enemy of the good, and it's our job to use the next few days to improve this bill and make it as strong as possible for America.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to hear each other out, take this process seriously, to show up and remember why we are sitting in this room to deliver for the people who feed this country and the families who depend on us. To get this right with that. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Now recognize the gentleman from South Dakota, Mr. Johnson, for five minutes.

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

It's so often dysfunction, Mr. Chairman, that grabs the headlines in this town. I don't think you, sir and this committee get enough credit for what we did last Congress, which is to pass a comprehensive Farm Bill out of this committee on a bipartisan basis. It was a good piece of work. We accomplished so many of those bipartisan priorities last year in the reconciliation package, we strengthen crop insurance, we made sure that we increased reference prices in Title One, programs clearly were in a totally different input environment than we were seven years ago.

Number three, we addressed conservation programs, particularly Working Lands Conservation. And then we also put into place some much needed reforms to SNAP now, a lot of that was done in reconciliation, but there were a few policy items that we were not able to get through the rules of the Senate, and so that's what brings us here today, sir, as you well know, we've got a little work to do, and what's before us is a solid piece of work. I think every Farm Bill probably should be judged by whether or not it is pragmatic and whether or not it is bipartisan. And boy, the numbers just don't lie.

When you look at the marker bills, the bills that we have all introduced staking out what agricultural policies do we care about for our country, for our district? Those are really the building blocks of these bills. Sometimes the people back home will say, Oh my gosh, how could you How could you read a bill that big? The reality is, this is like 180 bills that we've all been working on for two years.

Those are the building blocks. And when you look at those 181 marker bills, and you try to figure out, well, were they a Republican priority or a Democrat priority, or were they a bipartisan priority? Here's what the numbers say. I suspect you all know it already, but 149 were bipartisan.

18 were Republican, only 14 were Democrat, only this is an overwhelmingly pragmatic and bipartisan Farm Bill that takes care of the business that we were not able to get done last year. I'm looking forward to the debate and to the conversation we're going to have over the next couple of days, because

we all know that our farmers and ranchers and everybody living in rural America, they deserve it. They deserve this work product. There's a lot of things our producers simply can't control, and frankly, we can't control for them.

No matter how we vote, we don't control the weather, matter how we vote. We do not control input costs, and we sure don't control prices, but we can make sure that the hard working folks of production agriculture that they have a predictable and consistent policy framework so they can make decisions for the next five years understanding what the rules of the road are so Ms. Chairman, I just want to thank everybody for showing up, for doing the work, for filing those marker bills that have meant that this bipartisan work product is ready for prime time. It is ready to help rural America. It is ready for us to take action with that, sir.

I would yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman. She holds back. Now please recognize the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Thanedar, for five minutes.

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Thank you. Mr. Chair, access to food is like getting healthcare at your doctor's office. It's necessary for a thriving America, but at a time when everyone is struggling with the cost of living, Donald Trump and Republicans took away 187 billion in food assistance away from the American people make. It much harder for the 42 million people who rely on Snap to keep their American Dream alive.

These cruel cuts have also damaged the bipartisan coalition that has always been key to getting a Farm Bill passed. Investing in food assistance isn't just the right thing to do, it also grows the American economy. For every dollar invested in food assistance, nearly $2 in economic activity is created additionally SNAP supports nearly 400,000 jobs in trucking, manufacturing, warehousing and on farms, every agricultural group benefits from SNAP and

a strong nutritional title has been the consistent key to getting Farm Bills passed. But instead of trying to rebuild this coalition, this flawed Farm Bill, doubles down on the big, ugly Bill's failures.

It doesn't restore any SNAP cuts. It doesn't invest in the food banks overwhelmed by those struggling to afford groceries in the Trump economy, it ignores the bipartisan group of governors that asked Republicans to delay the big, ugly Bill SNAP cost shifts because they threaten to destroy the entire program. You can't slash nutrition programs. Ignore the tens of millions of Americans struggling to afford food, and call it governing, despite what my friends across the aisle may say about the legislation, a Farm Bill that makes no effort to undo the largest cut to food assistance in American history doesn't meet the moment.

A Farm Bill that does nothing to help farmers being crushed by Trump's reckless tariff strategy doesn't meet the moment, and a bill that provides no emergency assistance to farmers on the brink of losing their farms fails to meet the moment. While Republicans had the opportunity to work together in a bipartisan way and deliver for our farmers and families, they chose loyalty to Trump instead, my district has the fourth highest SNAP participation rate in the country. As someone who grew up struggling with food insecurity, frequently unaware of where my next meal would come from, I know the pain recent Republican food assistance policies have caused them. It's why I can't look at my hungry constituents seeing the same pain in their eyes that I once experienced.

And in good conscience, support this bill. I urge a no vote on this Farm Bill. Thank you and I yield back the balance of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back, now recognize general from Tennessee, Mr. Rose for five minutes.

Rep. John Rose (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Craig, for holding this mark up. I would like to express strong support for the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 this bill is about keeping America fed secure and strong

by standing with the men and women who feed and fuel this country at a time when input costs are at record highs, commodity prices are at painful lows, and many producers are wondering if they can afford to put a crop in the ground. Congress must act. It is time to provide farmers with the legislative certainty they deserve by passing a long overdue Farm Bill.

Since the 2018 Farm Bill expired in 2023 farmers have been forced to rely on short term extensions of outdated policies that only deepen the challenges facing the farm economy. Last year, this committee secured major victories for agriculture through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. But our work is far from finished. Without passage of a new Farm Bill, we risk letting vital programs and policies lapse at a time when producers cannot afford further uncertainty the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 builds on the successes of H.R. 1 by further strengthening the farm safety net, enhancing conservation programs and supporting critical enhancements of.

To the Agricultural Research and Extension complex, the farm food and National Security Act contains a number of bipartisan wins that will strengthen our rural communities by supporting rural hospitals, businesses, water infrastructure and broadband, restoring regulatory certainty by addressing issues like proposition 12, implementing science based policies by promoting agricultural innovation and protecting essential crop inputs, increasing access to capital for new and beginning farmers, and prioritizing American farmers on a global scale by furthering trade expansion and promotion programs. However, this bill is not just a win for farmers and rural communities, it is a win for all taxpayers. The Farm food and National Security Act eliminates fraud by transferring Food for Peace to the USDA, holding the USDA and states accountable for SNAP errors and taking additional common sense steps to streamline programs and improve financial integrity, all without increasing federal spending. Additionally, this bill promotes policies that will increase long term affordability, strengthen our food supply and lower everyday costs for all American families by making necessary supply chain improvements promoting efficient new technologies and expanding reasonable access to capital.

This bill prevents price spikes before they happen, to keep everyday essentials, essentials more affordable with resounding industry support, this must pass legislation delivers improvements that benefit farms, rural communities and every American family. I urge my colleagues to stand with

America's farmers and rural communities, to support the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 with that, Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. gentleman yields back now, please recognize the gentlelady from Michigan. Ms. McDonald rivet for five minutes.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Craig. So every time I'm at a microphone, I tell people proudly that I get to represent the hard working men and women of Mid Michigan, and as the great former Senator Debbie Stabenow used to say, in Michigan, we make things and we grow things our district, my district, invented the middle class, and our communities are fueled by family farms. So at home, one thing unifies all of us, and frankly, I think it unifies every every member of this committee we think about the future of our families, our kids and our country. From the potato farmer in Munger, I'll let you know on my hand where that is later, if you'd like, to the UAW worker in Flint.

This economy is not working for us. People are working harder and making less. Why costs are rising. The people in my district need us to pass real solutions to make things better.

So I've been really looking forward to this markup all year, because this is the space where we are supposed to be finding real solutions, lowering costs, supporting family farmers and helping working families put food on the table. In short, I want to get to yes on this as we begin the conversation tonight, we need to understand the realities on the ground that families and farmers are at a very real breaking point. Our farmers, as is mentioned multiple times, have not seen an update to the Farm Bill since 2018 for decades, they have had to grind out just to make men's meat and this year, policies from this committee have made things worse chaotic. Tariff policies have not only increased the prices of goods our farmers use in the field, but it's also taken away many of their customers.

I read a report yesterday that showed farmers across our country have lost $44 billion last year alone. Let's just sit that for with that for a minute. $44

billion back at home, I see the consequences. I hear new and I hear a new story nearly every day while touring fields, shopping at the grocery store or grabbing a cup of coffee with our growers.

Farmers are having very real conversations about closing their generational family farms. This is what is happening. I don't think that we can sit idly by and let it happen to the people we represent. We have a greater responsibility to the people who expect us to show up and work for them.

It's not just about the family farmers who need the solutions. It is everyday, working families add hours to their schedules, getting up an hour early and still struggling to make their bills. In my district, 70% of our jobs pay less than $60,000 a year, 70% and with the cost they face from healthcare to groceries and especially now, gasoline. All of them are up, and it makes it impossible to get by.

And I do have to talk about this, instead of helping this committee made things worse by cutting $200 billion from SNAP and food assistance in H.R. 1. And yes, as someone who, two years ago, was an appropriator that helped craft a state budget, I can tell you that our state cannot afford the costs that this committee has forced on them. Strong state economies will buckle under these costs. Bipartisan governors have asked for a relief in the state provisions.

I do remember when we did that. I remember asking this very room, what is the percentage of hungry children that we are willing to tolerate? Well, if you want to come to Mid Michigan, you will meet more than 150,000 people who rely on these benefits for their food. And the cuts in this community in this committee are making things harder.

I've seen food bank lines run out of food before they get through the lines of people who showed up asking for help. We need to do much, much better. So today, as we sit down to shape the future of our nation's agricultural policy, I carry with me this reality of the farmers and families who sent me here to represent them, and I'm determined to get things done for them, big things we in this room can do for them. We can fix SNAP cuts, and we can rein in dangerous tariff strategy that is crushing farmers and families.

I do want to say that looking at the text in front of us, there are a lot of pieces in here that really will help disaster relief will provide much needed stability for growers in Mid Michigan, we grow a ton of specialty crops, potatoes, dry beans, cherries, pickles, growers will see a meaningful change to the level playing field for their crop insurance, giving them much needed certainty. This bill updates loan limits and supports rural and development, and I have worked with rep venture to prevent foreign entities from snapping up our farmland. Make no mistake, things are hard and we need solutions for the moment, I look forward to talking about all of that and how we use this opportunity for this Farm Bill to work with our colleagues from both sides to deliver for farmers and families who are relying on us. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back, now recognize the gentleman from Texas. Dr. Jackson for five minutes.

Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-Texas)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for the incredible work you and your staff have done to bring this Farm Bill together. I would also like to commend you for your leadership during the reconciliation process, which delivered historic investments for production agriculture in the One Big Beautiful Bill, the number one issue I heard from producers in Texas 13th Congressional District was the need to strengthen the farm safety net through the One Big Beautiful Bill, House Republicans were able to update Price Loss Coverage reference process, enhance the Agricultural Risk Coverage Program and make higher levels of crop insurance coverage more affordable. For all these provisions are providing essential risk management tools for farmers facing persistently high input cost and declining commodity prices, I was also proud to have secured essential funding for USDA animal health programs in H.R. 1, ensuring America's livestock producers are prepared to combat foreign animal disease outbreaks like Foot and Mouth Disease, African swine fever and the New World screw worm. While one The One Big Beautiful Bill delivered historic wins for production agriculture, this Farm Bill expands on those successes, securing greater access to credit for producers, enhancing working land conservation programs and increasing investments in rural America.

I would also like to highlight some of the initiatives I led that were included in this legislation. One of my biggest priorities included in my agricultural infrastructure stability Act, which will provide critical risk management for the cotton producers, Jen's Co-Op and co-ops in my district, persistent droughts and natural disasters have devastated cotton production in Texas in recent years, which has reverberated throughout the entire supply chain, causing many businesses to close or consolidate. This provision directs the federal Crop Insurance Corporation to develop new crop insurance policy to help cotton producers manage increased risk associated with harvesting crops that would have been failed in the early growing season. Through this insurance policy, we can help ensure additional cotton volumes are harvested and produced, strengthening the downstream supply chain and improving financial stability across the entire cotton industry.

This bill also includes my rural healthcare Technical Assistance Program Act which codifies and expands an existing USDA program that provides critical technical assistance to rural hospitals and healthcare facilities, helping to improve financial and operational performance in recent years, many rural hospitals in my district in particular have across and across the US have been forced to shut down, but this provision will help prevent closures and strengthen essential healthcare services in our rural communities. I also, I'm also proud to have my dietary guidelines Reform Act include. Included ensuring greater transparency, integrity and evidence based nutritional information in the dietary guidelines Americans process President Trump and Secretary Kennedy's make America healthy again. Dietary Guidelines are simple.

Eat real food. This will build on the Trump Administration's historic reset of the US nutritional policy and promotes real science, backed recommendations that support the American people's health and well being. Finally, in this legislation, I was able to establish a pilot program to review crop insurance penalties for late planted corn in the Texas panhandle. New seed variants have allowed corn producers in my district to maintain the same production levels in a shorter growing period, using less water from the gala aquifer.

This pilot program will help determine how planting dates impact yields and irrigation use, ensuring producers can make the best decisions for their for their operations, while eliminating unnecessary reductions in their crop

insurance coverage overall, this Farm Bill contains strong, common sense provisions that support America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities so that they can continue feeding and clothing the world. I would again like to condemn. I would, I would again, again like to commend the work of Chairman Thompson and his staff for writing such an impactful bill. And I am excited for today's markup, and hope we can finally deliver a full five year Farm Bill that provides our agricultural producers with the certainty they need to remain in operation for generations to come.

And with that, I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chairman. Gentleman yelled back now please recognize parent of one of America's newest soldiers, Mr. Davis, for five minutes.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. And to the Ranking Member and to the committee members, there was nothing greater than to send my middle son off to the army, even though I'm Air Force and to serve our country as is his dream to do, and you are hearing me talk today about young people and fulfilling their dreams. Since joining the House Agriculture Committee, have devoted significant time to meeting and speaking with people across North Carolina's 1st Congressional District to hear their concerns, their issues, those things that impact our daily lives. And for too long, our farmers have faced an uphill battle, rising input costs, tariffs, labor and natural disasters, especially for us in North Carolina, have taken their toll.

We can add one more thing to that list, if we may, and that's continuing to kick down the road, the Farm Bill. Farmers are waiting on a new Farm Bill. Farmers can't keep waiting. They need our help genuinely now, nearly 15,000 farms closed this past year.

91% of farmers identified financial issues as the top factor impacting their mental health. And believe, I believe the American people sent us here to figure this stuff out and help solve the problems for them that they're facing

for the State of the Union, I invited Nathaniel Simmons from Hyde County, Mr. Chair, 17 years old. 17 years old. Ranking Member Craig an eight generation farmer.

He started the age of nine. He conveyed the challenges of keeping young people in agriculture. They're seeing their parents and the neighbors struggling and working from sun up to sun down, just trying to figure this stuff out, how to make ends meet, young people are left having to decide whether it's even worth it, whether they can fulfill their dreams. Yet, instead of being discouraged, this young man, like many others, he's waking up, he's putting his boots on, and he's stepping up for the challenge.

If we want a strong and prosperous nation everyone we must invest in young farmers and fuel it, because without them, there is no food on our tables and there is no future for our country. We must keep agriculture within reach for young people, fundamentally, fundamentally, we must allow young farmers to live the American dream right there on their farms. The farmers. Not just about the farm itself, though.

It's about communities. For those of us in these rural areas, the farm is helping the grocery store. It's helping Napa and convenience stores. The Farm Bill is not perfect.

We know it's not perfect, and I've heard from many stakeholders. We have a ways to go. But to be clear, farmers cannot keep taking it on the chin. So no matter where this bill ends up, I look forward, and this is my commitment is to the Chair, to the Ranking Member and to anyone, anyone who was sent here by the people to genuinely work on these issues impacting our farm families, consumers and rural communities with that.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair and our Ranking Member.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you, gentlemen I yield back now I recognize the gentleman from the great Dairy State of Wisconsin, Mr. Van Orden, for five

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and thank you. Ranking Member Craig, I'd like to read a quote here.

It will not be doubted that with reference either to individual or national welfare, agriculture is of primary importance in proportion as nations advance in population and other circumstances of maturity, this truth becomes more apparent and renders the cultivation of the soil more and more an object of public patronage that was written by George Washington in 1796 so I talked to some of my colleagues who think that we shouldn't be going through this process to ensure that we can feed our people, I would remind them that the first President of the United States was an agronomist, and he understood that as we grow as a nation, that we must help our agriculture industry. It's a privilege to be here today to deliver farm board, Farm Bill. 2.0 for America's farmers in rural communities, agriculture is the cornerstone of Wisconsin and the backbone of our nation. Wisconsin, farmers help keep America fed, and when agriculture succeeds in Wisconsin, rural communities thrive.

Supply chain stay strong, and families across the country benefit. And that's why it's so important that we get this right. Under the working families Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, we made significant strides in supporting farmers, ranchers, in rural communities in Wisconsin, across our nation, we've got $56 billion investment in various Title One provisions, $6 billion investment in title 11. Crop Insurance provides additional investment in specialty crop research initiatives and specialty crop black block grants that will support a growing and thriving specialty crop industry.

This significantly helps our cranberry farmers, and Wisconsin is the number one producer of cran berries in the entire world, where the number one producer of ginseng for the country and the number three producer of potatoes. This provides $125 million per year, the first mandatory funding in history for the agriculture research facilities act, showing that the American agriculture universities have the infrastructure required to lead the world in Agricultural Science, Technology and Innovation, provides $1.5 billion over the next decade in livestock, bar security, supporting more large animal veterinarians, USDA laboratories, vaccination developments, AFIS and the assistance for farmers impacted by animal disease. It gets rid of the death

tax. So the reason that family farms go under is because they owe the government 30 plus percent of the value of their farm when they try to go to the next generation.

That is gone $15 million per person exclusion and that it's going to be remarkable for revitalizing our family farms and making sure it goes to the next generation. Permanent Small Business deduction would increase to 23% extends 100% immediate expensing of capital improvements, immediate expensing for new manufacturing and protection facilities in America, and increases the 179 small business expensing threshold to $2.5 million renews opportunity zone programs for better targeting rural America. And following the enactment of the 2017 Trump tax cuts, small and medium sized family farms saw their effective tax rates decrease by up to upwards to 6% we provided critical support for farmers improve food security and promoted sustainable agriculture, but as farmers know, there is more work to do. This Farm Bill 2.0 invests in, excuse me, and addresses critical challenges.

Wisconsin is not a dairy state, it is the dairy state, and this legislation supports our dairy farmers by refining the important work in H.R. 1 to support dairy risk management tools, increases the Funding for Market access programs and foreign market development program. Enhances financing options for producers who are unable to obtain credit from a commercial lender, provides resources to new young, beginning and veteran farmers in transitioning to farming, they are the next generation, and we must help them protecting enhancing the ability of commercial lenders to provide rural America with a reliable source of credit and capital maintain mandatory funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension initiative at $50 million per year, Organic Valley was started. In my district in the state of Wisconsin, we're going to continue to support the organic production through the National Organic Program, organic production and market data initiative and the National organic certification cost share program that codifies the agriculture grants for veterans, education and training services. That's AG, that's my bill, and that was brought in under H. R. 1230 addresses the concerns about the conversion of private forest land, allows livestock auctioneers to invest in packaging and creates a pilot program for the life of the Farm Bill to allow a small number of custom

exempt facilities to sell meat producers directly to consumers within the state and my district has the fourth largest population of Amish in the country, it's going to help them tremendously.

But beyond the policies of this program, it's about people. It's about the families who rise before dawn to tend their crops and care for their livestock. It's about the communities that depend on the success of their farms to thrive. It's about feeding a hungry child and helping break the scourge that is the endless cycle of recidivism that has created a permanent underclass of formerly incarcerated Americans.

I'm so very happy to stand with my colleagues here on both sides of the aisle to get this Farm Bill through and give our farmers what they need, and that is certainty. And with that, I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman's time expires now. Please recognize the gentleman from Alabama and Mr. Figures for five minutes.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Craig this Farm Bill process has long been known as one of the most bipartisan acts of Congress, and it's my hope that as we take up the largest and most consequential piece of legislation that this committee produces, that we can live up to that reputation and ensure bipartisanship is truly reflected in this markup. But expectations for a meaningfully bipartisan process are unfortunately, very low this year, and that is because, for the first time, as I understand it, in the history of the Farm Bill, significant portions have been stripped out and taken up and tucked away in what was an extremely partisan reconciliation process. So now we're left to try to pick up the pieces and make the best of a process that will produce a non-traditional and severely limited Farm Bill. But yet, I remain hopeful and optimistic.

I'm just a freshman here in Congress, so I was not around for the Farm Bill processes over the past several years. But I have hope. I have hope that we can make this bill better than what's been presented by listening and actually implementing some of the ideas that come from this side of the aisle. So with

that said, I respectfully ask for careful consideration of the amendments offered today and for good faith participation from members of this committee on both sides of the aisle throughout this markup.

I represent a district in Alabama where the individual median income is just about $33,000 that is the reality my constituents live with every single day in my district, about one in four households rely on SNAP benefits, and yet we are here today working on a Farm Bill that has been described as skinny, and that's in part because SNAP and the nutrition title is largely not addressed. It. It was taken out and gutted during reconciliation, and it is the irony is not lost on me in calling a bill that historically provides food security skinny when this year's bill likely won't provide much food security as it has done in the past. Over $185 billion was cut from the SNAP program that already only supplemented about $6 a day for low income people to eat $6 at a time when eggs in Alabama cost about $6 a dozen.

It's like this committee has forgotten where food comes from, and some of the policies and acts that it is supported in conjunction with this administration. Every dollar taken from SNAP was money taken from our farmers, every dollar taken from SNAP was money taken from our farmers. Every dollar taken from the school lunch program was money taken from our farmers. Every ounce of beef that comes into America from Argentina is money taken away from American farmers.

Every increased price due to the tariffs, every market limitation due to the tariff policies, is money taken away from our farmers, but there is good news. We have an opportunity to recognize the error of our reconciliation ways and support and restore the support for our farmers and food security for those who need it most. But this bill is not just about one title, as we all know titles one through 12 all matter together. They shape the entire landscape of our farm food and national security systems.

For more than five decades, Congress has recognized that the Farm Bill only works when all of its titles work together as part of a single agricultural framework, from from the field to the fork, from conservation of the land to the commodities and specialty crops grown on it from protections for farmer credit to rural development of the communities where those farmers live. And so far, this text does not go far enough. It falls short of our land grant colleges. It falls short for our specialty crop producers.

It falls short for rural development for socially disadvantaged farmers and for beginning farmers who are trying to break. Into an increasingly more difficult industry. And given the amount of time we knew this bill was coming, many of these provisions had the opportunity, and quite honestly, the responsibility to American farmers to be stronger. That is why the amendments I will offer today and tomorrow, they provide support for rural healthcare systems that communities depend on they strengthen our land grant universities that serve as the backbone of agricultural research and extension and require a clear guarantee that SNAP benefits will still be there if a state cannot or does not meet the cost sharing requirements.

These are real world consequences that deserve serious consideration, and I sincerely hope we can strengthen them today through this mark up process. I believe we can still work together on what remains before us. I believe this committee can choose dialogue over division, participation over posturing, and people over politics. At the end of the day, the constituents who send each of us here to Congress deserve nothing less from each and every one of us here.

They deserve a process that reflects respect, seriousness and bipartisan cooperation. I hope today we can give them just that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you gentleman yields back, now recognize the gentleman from Iowa, Mr. Nunn, for five minutes.

Rep. Zach Nunn (R-Iowa)

Well, thank you, Chairman. I believe everyone in this room knows that food security is national security, and the men and women who farm our land don't just grow crops. They sustain our economy, our communities and our country. Like many Iowans, I grew up helping on my family century farm, helping to raise sheep, plant, row crop, learn early on that farming demands faith, stewardship and long term investment.

That long term investment is what we think about when we think about this year's Farm Bill. Over the past few years, I've traveled across Iowa on my

Farm Bill listening tour, and I met with farmers, co-ops, AG, lenders, rural leaders, Iowans, Americans, right in the heart of our country, and their message was clear, we need stability. They asked for certainty, market protection and real opportunity for the next generation of Americans to keep farming. I've worked to turn those conversations into bipartisan legislation, and I'm proud that the bills before us tonight include 19 of my legislative priorities alongside strong provisions from colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

This bill builds on the investment we made in the farm safety net of $66 billion that was passed this summer to expand opportunity, and I fought to include provisions that include lowering barriers for farm ownership, helping new and beginning farmers provide access to credit, to codify our reconnect broadband program to ensure that rural communities have the infrastructure modern agriculture depends on we include provisions to strengthen the oversight of agricultural lands and enhance an agricultural bio security and cybersecurity protections, priorities that I'm proud to have helped champion this bill also strengthen animal welfare protections by cracking down on cruel puppy mills through improved coordination with enforcement, both at the federal and local levels, we've done a lot of good things in this bill, Mr. Chairman, and I'm proud to say that Iowa farmers had a direct hand in what's been included. But the Farm Bill is only part of the equation for Iowa's 87,000 family farms and hundreds of thousands of farmers across our country. They need certainty when it comes to things like bio fuel policy, while we made meaningful progress over the last year, including my work to extend 40 5z tax credits and the support of friends on both sides of the aisle here, there's more to be done, both in sustainable aviation fuel and in bio fuels, but passing This Farm Bill is an important step forward for America's agriculture. But that's not the sole job alone.

We owe it to our farmer, our farmers, our families and our friends to deliver certainty and stability in the market, and that means year wide, year round, nationwide, e 15, we have the opportunity right now to show that Congress can still meet the moment. I hope we seize it. I'm proud of the bipartisan legislation that has brought these priorities together, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it. We can pass a Farm Bill that matters, a Farm Bill that helps America, and a Farm Bill that moves forward with year round nationwide, e 15 to help both the farmer and the family when it comes to feeding a family as well as fueling up at the pump.

I look forward to moving this bill forward again. Mr. Chairman, thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back now. Please recognize the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Vindman, for five minutes.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank. You. Ranking Member I agree with Ranking Member the Ranking Member that this Farm Bill fails to meet the moment, I was happy to see that there are some major wins in the bill. I'd like to thank Chairman Thompson for including my US Israel agriculture cooperation, improvement and expansion Act, which supports the bard fund.

This program will solidify our alliances in the Middle East and ensure continued collaboration between Israel and American agricultural scientists creating innovation that benefits everyone. I was also happy to see that a portion of my reModernization Act was included in the bill. The Rural Energy for American program is a lifeline for farmers and rural small businesses to make energy efficiency improvements and cut their electrical bills, but this bill still has a long way to go. I'm troubled to see that it wipes out state and local regulations on pesticide use and labeling.

I'm also troubled that the bill, as written, will make it harder for people who have gotten sick from pesticides to find justice in courts. I'm also concerned that the bill doesn't address the growing hunger crisis in America. It doesn't reverse the record SNAP cuts in the big, ugly bill, even though they were harmful and unpopular with the American people. It doesn't restore critical bipartisan programs to get farm fresh food to schools and food banks.

It doesn't restore the market share that our farmers have lost to competitors in Brazil and Argentina, and it doesn't make food more affordable for hard working families in the failing, flailing Trump economy. However, I believe that we have a great opportunity here to make a bill that that supports American farmers lowers costs and helps feed working families today, we have a chance to ensure that localities can make common sense policies that protect their communities from toxic chemicals. We can support American

ecology and eradicate invasive pests like the spotted lantern fly. We can reverse some of the unpopular, harmful SNAP provisions from the big, ugly bill and restore anti-hunger programs that were canceled by DOGE.

We can work to cut rural energy costs and lower costs at the grocery store for American families. We can support a robust agri tourism economy that allows our farmers to have multiple streams of income and encourages Americans to know where their food comes from. We can commit more money to agricultural research and support national security as well as Farm Security. Today, I look forward to hearing my colleagues amendments to this bill, and call my colleagues to consider my amendments as we work towards a Farm Bill that truly meets the moment.

Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Please recognize the gentleman from Washington State, Mr. Newhouse, for five minutes.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, as well as Ranking Member Craig, I just want to say I'm pleased to be able to speak in favor of the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 I'm delighted to mark up this important piece of legislation, something that I think we can all agree on is long overdue. You know, as a third generation farmer, my son being now the fourth generation, and also as a proud member of this committee, I know all too well the importance of the Farm Bill and and happy that with the work that was put in to this year's version. I want to take a few minutes to highlight some of the provisions that I'm most happy to see that will greatly benefit my constituents in Central Washington, as well as farmers around the country.

For those of you who may not know, Washington is home to over 300 specialty crops. This Farm Bill provides over $1 billion in support for specialty crops in critical areas such as research, market competitiveness and protection from pests and diseases. It also addresses other issues for the industry, such as waiving the matching funds requirement for the specialty crop research initiative, making improvements to the specialty crop block

grant program and establishing a specialty crop advisory committee with a member seat on the federal Crop Insurance Corporation board. Throughout my years in Congress, I've heard repeatedly of another important matter, which is the need for a standing framework for specialty crop economic and disaster assistance, especially crops, often must wait months to receive vital assistance, and that's just unacceptable.

The bill before us addresses this issue by providing a framework for USDA to use for future disaster and economic assistance for specialty crops, the need for a simplified, consistent framework for specialty crop assistance is long overdue, and I'm glad we are taking action today to address this long standing issue. Another portion of the legislation that I'm particularly excited about is the trade title we make significant. Investments in the market access program and the foreign market development program, a priority that I have championed for years as I have the technical assistance for specialty crops emerging markets and priority trade funds. Trade Promotion and access to new and emerging markets is critical to ensuring the success of farmers in my trade dependent state of Washington and across the United States, the trade title also includes a provision that transfers the Food for Peace program to the USDA.

Food for Peace plays a critical role in prevention, preventing starvation in places around the world that need it most, while also providing American farmers additional market opportunities. It makes sense to move this program to USDA and allow a commodity focused agency to manage and execute the program's mission, while ensuring accountability and that funds will be spent responsibly. You know, these are just a handful of the common sense provisions in this bill, and while I'd love to speak on about more of them, I'll just end today by urging my colleagues to to vote in favor of the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for for your many trips around the country to get valuable input, input and to listen to farmers in so many different states. And I also want to give thanks to the staff that worked so diligently on this piece of legislation.

It is a product that I truly believe will benefit our nation's farmers, our ranchers and also our rural communities with that. Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you gentleman yields back now. Please recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. Riley, for five minutes.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Oh, thank you. Mr. Chairman, our farmers are the heart and soul of rural upstate New York. They really are the very best of who we are. Up before dawn in the freezing cold to milk the cows on the sun beating down to pick the apples, no excuses, no complaints, no days off, really, Nobody works harder, and they don't ask for a hell of a lot in return, just a fair shot to make a decent living doing the work they love, work that very often has been in the family for generations.

I represent 4547 farms across nearly 1 million acres, and almost all of those farms are family owned, and the average net income is just over $45,000 a year. So these are families who are just trying to keep it together and make it work. And the thing is, these families aren't just up against the conditions. They're up against a system that has been rigged against them.

Big AG monopolies around here have all the lobbyists and corporate packs they spent close to $30 million in the last election. It's literally 600 times the amount an upstate family farmer makes in an entire year, and they've used all that influence to stack the deck in our farm economy. They get bigger and richer, and our small family farms get crushed and left behind. And so I came to Congress, and I asked to serve on this committee to change that.

I want a Farm Bill that puts up state New York's small family farms first for once. And I've been listening to all the opening statements here, and it sounds like, you know, a whole bunch of people on this side say this is a terrible bill. A whole bunch of people on this side say this is a great bill. I think the answer is somewhere in between.

And I'm going to come into this mark up with an open mind, bill includes a lot of my priorities for Upstate New York's family farms. Also include some stuff I very strongly oppose and it's missing some stuff that needs to be added, the good stuff. Upstate New York grows the best apples and makes the best cider in the world. Period.

It's not up for debate. I know this, having grown up a few blocks from not a cider mill, but the cider mill in Endicott. So the Farm Bill has my bipartisan legislation to cut red tape, waive fees, make it easier for our apple growers to take advantage of cutting edge research and innovation. I thought you'd like that part.

Farm bill also includes my bipartisan legislation to deploy middle mile broadband across rural America. This is going to connect our rural communities to economic development, public health, basic necessities that are easy to get in the cities, but too often a luxury in upstate New York. I also know that our dairy farmers are at the mercy of a complex and bureaucratic and outdated price setting system that too often pays too little for their product. A lot of time they can't even recover their costs, and they're literally operating at negative margins.

So I'm proud that the Farm Bill includes my bipartisan legislation to update the milk pricing formulas with the most accurate, most up to date data about dairy farmers, actual. Costs when we have fair prices for milk, that's good for dairy farmers, it's good for consumers and it's good for our rural economy. Really thankful to the folks at Dutch Hollow Farm and skodak for working with me on that. I'm also glad to see this bill extend the whole milk for Healthy Kids Act to cover breakfast.

And one of the things I've heard time and again visiting upstate New York's family farms is anxiety for the next generation. Older farmers at the end of their careers who want the farm to stay in the family, younger farmers at the start of their careers who want the same thing, but the barriers are so high, the margins are so small, and the uncertainty is so much, so the Farm Bill includes my bipartisan legislation to improve access to credit for the next generation of farmers, it cuts red tape, makes it quicker and easier to get capital, because why should it be so easy for investment bankers on Wall Street to get credit and so damn hard for young farmers in stephentown and Kinderhook so there's a lot of good stuff in here, but there's also stuff that I very strongly oppose and will not support, including immunity for pesticides manufacturers and handouts to the chemical companies. We've got provisions in here that could interfere with labeling practices for kosher and halal foods and language that could let USDA outsource good union jobs with CSCA. These are harmful provisions, and I'll support amendments to remove them.

And finally, there's some stuff that's been left out of this Farm Bill, including some things that have to be added to earn my support. I want us to undo the devastating SNAP cuts from the one big, ugly Bill Congress never should have cut public health by a trillion dollars to fund tax breaks for Wall Street. And we need to undo that. We need to do more to address the housing crisis in rural America, and I'm hoping that we will add my bipartisan bills to make tractors safer, SNAP benefits, more secure, irrigation systems less expensive, yogurt more accessible for kids, and utility bills lower for rural families.

At the end of the day, question for me here isn't whether this is a good bill for a political party. I'm looking for whether it's a good bill for upstate New York. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman's time is expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Wied, for five minutes. I tell you what.

Rep. Tony Wied (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm proud to stand in support of this Farm Bill. Since I joined Congress, I've heard from our farmers over and over again on the importance of getting a Farm Bill done. We've got so many important parts done with the working families tax cuts, our farmers depended on the investments we made for them, and it was incredibly disappointing to see our friends across the aisle not support those investments.

However, I am hopeful that we can have strong bipartisan support this time around and get this strong Farm Bill passed so our producers can get the help they desperately need, as we so often hear around here, food security is national security, and hopefully that is reflected during this markup. Wisconsin has such a rich agricultural heritage, ranging from the traditional row crops of corn and soy beans to specialty crops like door County's famed cherries and 60% of the nation's cranberry crops to our world famous Wisconsin dairy America's dairy land has been producing world renowned cheeses, butter and yogurt, for generations. Our producers in Wisconsin's 8th District and beyond deserve to have our support. This Farm Bill does exactly that for our dairy farmers in general.

The unprecedented increase in support for trade promotion programs will provide our farmers with new opportunities to grow. The bill increases support for our specialty crops and organic programs. These, of course, will help ensure Americans have access to healthy, high quality American foods. It also ensures that USDA will safeguard the use of common names, which is vital to the many, many cheese makers in my district to remain competitive.

Everyone knows that cheese is made in Wisconsin, such as Parmesan, feta, Gar gonzola and all the others are better than their European counterparts, and people all over the world deserve to have access to that no matter how hard they try to implement unfair trading practices in H.R. 1, we were able to authorize production cost surveys for dairy farmers and processors to increase transparency, transparency to help manage risk for both. Additionally, we were able to expand the dairy nutrition incentives program to include all dairy milks and hard cheeses. Later on in the markup, we will hopefully add in yogurt as well. This move provides an excellent opportunity to encourage SNAP participants to make healthier choices at the grocery store.

I think all people should be consuming more whole milk cheese and yogurt. They are some of the healthiest choices families can make, and it is a good use of SNAP dollars to incentivize that. Additionally, this bill codifies the important adjustments that the Trump Administration has made on dietary guidelines, ensuring that Americans are being advised on their decisions based on science and transparency. This is vital for every American.

Can family to make the most healthy decision for themselves along the lines of SNAP I'm also proud that the provision from mine and Representative Brown's EBT fee free Act has been included in the manager's amendment. This will ensure that neither SNAP participants or retailers ever must be subjected to potentially costly EBT processing fees. Neither consumers nor retailers could shoulder any more unnecessary fees now they never have to worry. I want to reiterate my support for this bill, and I want to thank the Chairman and the rest of the committee on not giving up on their commitment to rural America to get this Farm Bill done.

This is the first step. I hope our friends across the aisle will join us in supporting this vital lifeline to our producers when so many of them are

struggling. I also hope our friends in the Senate can do their job and also pass their version of the Farm Bill so we can finally get this to the President's desk, and let's get the job done. I yield back,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Mannion from New York for five minutes.

Rep. John Mannion (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to Ranking Member Craig. I serve on this committee to represent the interests of a district where agriculture matters, dairy, specialty crops, family farms that have been there for generations. I also represent families who are managing an affordability crisis and are stretching every dollar.

Farmers in central New York and the Mohawk Valley are facing rising input costs, closed export markets and uncertainty heading into the next planning season. At the same time, grocery prices remain elevated, and working families are feeling it every single week. Historically, the Farm Bill has always worked when we work together to address the concerns of farmers as well as families that rely on nutrition assistance. Yet this proposal fails to restore the $187 billion in SNAP cuts, including the unprecedented cost shift to states, which governors across the country have said will undermine the program's financial integrity and long term viability.

And these cuts aren't just devastating to those who find themselves in a position where they need food assistance, they've resulted in Lost markets for farms across Central New York and the Mohawk Valley. The government has literally taken a customer away from our producers. In New York alone, 46,000 children and 291,000 adults with disabilities rely on SNAP. And in New York, 22 over half of the SNAP households include a person with a disability.

These are seniors on fixed income, these are veterans. These are families caring for a loved one with higher medical costs and fewer work options. Snap averages about $6 a day. That is not excessive by any reasonable measure.

And instead of building bipartisan consensus, the bill includes poison bills like shielding large pesticide corporations from accountability and overriding state animal welfare standards that farmers have already invested in meeting. It does nothing to address the root cause of rising farm costs, the inflationary, unpredictable tariffs that farmers in my district tell me are squeezing their margins and limiting market excess, it does nothing to meaningfully stabilize family farm income as bankruptcies rise and USDA projects further income income declines, we should be doing better. We should be supporting farmers and real market relief and predictable conservation funding. We should be protecting SNAP so children, seniors, veterans and people with disabilities don't go hungry.

We should be restoring stability to rural economies, instead of shifting unfunded mandates on the states and counties. That's why I support the farm and family Relief Act, real assistance for family farmers, protection for SNAP recipients and reasserting congressional authority over the tariffs driving so much of this pain, I do want to acknowledge one important inclusion, what I see as a bright spot in this piece of legislation, and that's the bipartisan rural micro entrepreneur assistance program that I introduced with Representative Zach Nunn, it's getting more expensive to chase the American dream, especially in our rural communities, and this language will increase the maximum loan amount available to rural entrepreneurs to $75,000 to better reflect current business start up and expansion costs. It also expands how that money can be used, giving flexibility to use up to half of those funds for construction and real estate improvement costs, these common sense changes will give business owners the resources to improve their physical spaces and revitalize our main streets. I'm grateful that this bipartisan practical reform is included.

Nine because strengthening access to capital for rural micro businesses is exactly the kind of targeted economic development we should be advancing and an example of what's possible when we work together across the aisle, we have a couple of long nights ahead of us. I hope we use that time to make this bill worthy of the farmers and families that we represent. I thank you, Mr. Chairman and

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I yield back gentleman yields back the challenge Chair. Now recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Bresnahan, for five minutes first.

Rep. Rob Bresnahan (R-Pa.)

Thank you, Chairman Thompson, for being a champion for Pennsylvania farmers in rural communities across America and for your leadership on the farm food and National Security Act in northeastern Pennsylvania, I represent dairy farmers, specialty crop growers and small multi-generational family farms, who are being forced to working longer hours for thinner margins, they are battling rising feed costs, supply chain disruptions and unfair market pressures. Congress has a responsibility to ensure federal farm policy works for them, not against them. This Farm Bill answers that call. I am particularly proud that includes my bipartisan local farmers feeding our communities act co-led by my colleagues, Representative Riley, Representative Pingree and Representative valladao, far too often the conversations around hunger leaves out the very people who grow, raise and produce the food our families depend on.

This program will reduce the barriers between our farmers and their local communities by creating a clear path to put fruit, fresh fruit, healthy fruit, foods like veggies, milk and cheese on the plates of the people that need it. I'm also proud this Farm Bill also prioritizes specialty crop competitiveness, delivers long overdue regulatory relief so American farmers and ranchers can focus on producing food instead of navigating red tape and provides critical support to rural America, including strengthening rural broadband, expanding access to healthcare, meeting child care needs, investing in work force developments, streamlining permitting processes and modernizing rural water infrastructure. These are challenges I hear from the people across Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District every single day, and I'm proud that we have found ways to address these needs with bipartisan support. Finally, Mr. Chairman, while there were several policies that we were not able to include in this bill, I look forward to working to work with you to address them.

Moving forward, chief among them is the training and nutrition stability Act, which would remove the disincentive for individuals to participate and learn as you earn programs through the SNAP Employment and Training program. I know this is a shared priority, and I'm committed to finding a

path forward together. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill. And Mr. Chairman, Chairman,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I yield back gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Maryland, McClain Delaney for five minutes.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Thank you to our Chair and our ranking committee member as the only Maryland federal delegate on the house Agricultural Committee. I take this, this work, very seriously and proudly represent Maryland's 6th Congressional District, which represents Western Maryland and our Montgomery County AG reserve. The work of this committee touches every corner of our communities, supporting farmers, strengthening small towns and main streets and protecting the land and water for future generations. It also helps our US competitiveness and our national security, and there is no moment that when the responsibility matters more than when we come together to craft a Farm Bill.

And this is a personal issue for me, because I grew up in a farming family, the Farm Bill is more than legislation. It is really a blueprint for our future and for our American agriculture coming in as a first time member of this Congress, I was honored to join this committee, not only to tackle the critical issues faced by farm country, but also to do so in a bipartisan spirit. This is the principle that this committee has uniquely upheld, even in the most challenging and diverse, divisive of times, and we have the opportunity before us to put politics aside and work for the betterment of the people we represent. While I appreciate the majority's efforts to reauthorize the 2018 Farm Bill a long, long overdue step, the bill before us still fall short.

It doesn't address the deeper economic struggles producers face, or the hardship that millions of working families small businesses and manufacturers continue to endure under a trade war that cost our farmers over 25 billion and contributed to a 46% increase in farm bankruptcies. I'm glad to see that farmers are due some relief under the Supreme Court and when they struck down the President's reckless tax scheme, but the President shows no bounds In retaliation, he has placed a 15% levy on

imports. When will this stop? Trump's illegal tariffs have cost my hard working Maryland families over $1,700 per household, and $4 billion statewide, with Western Maryland farmers and small businesses being hit the hardest, we as Democrats in our caucus have offered a solution, the family and farm Relief Act, we give our farmers the certainty they need in the trade war and provide stability for rural communities.

This current bill still does not meet that need. We also cannot ignore what this moment demands. Families across this country are still struggling with higher grocery prices, yet this bill does nothing to restore basic food assistance, even after Republicans cut over 187 billion from SNAP in H.R. 140 2 million people rely on SNAP, including in my district, one in nine Marylanders, half of them children, at A time when food costs are rising. We should not only be pulling away system assistance, like my colleagues in this room did just a few months ago.

Instead, I want to work on restoring support this bill is rose back even modest gains made in the 2024 Farm Bill, including funding for fruit and vegetables incentive programs and many Maryland families and farms utilize SNAP but also many farmers sell into the SNAP program. This legislation also has an opportunity to address the broader Hurd fall across rural America. The committee has the tools to strengthen rural broadband, invest in child care, bolster housing, address the skyrocketing cost of utilities and more in the rural development title in this bill, but it barely moves the needle. We have a chance to do better, and we can right now.

We face a real risk splintering our bipartisan coalition that has sustained the Farm Bill for nearly a century, since 1933 farmers rural communities and advocates have come together across party lines to make a Farm Bill a reality. And what is stunning is that same coalition once drove tractors from across the country to the Capitol in 1979 standing shoulder to shoulder in protest win the bill before the bill to me at the moment, I remember that moment my dad spoke about it. Their determination built the framework that supports our food systems and rural economies. To this day, if we lose that unity, we put politics above the needs of farmers and rural communities, we risk more than just a bill we risk undermining nearly a century of bipartisan collaboration on the trust of the people who feed and sustain our nation.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to craft a Farm Bill that truly works when that reflects the needs, the resilience and the voices of rural America. I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady's time has expired, and I recognize the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Messmer, for five minutes.

Rep. Mark Messmer (R-Ind.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I am proud to support the farm food and National Security Act to help the 9300 family farms in my district. This bill represents years of hard work, and it incorporates answers to nearly a decade of requests, not just from farmers, but American families rural schools and hospitals and small businesses, the Farm Bill before us does not just keep family farms operating, it also lowers consumer energy costs. Invest in rural infrastructure, improves improves opportunity for conservation and recreation and enhances access to food for Americans struggling with hunger, and it bolsters the security of our food supply chains against international threats. This is not a partisan bill, as detailed by my colleague, Representative Johnson.

In fact, several of the bipartisan priorities I introduced this year have made their home within the text of this Farm Bill. These include the DOD and USDA interagency Research Act, co-led with with my friend Congressman Don Davis, the SNAP Online Access Act, which I introduced alongside the gentleman from California Representative Adam Gray, the restoring Americans flood plains Act, which I drafted in partnership with Congressman Gabe Vasquez, and the bio manufacturing and Jobs Act, which I introduced alongside Ranking Member Angie Craig, Representative Mark Alford and Representative Kristen McDonald rivet. While these are just a small snapshot of the cumulative impacts of this year's Farm Bill, these four bills represent the shared Republican and Democrat priorities with profound impacts on not just Indiana, but the rest of the nation as well. The DOD and USDA interagency Research Act, for example, strategically incentivizes public and private public private partnerships to leverage innovation in both American agriculture and defense sectors to address risks to our most critical resource.

Food the SNAP Online Access Act provides a modern solution to the food deserts in both urban and rural America by allowing SNAP families to purchase their groceries online. The restoring America's flood plains act reshapes the way USD for USDA formats floodplain easements by ensuring that farmers, land owners and local local conservationists remain at the heart of flood prevention efforts that protect communities and revitalize injured watersheds. The bio manufacturing and jobs act directly expands markets for American food products to the USDA bio preferred program, enhancing that that the productivity of a $489 billion market that accounts for 100,000 jobs in Indiana alone. These are the kind of common sense bills that make up the 2026, Farm Bill.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the farm food and National Security Act to provide stability for this generation of farmers and secure the viability of the next generation. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. He yields back. Now recognize the gentlelady from Maine Ms. Pingree for five minutes.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to you and the Ranking Member for the tremendous amount of work you put into this bill. But sadly, I still feel this bill is a disappointment for farmers, for families and for rural America. It is a very challenging time to be a farmer or to live in a rural America, farm bankruptcies are up 46% we lost 15,000 farms last year alone. We continue to see consolidation hurt small and medium sized farmers who just can't make ends meet.

Big farms are getting bigger and smaller. Farms are closing their doors, and even though grocery prices keep rising, Republicans slash SNAP by $187 billion in the big, ugly Bill taking food off the table for 42 million Americans, seniors, children, veterans, people with disabilities, and then they handed the states the bill. Some governors have said that they may have to drop SNAP entirely, and this bill does nothing to fix that. The tariffs have been an unmitigated disaster, causing chaos and hurting the American farmer.

Here is a story from one farmer in main he was trying to buy a single piece of equipment to process organic brussel sprouts. It's only made overseas because of the economic chaos coming out of Washington. He has to guess the weight of steel and the day it arrives, and hope prices won't spike before the machine clears customs and this bill doesn't help farmers impacted by Trump's trade wars. Meanwhile, Maine's iconic blueberry industry is suffering.

The acreage down. The price is down. The cost doubled. Our dairy sector has collapsed from over 600 farms to 140 while this bill makes some policy tweaks, it makes zero investment to help those farmers and families.

We should be investing in resilience for farmers facing the challenges of extreme weather, heat, drought, floods, invasive species. While I was glad to see this administration launch a regenerative agriculture pilot program, I am deeply concerned that they are merely shuffling funds from other areas already funded and have set so far, no standards you could be claiming you were regenerative because you were doing new till while still spraying glyphosate on your fields. The bill also provides insufficient funding to support farmers who are organic or transitioning to organic, which is a proven standard that helps soil health and has clear standards. We are also cutting other conservation programs that help with soil health.

The Republicans are reshuffling a billion dollars from equip a core conservation program that is over subscribed in main and across the nation. They're also eliminating farmland conservation transactions that give beginning farmers and underserved farmers access to affordable land. They're failing to increase gusnip, which would provide more funding for fruits and vegetables, stripping tribal authority for the Food Distribution Program, eliminating tribal access to agriculture mediation programs that help resolve loan disputes and farm transition. And buried in the energy title is a severe restriction on USDA funding for solar on farmland.

And while I understand we can't put solar panels on all farms. It is written so broadly that it would effectively end solar investments for rural businesses, beginning farmers and rural development programs alike, at a time when energy prices are unsustainable for families across the country and farmers need every support they can get to bring down costs, this bill includes harmful pesticide language that is a handout to big chemical that states

rights and creates a liability shield that prevents people from fighting for their health claims. I will submit an amendment to remove this, and I thank the MaHA movement for seeing the importance of this and working hard. I.

Making the public aware of how harmful this would be to our health. This bill does not do enough to deal with the P fast challenges that our farmers are facing yet another toxic chemical. So I hope we can amend this bill and make it good enough to improve this so that we can all vote for it. Thank you.

And I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you, gentlelady. She yields back. Please recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Harris for five minutes.

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and we do, once again, want to remember our prayers to the families of Doug LaMalfa and to our colleague and friend Jim Baird in the passing of his wife, and also to our colleague Jonathan Jackson, the passing of his father. I want to begin tonight by recognizing the hard work that has gone into this year's Farm Bill, Mr. Chairman, there are many strong, meaningful provisions in this legislation, and they deserve to be commended. First, we're saving our pork producers from California's disastrous prop, 12 families who have raised hogs for generations in North Carolina have been living under the uncertainty because of one state's decision to impose its reckless standards on the rest of our nation. When outside mandates drive up cost or shut producers out of the markets, it doesn't just hurt farmers.

It ripples through small towns and working families. That's not how interstate commerce is supposed to work. The Constitution gives Congress the responsibility to protect the free flow of commerce among the states. Needless regulations like proposition 12 are not how agriculture is meant to function in America, and I'm grateful that these protections are included here by incorporating our save our bacon act.

Second, I strongly support reauthorizing and strengthening conservation programs like equip and CSP. These voluntary programs give farmers the tools to be good stewards of their land while keeping their operations productive and viable, conservation works best when it is locally driven and built on partnerships, not federal mandates that increase cost for farmers and for taxpayers. There's so much in this legislation that supports farmers and producers. However, we're not yet where we need to be, we should continue to work to ensure that programs like SNAP operate with integrity and clear eligibility standards consistent with congressional intent.

We must ensure we're not increasing the size and authority of the bureaucratic state of Washington and when we invest federal research dollars, those investments should prioritize American interest first and foremost, not embed preferences for partnerships with multinational institutions that may not share our values or priorities. This Farm Bill makes important progress, but if we're serious about fiscal responsibility, draining the swamp and protecting American farmers, these concerns will be addressed by adopting some amendments that will be offered. I look forward to working with my colleagues to strengthen this legislation so that it fully reflects those principles and the values of the millions of Americans who are directly impacted by this bill. Mr. Chairman, again, I commend and thank you for your hard work.

And with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. He yields back. Now recognized gentleman from California, Mr. Carbajal, for five minutes.

Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Craig. I am proud to represent California Central Coast, an agricultural power house that is essential to our state status as the vegetable and fruit basket of the world. Agriculture is our region's largest industry and the essential food we grow benefits families, locally, nationally and around the globe. The Farm Bill is a critically important piece of legislation for my for many stakeholders in my district and across our nation as well.

That is why it is so essential that it is done right. Unfortunately, the current bill falls short of that. Since our last Farm Bill proposal marked up in 2024 my staff and I continue to engage with committee members, their staffs and stakeholders to find common ground and to pursue solutions, bipartisan solutions that best support our producers, farmers, farm workers and families, something that can be a win, win for everyone. When reviewing the bill, I was pleased to see some of the bipartisan measures my colleagues and I worked on that are part of the proposed that were part of the proposed 2024 Farm Bill found their way back into the bill, including provisions drawn from legislation I worked on.

Hour with the late Representative Doug LaMalfa to support specialty crop mechanization projects, as well as my fire safe electrical corridors bill with Representatives Valadao Costa and Fitzpatrick to simplify the process of removing hazardous vegetation near power lines to allow for a more streamlined approach to combating wildfire risk. While this Farm Bill contains some remnants of past bipartisan cooperation, the committee's inability or ability to work collaboratively on mutually agreed upon Farm Bill policies has diminished since the Trump Administration's return to the White House in the lead up to the introduction of this bill, Democrats were excluded from the drafting process, and the result is legislation that reflects just that. As expected, the bill includes no provision reversing the big, ugly bills, 180 $7 billion dollar cut to SNAP, nor attempts to delay the detrimental administrative and benefit costs. Shifts it places on states.

This decision to not address these major issues will result in millions at risk of having their benefits being cut or being kicked off the program entirely due to the looming cost shift onto states. In my district alone, more than 119,000 people depend on SNAP, and thousands of them will feel the impacts of these decisions. This bill not only fails to address these concerns, but also removes positive investments from past efforts that would have provided millions in additional funding for fruit and vegetable incentive programs, and if that wasn't enough damage, the majority also chose to eliminate the additional investments in the emergency food assistance program that were included in the 2024 bill, including 134 million for the food bank commodities and 100 million for storage and distribution support. This is unfolding at a time when families food costs are surging and farmers input costs are rising as a result of President Trump's misguided tariffs on the Central Coast.

Specialty Crops comprise the lion share of agriculture commodities, and President Trump's reckless trade wars have impacted many of these local growers and businesses in the area, including the loss of international markets for their products. This president continues to simultaneously play both the role of chief arsonist and firefighter, creating the problem, then stepping in to take credit for fixing it, often at taxpayers expense. Yet this problem has not fixed. Businesses and everyday families continue paying the price for these foolhardy tariffs, even with this administration's announcement of farm assistance for specialty crop growers, producers across the country are expected to receive only $1 billion in aid to mitigate the impacts of these tariffs.

This is only a fraction of the sector's outstanding need. According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, while I was pleased to see additional provisions in the Farm Bill for specialty crops. This bill does not do enough to address farmers current needs outside of the needs of families and farmers. This bill also fails to make any improvements in the area of animal welfare, whether that's not including whether that's not including bipartisan bills like the Greyhound Protection Act or attempting to overturn California's Prop 12.

This Farm Bill retreats progress and seeks to undermine current humane standards in place.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Time is required. I thank the gentleman, and please recognize the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Taylor, for five minutes.

Rep. Dave Taylor (R-Ohio)

Thank you, Chairman. This is a monumental day for our farmers and rural communities across the country. The Farm Bill represents not just an historic piece of legislation, but our continued commitment to the men and women who feed America and the world. So I want to use my time to highlight not only what we have already done in this Congress, but the good that this bill will provide to each of one of our districts.

To start last July, President Trump and Republicans delivered the largest investment ever in our agricultural sector. That Bill reduced the cost of crop insurance for our farmers, doubled agricultural trade programs that send our products around the world invested in animal disease prevention to protect our food supply and made critical tax provisions permanent, like the death tax exemption and much more, promises were made and kept. Now we are taking a critical first step to pass a full five year Farm Bill with the farm food and National Security Act. I applaud Chairman Thompson for leading on this.

LED. Inflation, which should have bipartisan support. After all, this bill is not only budget neutral, but includes several critical provisions to help those in rural America. The Farm Bill in front of us expands rural broadband, boosts farmers ability to get credit, and cracks down on our adversaries buying up farmland, just name a few provisions, and I'm proud to have been involved in multiple items have been included in this Farm Bill.

First, my rural broadband Assistance Act is in this bill to help small towns like those in my district get access to federal broadband programs. My district in southern Ohio is one of the least served areas in the country, and this will help it get connected to the modern economy. Broadband has been my number one priority since I joined Congress, and I'm proud to help deliver results. Back to southern Ohio, nearly all the water infrastructure in my district is well beyond its life expectancy.

I led legislation to reauthorize the vital water infrastructure programs at the USDA to assist rural communities in modernizing their water systems. That is also in this bill, and I'm proud that this bill backs up the Trump Administration to stop the takeover of our prime farmland by solar panels. This is a massive issue in southern Ohio and across rural America, and stopping this takeover is a huge win for the next generation of farmers. Special thanks are due to Congressman Bost and his team for all his efforts, their efforts, in leading this charge.

This is just the tip of the iceberg of what this bill will do. By passing this bill, we have the chance to help our rural communities and reduce costs for our farmers and in turn reduce costs for all Americans. The American people spoke loud and clear in November 2024 they wanted us to look to deliver. Excuse me, they wanted us to deliver results.

We delivered on the Fourth of July, and it's time for us to deliver again. Mr. Chairman, I look forward to passing this bill make America and agriculture great again. And I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman. gentleman yields back. Hearing no further discussion. The committee will now move to consideration of the bill and time for staff needs some time to be said.

We able to move right ahead. All right, get staff to table.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I you, by the way, you all did great, you know, thank you. We kind of thought it was going to be 10 o'clock. Thanks for yielding back 40 minutes. My intent is, is to go no later than 1159 my life experience says nothing good happens after midnight.

So I I've experienced those markups that go we into the wee hours, and it's painful, and I don't think it's effective,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Mr. Chairman, may I just say that Mr. Crawford wins the award for yes, he does best. Opening statement,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Innovation and creativity. [CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right. I think we got I think we have everyone in place, and so we're going to proceed with consideration of the bill. Does Eddie understand that Ms. buznski has a amendment at the desk under Title One. We're just dealing with title one right now.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number two, okay?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Members will suspend while the amendment is being distributed. All right, everyone has it. Very good. Ms. bizki has offered amendment.

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number two, offered by Ms. bush of

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Illinois, without objection, the amendment will be considered as read and now recognizes the distinguished gentlelady, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Mr. Chairman, my amendment would require a mandatory base acre update to better align title one commodity programs with current planting realities. The goal of this update is fairness, fiscal responsibility and strengthening the long term integrity of the farm safety net. As you all know, this is an issue I've spoken about in our last two committee markups, and I even introduced a bill on this topic last summer with Congressman Johnson.

If this had been a normal Farm Bill process, I would have appreciated a debate on this topic, but Republicans pursued a partisan path with reconciliation that included only a voluntary update. I want to be clear, a voluntary update does nothing to address the root problem here. Title One, payments are still made on historical base acres not necessarily on what a farmer plants today. The fact that there has been no mandatory base acre updates since the 1990s means that there are egregious discrepancies between what is being planted and what we are paying for.

It's outrageous that a farmer can be paid for one commodity while planting another think of it this way, a farmer may have base in cotton and collect a

payment of upwards of $100 but let's say they planted corn and maybe they get a crop insurance indemnity too. Our current setup allows farmers to collect payments from USDA for multiple crops on the same acre and still compete in the market. And that's not to mention that we make payments on acres that aren't even planted. In my view, funneling money to up onto unplanted acres is not in the best interest of farmers, and it's certainly not in the best interest of taxpayers, How is this not waste, fraud and abuse?

We need to get serious here. We need, if we allow this to continue, we deserve any scrutiny that comes our way about these programs. A mandatory base acre update strengthens the credibility of the safety net. It would strengthen taxpayer confidence, and it is our role to take that seriously.

I don't think any farmer out there would tell you things on the farm are the same as they were 30 years ago. They tell you that things aren't the same as they were five years ago. So why are we clinging to a program set up that does nothing to address that agriculture in 2026 does not look the same as it did decades ago. Our policy should not be frozen in a different era.

Illinois and Midwestern farmers want a safety net that reflects the risks they face today, not the planning decisions of generations ago. A mandatory base acre update is a practical, responsible step in that direction. And I urge adoption of this amendment. I yield back, and

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back other members that we wish to speak on this on the Republican side. Ms. McDonald, rivet recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to Representative Budzinski for raising this really important issue. It's our responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and ensure that our farm programs reflect actual production under current law, payments are still tied to base acres established decades ago, meaning some producers can receive support for crops they no longer plant, and in some cases, for land that is no longer in production, a mandatory base acre update would modernize the system by aligning payments with what farmers are actually growing today. For states like

Michigan, where planting patterns have shifted significantly over time. This ensures Fairness and Accuracy in programs that support producers and for taxpayers across the country.

It ensures their dollars are being spent officially. I'm sorry, efficiently. I urge a guest vote on this amendment, and I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on the amendment. If not, I will. Ms. Cammack is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Kat Cammack (R-Fla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question for the for the amendment offered. Do you have a price tag on this?

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Well, I, actually, I don't. I mean, I think this will end up saving taxpayers money, because we haven't done the update in decades. So if we're not having to provide financial assistance continuing on acreage that isn't planted right now, my cases that I'm making is I think we are providing financial assistance to farmers that are not planting on the acreage that they're getting the financial assistance for. So I think we would come out this would come out as a benefit to taxpayers, if we did an update on what is the actual acreage that farmers are actually planting on, but you didn't support the voluntary base update.

Well, my point is, if you if it's voluntary, are farmers really going to be you know, I think it has to be mandatory, so that we get a real accurate description and understanding of what the acreage is that is being farmed. If it's just up to a farmer to decide, if it's just up to a farmer to decide whether they're going to report the acreage that they're planted or not, I just don't think that we're going to get a real accurate read. And that's why a mandatory base acre update, I think is necessary, and we haven't done it in decades,

Rep. Kat Cammack (R-Fla.)

But I do believe in previous cost estimates, it was exceptionally expensive, but that's why we went with a voluntary but I yield. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yields. Ms. Scott's recognized. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I won't take up the whole five minutes, but I'm opposed this amendment. Every farmer I know wants a voluntary base acre update, not a mandatory base acre update. And I hope you'll listen to what the author the amendment said that they think there's a problem if it's up to the farmer to decide. And I don't know any farmer in favor of a mandatory base acre update, I know, I know a lot of farmers in favor of a voluntary base acre mandate, and I think that we should support the farmers in their position on this.

With that, I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Any other members see recognition? Mr. Crawford is recognized?

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

Yeah. I think that when, anytime you start mandating things, thank you. Mr. Chairman, anytime you start mandating things, farmers reflexively resist, and that's for good reason. What we've seen, for example, a mandatory livestock ID program, when you were able to demonstrate market value for premise registration and they could actually benefit from it at the market by a gain of 25, 3040, cents a pound, then you started seeing premise registration taking place because there was a market demand for it.

That's when you got accountability, and you took that extra step in in record keeping and so on, because the market would actually reward you for it. So if we could find some way to reward farmers for updating base acres on a

regular basis, find a way to do it. I think then you'd see an uptake that would address your concern. But when you mandate it, the nature of farmers is to reflexively say, No, thank you.

And I think that's we're going to run into this time around. That's why I oppose that amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any other members seek recognition, not I'll take liberty of my time. I'd like to thank Julie for raising this issue before the committee. And I know there are some areas of the country that would benefit from a full base update, but also had to be mindful of those who stand to lose significantly from a mandatory base update under the base acre provision of H.R. 1, this committee carefully threaded the needle to help significantly expand the safety net without penalizing producers who've availed themselves of the planting flexibility that's been a hallmark of Title One since the 1996 Farm Bill, as I Understand, Secretary Rollins and the folks at USDA have already begun working to roll out these additional 30 million base acres that we added as a part of H.R. 1 agriculture title to give beginning farmers and under based producers access to the farm safety net. So this committee has worked diligently to find a solution on base acres that is a net gain for all producers, and for that reason, unfortunately, I'll be opposing this amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Any other members seek recognition? Mrs. Tokuda is recognized the.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

You. Thank you, Mr. Chair, I rise to express my strong support for this amendment. This is going to help a lot of our farmers, and at this time, I'd like to yield my time to Representative bush.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you. I just wanted to add there are Midwestern farmers that would definitely benefit from a mandatory base acre update. So to say that there aren't any farmers that would benefit, I just want to make it clear the farmers that I represent definitely would I understand, Southern farmers,

which I you know, I know the members that spoke up in opposition to about to a mandatory base acre update. Southern farmers might see opposition to this, but when you look at reference prices, and one of the things I've consistently said on this committee is to make sure that a Farm Bill is geographically balanced, that it weighs the, you know, the pains and the frustrations of Midwestern farmers with the same pains and frustration as Southern farmers, and doesn't give our southern Farmers an unfair advantage if it relates to reference prices or base acreage.

And I think just asking for a system that we've been based on that's decades old, asking farmers to do that update and making it mandatory so that we get a real, full picture of what's being planted, I think is a fair request, but I will yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. Tokuda, the meantime is yours. Thank you. I yield back yield back.

Other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. All right, hearing. No further conversation. The question is, on the amendment all those Chair,

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Mr. Chair, I'll withdraw the amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady, withdraws the amendment. Thank the gentlelady, now I understand. Mr. Carbajal, you have an amendment at the desk

Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.)

Mr. Chairman, amendment number 24

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 24 offered by Mr. Carbajal of California

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without I think that the amendment has been distributed everyone. What's that? Carl halls, thank you. So, without objection, the amendment be considered as read.

I now recognize the distinguished gentleman that sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Each year, states across the nation experience natural disasters resulting in substantial damage to farms and agriculture lands in 2023 farms in my district alone experienced over $200 million in losses due to storms. I'm sure each of you can relate, and I've seen losses in your district at some point as well, even with standing USDA disaster programs and safety net offerings, many producers are still left with uncovered losses from natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, droughts, tornadoes and wildfires in 2024 47 states Experienced natural disasters with uncovered losses totaling over $9.3 billion in 2023 all states except Alaska experience natural disasters with uncovered agriculture losses totaling up to $10 billion that same year is when California producers experience unprecedented weather events. Early years, storms lasted on to march, bringing multiple atmospheric rivers, intense rainfall and subsequent flooding.

The subsequent months of August and September saw severe impacts to state from Hurricane Hillary. All told, it is estimated that my home state was hit with a staggering $2.4 billion in agricultural damages and losses at the end of 2024 we supported a proposed bipartisan supplemental package that included $21 billion in natural disaster assistance to producers. The package also included a pilot to allow some funds to flow from USDA to states via a block grant mechanism. This authority has largely been replicated in Section 1004, of this bill.

Last year, using this authority, USDA issued general block grants and provided roughly $1 billion in ad hoc disaster funding to select states, with

those states in turn aiding producers, despite the $21 billion in assistance for several disaster types, such as tornadoes, fires, flooding, drought, the general block grants USDA chose to implement only provided funds to states. Experienced uncovered losses due to hurricanes with all other disaster types being deemed ineligible. To date, roughly $1 billion in general block grant funding taken from the general funds allocated by Congress to all producers have gone to only six states. Eligibility criteria and data requirements for the states were not made public before the USDA began accepting grant applications.

Nor have the finalized block grant awards to these select states been made public. Publicly available. The $1 billion awarded to these handful of states provides money to producers in those states for losses that existing programs federal programs do not cover, allowing them to receive money on top of other federal disaster assistance. All of this ultimately creates questions about equity for impacted producers in other states, as we are all aware, Congress has created many state block grant programs across multiple agencies and jurisdictions.

To my understanding, in every case where block grants are created, Congress establishes a framework for the program to ensure states receive funds in equitable manner and administer such funds in compliance with federal requirements. Mr. Chairman, should we intend to give USDA new block grant authority to address natural disasters? We must practice good governance and lay out a framework here as well. That is why my amendment would ensure continued accountability for any federal tax dollars given to state governments.

It would also require transparency both in the USDA process of determining state and disaster eligibility and how states would administer awarded funds. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman. Now recognize the speaker on the amendment, Mr. Crawford, for five minutes. Okay, recognize Mr. Costa for five minutes.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I want to speak on behalf of this amendment that our colleague is offering. I think that it's not just California, but all of our states are challenged with the unpredictability of whether you know, farmers can be and ranchers, dairymen and women the best. But you know you pray for rain. It doesn't always come when you want.

And then oftentimes you have other kinds of natural disasters that affect it, whether they be hurricanes or tornadoes or other factors that devastate regions of our districts and our states, and therefore I think this amendment has good merit. I think it provides an effort to compensate those who are devastated by the impact. And I support the amendment, and I think it's something that clearly we need to have more tools in our management toolbox to deal with the devastation that weather events cause, regardless of where we farm. So I support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you, gentlemen I recognize Ms. Ross and Scott for five minutes to

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Speak on the amendment. Thank you, Chairman, and I say this respectfully with my good friend Salud, who I've traveled the world with, especially Africa and places that actually benefit a lot from our UTF and other programs. My district has been hit by disasters going hurricane. Michael Ida, I mean, we've, we've had hurricane after hurricane in our district.

And I would just suggest to my colleague the reason, the reason I'm opposing this amendment is because the better place to write this is in the actual disaster bill. And that is what we've been doing, is when we have a disaster. We've actually been writing those parameters in that bill. And if you put this in this Farm Bill, you're going to lose your opportunity.

I believe at least you're it's going to require additional agreements to get additional changes into this that into the disaster bill. So I just suggest that the better place for this type of language is in the actual disaster bill, after we

see what the damage is, and we go to pass that disaster bill on the floor of the House, Representative with that, Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment for that reason,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And I yield back. gentleman yields back, now recognize the Ranking Member for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start by saying thank you to Mr. Carbajal for bringing up this amendment. As we all know, block grants can be used as incredibly effective and useful tools for delivering assistance to producers, especially for crops that don't benefit from the established USDA Farm safety net programs. I.

Of course, as we've seen in the actions of this administration, it's easy to use block grants to pick winners and losers among those who could receive assistance. This amendment will help establish uniformity, transparency and accountability in these block grants so they don't simply become a blank check for states to use recklessly or inappropriately. Again, I just want to say, Mr. Carbajal, I think this is an excellent amendment, and at this point, anyone Okay yield back to the Chairman

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Shelley yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Ms. Carbajal's amendment. If not, I'll take the liberty of providing my my time. I want to thank the gentleman for his amendment. The ability to streamline the Block Grant negotiation process remains a top priority.

Is critical that we're able to provide states with as much discretion as possible to negotiate these block grants in a way that best suits their needs. Now, I have some concerns about removing some discretion from the ability of the Secretary and states to negotiate terms around block grants that could hinder their ability to respond to unique challenges or disasters that may not be able to they may not be able to contemplate as we sit here today. So I oppose the amendment, but would appreciate the opportunity to keep

working with Mr. Carbajal as this process moves forward to ensure that we are appropriately balancing the interests of all the stakeholders. And I yield back my time.

Anyone else seek recognition? If not

Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.)

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Carl, there's no more speakers. I would like to withdraw my amendment and hope that we might discuss opportunities to address these issues in the future. I appreciate my colleague, Mr. Scott's constructive feedback, and I'm hoping we will continue to work on this issue.

Well.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. carwell, my promise, we'll do that. Look forward to it very good. We're going to move on.

Understand it. Mrs. Tokuda from Hawaii, has an amendment under Title One. Amendment number 96

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Okay, very good. So if, if not recognize Mr. Mr. Crawford has an amendment at the desk. Thank you.

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

Mr. Chairman, have an amendment at the amendment at the desk would like to call up amendment number 137

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 137, offered by Mr. Crawford of Arkansas

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection. Amendment will be considered as read. Now recognize the distinguished gentleman to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I want to thank you and your staff for working so hard with me on this joint priority. I'm glad we both understand that advanced partial PLC and ARC payments is a necessary policy change, understanding the importance of keeping this bill cost neutral, and since CBO unfortunately scored the provision, I do intend to withdraw my amendment, but I think it's important that we have a little bit of a conversation about it first so and I also would like to pursue this, maybe in some other avenues. This is only one half of my bill, the bridge the gap for Rural Communities Act.

The other half suspends payment limitation for crop year 2025 recognizing that securing our nation's food supply means tying the farm safety net to the acres of our family farmers cultivated, instead of subjecting them to arbitrary cut offs that add another squeeze to producers who can't afford another squeeze. But getting back to the amendment in front of us, this amendment simply gives farmers the option to receive 50% of the projected PLC or ARC payments several months early in the years. The Secretary projects a payment will trigger. This will help farmers with cash flow issues, which right now is pretty much everyone, and allow producers to save on interest expense.

To be clear, this is not a novel or revolutionary idea. It was actually part of the predecessor program to PLC and arc, but in the 2008 Farm Bill, Democrats decided to play political games and gutted advanced partial payments to be used as a budget Gim ick, that has put farmers in a situation where PL, where PLC and ARC payments are paid in full a full year after harvest. And let's just pause and think about how ludicrous that is. Why in the world are payments coming out a year after the crop.

They're meant to as a protection tool for and let's remember payments are only triggered in years when farmers are losing money on a crop. So we're

already hurting farmers in years they're already down. It's far past time we correct this issue created by Democrats a decade and a half ago. We're facing existential crisis in agriculture, and I understand this is not a silver bullet, but is a simple way to align policy to help farmers when they need it most, and bolster our nation.

Food Security, Mr. Chairman, if on your commitment to continue working with me advance this policy, I'd be happy to withdraw this amendment. I want to

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman for bringing forth an amendment, as well as his diligence in working towards improving certainty and cash flow for producers. I you know, I believe the provision has merit. In fact, it's something we've been working together on for months. Unfortunately, with the updated February baseline, the Congressional Budget Office has changed their methodology and scoring provisions that interact with the commodity credit Corporation.

Now what should have been budget neutral will cost billions and so, you know, I commend Mr. Crawford for his efforts to move the payments for farm program payments, this effort should right to ship the after House Democrats arbitrarily in past use Title One payments, timing to pay for nutrition spending in 2000 and the 2008 Farm Bill. So we're not able to include this amendment this time due to budgetary constraints. But look, look forward to working together with the gentleman to get

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

This cross finish line. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and with that, I will withdraw the amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. Does anyone else have a amendment under Title One.

Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Rouzer, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

This number 132 amendment, number 132 offered by Mr. Rouzer of North Carolina, now

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Recognize distinguished gentleman from North Carolina sponsor the amendment from the five minutes for the five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.)

I think the Chairman the amendment would simply restore tobacco as an original, pardon me, as an agriculture commodity under the commodity credit Corporation charter. Let me give you a little history on this, on why this is the case. And this goes back to a previous life of mine. I think maybe only Frank Lucas and David Scott were here at the time, but in 2004 when the tobacco quota buyout was negotiated, there was some concern that there might be an effort later on to reconstitute a tobacco program, and so we excluded tobacco from the CCC charter for that reason.

But the purpose, again, was the purpose of the language was to prevent any reconstitution of the program. It was not to prevent access to ad hoc disaster assistance or ad hoc economic assistance. And I should add this change ensures that tobacco farmers are not excluded from assistance, but it does not ensure that they get any assistance. So really, this is a technical correction with regard to the original intent of the negotiation back in 2004 as it as it works now When Congress passes a disaster package.

Tobacco is included, but if the administration proactively issues payments to farmers and it's coming from the CCC, then tobacco is excluded. So this corrects that wrong, and it's very much a technical change. CBO scores at budget neutral, zero. It is not retroactive, only prospective.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back, gentleman yields. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Mr. Davis.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Thank you so much. Mr. Chair, as the congressional district that produces more to back and in this in this nation, I do want to speak on this, and thank the gentleman from North Carolina, my colleague, for bringing this forward. And I believe that this will go a long ways and helping, given an opportunity for tobacco farmers, and I can tell you, I've spoken to so many along the way, and anything we can do up here that just makes sense to help this population, this group of farmers that are doing what they can to again, make ends meet. I'm grateful for that.

So thank you for that. I am supporting this, and I yield back, Mr. Chair. Thank you gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yields back, now recognize the Ranking Member for five minutes. Well.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you so much, Mr. Rouzer and Mr. Davis, I just would remind my colleagues that in 2004 Congress passed on a bipartisan basis the fair and equitable tobacco Reform Act, that legislation ended federal support for tobacco in our country in exchange for making payments of almost $10 billion to our nation's tobacco farmers. Unfortunately, I have to say that this amendment would undo the provisions of that act and limiting the use of CCC dollars to support tobacco. If this amendment is adopted, it would restart the government's ability to use. Taxpayer dollars to promote the domestic consumption of tobacco and the marketing of tobacco as well, to me, that seems very inconsistent with the Make America healthy again agenda.

And of course, the past is littered with examples of the government buying surplus tobacco from farmers and ending up having to dispose it. So again, I

appreciate my colleagues in the situation they're in in their states, but I do I believe this amendment just doesn't meet the reality of where Americans are with regard to tobacco and public health. So I urge members to vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

No thanks the gentlelady, any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Rouzers amendment? If not, I'll take liberty of my five minutes. I think both of the gentleman from North Carolina for their commitment to finding a solution on this issue. The ability for tobacco to be eligible for CCC funding has been heavily debated, but now that we are over two decades past the origin of prohibition and tobacco growers have missed out on critical assistance, while other commodities receive support, think it's time to put tobacco on on a fair and equal footing with each other and with other commodities, and I support this amendment, and if no other members seek recognition, hearing no further conversation, the question is on the amendment.

All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,, All those opposed saying no, in the opinion of the Chair the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed To, and that is, does

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members have I amendments under Title One. Give you two chances. Any other members have amendments. Any members have amendments under Title One, hearing non-Title One is now closed.

Are there any amendments to title two,

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Vasquez is recognized. Mr. Vasquez has an amendment at the desk. Yes.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 122, I'm proud to offer this amendment which would strengthen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Just just a second sure The Clerk will report the title amendment number

The Clerk

122, offered by Mr. Vasquez of New Mexico.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'm proud to offer this amendment to strengthen wildlife habitat connectivity in our federal conservation program. [IN PROGRESS]

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

The flexibility and voluntary nature that producers rely on in New Mexico. We know that agriculture and wildlife go hand in hand. Ranchers and farmers provide us with quality wildlife habitat across the country, and they can do even more. They themselves depend on healthy land, healthy water and healthy ecosystems, and they want to protect those valuable resources on to the next generation.

Across the West, we're seeing increased drought, catastrophic wildfires, and pressure on open space. At the same time, big game species like elk, mule deer and prong horn depend on seasonal migration corridors that is in the path of working lands. When those corridors are fragmented, we see impacts not only on wildlife populations, but on rural economies that depend on hunting, outdoor recreation and tourism. And as a hunter myself, I know how important these intact corridors are for wildlife movement.

This amendment simply ensures that USDA conservation programs can better support producers voluntary efforts to restore and enhance wildlife habitat connectivity and migration corridors on their working lands. Now it does that in a few common sense ways. First, it formally incorporates wildlife habitat connectivity into existing conservation definitions so that USDA can more clearly support these practices. Second, my amendment

allows cost share payments for wildlife corridor projects on grasslands with ecological significance that are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program with two important caveats, no double payments and no putting emergency grazing or haying access at risk.

Those caveats are explicit now. Third, it directs USDA to expand the use of non-structural tools, things like virtual fencing, which were pioneering in my district, paired with strong technical assistance, so that producers have flexible, innovative options that work for their day to day operations, and can import wildlife habitat like riparian corridors. And let me be clear, this is not a mandate. It is not more red tape.

It is entirely voluntary and producer driven, meeting producers where they are. This approach reflects the spirit of the habitat connectivity on working lands framework, supporting producers who want to be part of the solution while respecting private property rights and operational realities in a Farm Bill that should be about resilience, resilience for producers, for rural communities and for our natural resources. This amendment strengthens the conservation title in a practical, bipartisan way. It supports working lands, it supports wildlife, it supports farmers and ranchers and it supports rural economies.

I urge my colleague to support the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman. Recognize myself for five minutes. I thank the gentleman from New Mexico for offering this amendment. Supporting wildlife and habitat have long been the goals and the purposes of many of our conservation programs, including EQIP, RC, PP and CRP.

This amendment includes several provisions that will further incorporate wildlife corridors into the program to better support those purposes and improve wildlife habitat. I appreciate the gentleman offering this amendment today and support its inclusion, and I yield back any other members wish to speak. The Ranking Member is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Mr. Vasquez for introducing this amendment, and I fully support several components of this bill. Conservation programs should be developed with an eye toward restoring wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity. I agree that CRP grasslands payments are too low, and I would support efforts to increase those payments, I do have concerns about allowing producers enrolled in CRP grasslands to access the already over subscribed equip and CSP dollars. So again, I think we're probably here because we didn't have a normal five year 12 title Farm Bill negotiation and process.

But Mr. Vasquez, I appreciate your efforts, and I don't have a recommendation on this, and would just urge folks to vote their their districts.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for five minutes. Thank you.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Chairman, having been around for the birth of the grasslands reserve program, it served many purposes, to put property that, in some cases, had been set aside in CRP for 1020, 30 years back into some sort of productive use. And that's been very successful. I congratulate my colleague for being very thoughtful in how he's attempting to approach this.

And I would agree with you, Mr. Chairman, I think we should accept our friends language and continue to work on this.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yield,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I would yield to the Chairman on any occasion.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And the question of, you know, conservation be in stress. We we have, you know, this committee has added 24% to the conservation baseline and equip was.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentlelady. I recognize

Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-Iowa)

Mr. Feenstra for five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank Congressman Costa for his continued support in partnership with strengthening voluntary conservation program that works for our farmers, ranchers and our rural communities, the legislation we worked on together, reflects a bipartisan commitment in improving CRP by improving access to hay grazing, helping to provide our farmers and ranchers with tools to conserve and improve soil health and water quality.

I strongly support these goals. However, I understand the Farm Bill has been carefully crafted and negotiated balance of commodities in this area. So I just look forward to working with Costa as we move forward, and hopefully we can get something authorized outside this package where we can give this focus and legitimate attention as we move forward. So thank you, Mr. Costa yield back gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Jill Becker, take the liberty, recognize myself for five minutes and yield to the sponsor of this amendment, Mr. Costa.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And as I noted, it has, as we've seen, I think good bipartisan support, and I would take the the direction of the Chair at this point that maybe we work on this, assuming this measure continues to move on, because the Senate, I believe, is going to have an effort in the same

area. When you see the Senate support that is there, and I just believe that, as we've all discussed here, it's long overdue that we update this. And I think this is the appropriate vehicle, this and the companion bill in the Senate, and I think we ought to figure out some way to make that happen.

Gentleman, withdrawals. I'll withdraw it for the sake of continued bipartisanship. Absolutely.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I'll reclaim my time. You know, unfortunately, legislation is not able to include in Well, there's several sections of this amendment that are similar to the language included in the 2024 Farm Bill to modernize CRP, and unfortunately, today's legislation is not able to include the previous attempt to modernize CRP due to the updated CBO score of these provisions against the new baseline. And with that, you know, we in the house, we have an obligation to remain budget neutral, so I appreciate withdrawing the amendment so that we can continue to work on this going forward and and find a pathway

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Good let's do that. Yeah, I'll withdraw the Amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is withdrawn any other Mr. Feenstra has a fence that I'm looking it over your shoulder. Mr. Has an amendment at the desk. Mr. Chairman, I have amendment at the desk.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

It's amendment number 18.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 18, offered by Mr. Finstadt of Minnesota.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good, I know, without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, the sponsor the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the previous conversation. So this amendment is essentially an amendment that would modernize the CRP program. I'd like to call it CRP 2.0 what does the next 30 years of CRP look like? You know, we've had this great collision of science, technology and agriculture, and we have more better tools available to us now than we did at the onset of CRP in 1985 I'm old enough to remember on our farm, it was called set aside, and it was a supply, really a supply control issue in regards to the commodities.

And so as that over time, grew into a program where I feel like over the last years, we've really been chasing acres and dollars, and that's what this conversation in Congress has been about, is chasing acres and dollars. And so as I've talked to farmers back in my district and all across the country, specifically with young and beginning farmers, I hear a lot of talk about the competition for rental rates and highly productive land, where they feel like they're competing directly with the federal government because the most productive land in their backyard gets tied up as a retirement plan and a CRP contract, and they essentially then are competing dollar for dollar with the federal government. So it's high time I think that we have this conversation. I'm encouraged here Congressman Costa's approach and the bipartisan support for having a conversation about CRP, 2.0 what does it look like to modernize this program?

I am keenly aware that this comes with the Wizard of Oz behind the curtain. CBO score. That's hard to completely understand, but I do, I do know that this comes with the price tag. And I understand the Chairman's wishes, and I would would really just ask the Chairman to continue to work with me and others on this committee, to have a thoughtful conversation about the next 2030, years of what CRP needs to look like in our country, taking into

account the awesome opportunities that it provides for our sport our sports men went men and women, our land owners, farmers, but also making sure that we're embracing all of the technologies that we have at our disposal that we didn't have in 1985 when this program was established.

So I appreciate you hearing me out. I know we've just had this conversation. So Mr. Chairman, I will if you commit to continue to work as you did with Congressman Costa, I would then be willing to withdraw this

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment, gentlemen withdraws. I You my commitment to work with both of you. CRP, I believe is the oldest conservation program has never been modernized. It was a, it's a huge, was a huge goal of mine to be able to get that done until we got this most recent CBO score is just, I would, I wouldn't give CBO the credit of the of the wizard.

I would confirm up with their numbers, but, but I definitely would continue work with both of you, because we this is something that we need to get done. So I thank the gentleman. Any other members, Mr. Johnson has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

I move amendment number 10, sir.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Okay. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 10, offered by Mr. Johnson of South Dakota,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection. Amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize distinguished gentleman, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

This is not going to be an offer and withdraw. This is something I'm asking my colleagues to agree with. So you can have fencing, either conventional fencing or virtual fencing, which is becoming increasingly more popular out in the country, you have a disaster comes around knocks down that fencing. The Emergency Conservation Program can provide funding to replace that fencing.

But under the old school rules, if you've got conventional fencing, you can only get conventional fencing, and if you got virtual fencing, you can only get virtual fencing. This would allow flexibility for the producer to decide if they want to take this opportunity to convert from conventional fencing to virtual fencing, or the other way. In some instances, it can make sense to go the other way at no additional cost to the program. So this is additional flexibility, no additional cost.

I would submit myself to questions, sir, but would urge a yes vote on this common sense amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Johnson's amendment. Ms. figures, you're recognized.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Mr. Johnson, just for I'm asking for a friend. Can you explain the concept of virtual fencing?

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

So thank you. You can tell your friend that most Americans would be more familiar with this in their neighborhood with with dogs, right? And that they would have a fence that you can't see, but that still provides a clear incentive to the animal not to cross the line. This is increasingly being used virtual fencing out in the field.

It's nowhere near as popular as conventional fencing, but for some producers, it really works. Well, not applicable here on the hill.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yeah. All right, if not, I'll claim my my time. I thank the gentleman from South Dakota for offering amendment. Given the many natural disasters we've seen in recent years, ECP remains a critical program for many producers, and this amendment will encourage more flexibility in the program make it easier to respond to natural disasters such as wildfire.

One goal in mind with this Farm Bill is to further incorporate science technology innovation into conservation program, so new technology, such as virtual fencing, is cost effective and efficient way to respond to these disasters. With that, I fully support this amendment. Urge my colleagues to do the same. Any other members seek recognition to speak on amendment number 10?

All right, seeing none, no other conversation. All those in favor of amendment number 10, Ms. Johnson's amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to. Okay.

Ms. Bush is recognized as an amendment at the desk. Yes.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you. Ms. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

54 The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 54 offered by Ms. Budzinski of Illinois,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection. Amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. this amendment would strike the rescission of over a billion dollars from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, also referred to as equip. Let's start with the facts when Republicans advance their reconciliation package, one of the few positive items within this committee's jurisdiction was moving Inflation Reduction Act conservation funding into the Farm Bill. Baseline.

That decision increased long term funding for programs like equip and gave producers more certainty as they plan multi-year investments. I opposed removing the climate smart guard rails tied to that funding. I believe those guard rails ensured accountability and measurable outcomes. But ultimately those requirements were removed, and farmers were told conservation funding would now be stable and predictable, and yet this bill rescinds over a billion dollars for equip USDA, most over subscribed conservation program in Fiscal Year 2024 fewer than one in four Illinois equip projects were funded, and Illinois ranked nearly last nationally, 50 out of 51.

In increases from Fiscal Year 2023 these projects are real investments that lower input costs, protect soil health, improve quality, water quality, and strengthen long term productivity. They help farmers in my district manage risk in an era of volatile markets and stay competitive when margins are tight, and now we are pulling more than $1 billion out of it, roughly 420 million of that rescission is redirected to other programs. If the majority wants to increase funding for these programs, they can make that case. But $420 million is nowhere near a billion dollars.

The rest appears to be used to help balance other administrative costs in the bill, if we are moving resources out of the most over subscribed conservation program at the USDA, producers deserve a clear explanation of the trade offs, especially since some of the programs being funded with EQIP money, like feral swine eradication, only benefit specific regions and not the entire country. Conservation funding is not a slush fund. It's not a reserve account to be offset, to offset unrelated policy changes. It is a long term commitment

to working lands in the producers who Stewart them without this amendment, Illinois producers are expected to receive nearly a $20 million cut in conservation payments.

EQIP helps them reduce risk. It helps them lower input costs. It helps them build resilience in a volatile farm economy. If the majority believes other priorities deserve funding, then be honest enough to acknowledge that these choices carry a cost and allow this Farm Bill to reflect that cost, but do not quietly remove more than a billion dollars from the most popular conservation program in the country, especially after telling producers that conservation funding was secure.

I urge adoption of this amendment. I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back, Mr. Costa is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I think this is a very, very good amendment, and I suspect all of us have experiences within our own districts where equip has really performed well. I can tell you, over the decades, in California, it has been perhaps one of the most popular and successful programs in California agriculture. It's been used to match state funding for multiple beneficial uses in conservation and to see the cuts in the equip program and to see our colleagues efforts to try to respond to that, I think is worthwhile, and I would wholeheartedly urge all of us to support her efforts in this measure, because it just, it's it's common sense. But as my mother used to say, she didn't know why they called it common sense.

It didn't seem to be all that common so therefore I add my support to this amendment, and hope that we will, on a bipartisan basis, support it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other Republicans seek recognition? Mr. To is recognized. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

I want to thank my colleague from Illinois for introducing this measure. I. In support of this amendment and to oppose a short sighted and self defeating cut to one of the most successful conservation programs in the Farm Bill. Equip is one of the most trusted tools farmers rely on to care for their land while keeping their operations viable at a time when unpredictable weather rising input costs and market instability are squeezing family farms.

Congress should be strengthening programs like equip to help them stay resilient and profitable. Instead, this bill, as we've heard, will strip more than $1 billion from this critical program that's not trimming around the edges, that's pulling the rug out from under farmers who are trying to do the right thing for their land and their bottom line over a five year Farm Bill period, this represents about $6.4 million in cuts to Hawaii farmers in my district, the Inflation Reduction Act's historic investment in conservation programs like equip was supposed to be a promise to farmers, you step up, we'll have your back yet last year, the denial or delay of $2 billion in conservation funding through the IRA, including roughly $1.4 billion specifically for equip, left over 30,000 farmers across the country, farmers and ranchers clutching onto receipts with no assurances that the USDA would live up to its word that's not giving farmers a hand. It's a slap in the face. We already know that equip is over subscribed.

In a typical year, less than half of farmers with strong, high value conservation projects actually receive funding. According to expert testimony before this committee, equip received more than 134,000 applications nationwide in Fiscal Year 2023, but only about 34,000 contracts were awarded. That's roughly a 25% acceptance rate. In some states, fewer than 20% of applicants were actually funded.

Farmers are lining up to participate, and we are turning them away. And in Fiscal Year 2021, 26% of total applicants for equip were deemed to be valid, but were not funded. With the highest concentration of these applications in Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas. These are farmers who did everything right.

They applied, they qualified. There just simply wasn't enough funding to meet the demand. Rescinding over $1 billion from equip makes it harder for farmers to access reliable revenue streams and invest in responsible land

stewardship. It delays conservation projects, weakens resilience and ultimately costs more in the long run.

Furthermore, these cuts both ignore the data and the testimony we've already heard in this very Committee during our June 2025 conservation hearing, we heard from experts representing farmers, ranchers and conservation organizations who emphasize that working lands programs like equip are economic drivers. We heard that equip popularity has caused demand to consistently outpace funding. We heard that when technical assistance is under resourced, producers face rigid guidelines and barriers to entry that discourage participation. We heard that ranchers often dig into their own pockets to make conservation improvements rather than wait for help that may never, ever come.

In other words, we have already heard from experts who support equip and who would almost certainly oppose cutting it by over a billion dollars. And let's be honest, cutting funding is one thing, but what happens when there aren't enough boots on the ground to administer the program? Since the beginning of this administration, 22% of NRCS staff have separated from the department in Hawaii. We're down at least 22 NRCS employees since the beginning of 2025 some field offices have had to shorten their hours or close their doors entirely.

That means farmers are left without on island technical assistance, and without the trusted partners who walk the fields help them design conservation plans and guide them through the process. If we truly, truly value our farmers, if we value local food production, climate resilience, responsible stewardship, then we should be investing in equip, not dismantling it piece by piece. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this very important amendment, and I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back recognized gentleman from Oklahoma for five minutes.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nobody on this committee has worked longer and harder on the conservation programs down through the years, and nobody's been more focused on equip and all of the other tools that preserve our quarter, our air, our soil, our wildlife, our productivity of farms. The argument about this being a cut, I think, in fact, in the way the 1974 Budget Act works, in fact, in the way we've had to do things, what we're going through here today is the way to preserve the baseline for EQIP and to preserve all these other programs, as some of my colleagues alluded to, the fact that swine or feral swine eradication, example, is an issue in a particular area. Well, it's much of the country, but.

It as a particular area, we have to do these things in a way that we maintain the funding base for the overall programs, and we maintain all of the various options out there. So I respectfully say, I suggest that we reject this amendment, that we continue to work forward and our goal as members of this committee should be more funding in general towards equip and all of the conservation programs. There'll never be enough in the oh two Farm Bill, when I was Subcommittee Chairman, we had in the range of $11 billion in back equip request, conservation program request, we were able to fund the program with 14 billion guess what happened? As soon as people found out resources were available, we were instantly over subscribed.

Why is that? Farmers, ranchers, are some of the best conservationists in the history of the world. They want to take care of the property they're stewards of. They want to use these programs.

So I just suggest to my colleagues, let's pass on this amendment, let's continue to work forward, and we'll all get there together with that. I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chair, gentleman Yellen back and Congresswoman Brown is recognized five minutes.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you very much. One of the less ugly components of the big, ugly Bill was keeping the increased funding for conservation programs that help

farmers keep their soil healthy. Those funds were originally provided by the Inflation Reduction Act with a focus on fighting climate change and supporting regenerative regenerative agriculture. As a result of Ira dollars equip application acceptance rates increased by more than 50% and eight states were even able to tackle the backlog of deferred application from prior years.

When Republicans passed H.R. 1, they removed the focus on making sure those dollars flow towards sustainable agriculture practices, but at least the Republicans didn't cut them entirely. Now Republicans are going back on the promise they made to farmers, pulling the rug out from them and rescinding more than a billion dollars from equip to satisfy their own made up rules for a budget neutral skinny Farm Bill. But we don't have to buy into that flawed premise. Congress can and should support EQIP, the most popular of all conservation programs, while also reauthorizing and funding other conservation programs.

So I urge my colleagues to support the amendment and reject a billion dollars in cuts to soil health and conservation. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield to the Ranking Member.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member is recognized. Thank you. I just want to add my support to this amendment. Thank you so much for this.

You made really eloquent argument, and I know that. You know, I was very proud to see those Ira dollars that came into the programs, and just we saw immediately that the application acceptance rates increased by more than 50% and eight states were even able to tackle that backlog. So we know that's the right thing to do, and we appreciate it. And I would urge my colleagues to vote yes on this amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The gentlelady yields back. Ms. Riley is recognized five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

I support this amendment. Thanks Nikki for doing this. This conservation title is just so important, and we have to get it right, because we need some practical, common sense solutions that are going to support our farmers and not hurt them. I will tell you instead, in New York, what we often get is a bunch of ridiculous, out of touch mandates from Manhattan.

Seriously, last year, we had a bunch of New York City politicians who tried to limit the number of cows we could have on our dairy farms, and then they had the audacity to turn around and tell us, it's because they think they know best how to care for the environment. Them telling us how to run our dairy farms. It'd be like me going down there, excuse me, and telling them how to run their subways. So as far as I'm concerned, they can keep their hands off our herds.

If you step foot on a farm in upstate New York, talk for one minute to one of our dairy farmers, and then try to tell me, you know more about conservation and stewardship than they do. One of the best days I've had. I've been in this job for about a year now, and one of my my favorite days of the last year was last August. I went up to Unadilla for manure injection Field Day.

The whole community came together to test out the new state of the art, manure injector, super precise, cuts a slit in the ground, injects the manure, then covers it, makes the soil obviously really healthy with all those nutrients, protects the environment from the runoff, saves the farmers a ton of money. Uh, that they'd otherwise have to spend on fertilizer. I think it's like 40 bucks an acre in savings or something like that. So, so it's really good for the environment, it's really good for farmers bottom lines.

But you know, let's face it, if you're a family farm and you're making 45 grand a year net income, you're just not going to be able to invest in this kind of equipment on its own. So I was really glad to see that this Farm Bill actually includes my bipartisan legislation to prioritize dairy farmers conservation efforts. I also have to know my two and a half year old Matteo, is actually thrilled about this too, because he he just loves it when we get to talk about the cow poop, whether it's injecting it, putting it in the lagoon. Sometimes he just likes to stomp in it.

If it involves it, he's pretty happy. So but the problem here is that the Farm Bill is making these overall cuts that Nikki and others talked about to conservation spending, and so I think we've got to be investing more in these conservation efforts, not less. And I support this amendment. I'd urge all my colleagues to restore full funding here, because really, these are some of the best investments we can make for Upstate dairy farms.

Thank you,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chairman. gentleman yields back. Take the opportunity to speak on the amendment.

First of all, let me walk you through some background. I The Farm Bill has to remain budget neutral. But also, though I have to note that the amendment is not necessary, let me walk through exactly what happened with H.R. 1 through H.R. 1 equip was one of several programs that received significant funding increase through the reinvestment of the conservation dollars provided through the IRA the 2026 Farm Bill created a new forest conservation easement program, and I think many of us support, but had to be paid for, and provides $240 million for it over the five year life of the bill, due to the rules of reconciliation. Fcep Forest Conservation Easement program couldn't could not be created or funded through H.R. 1, since it was a new program.

However, when H.R. 1 was passed, additional dollars were added to equip, to offset the funding needs to pay for fcep in its first five years. So additional monies was added to equip in order to do that, the limited equip funding changes also necessary to offset the cost of a few other reforms to the conservation title. So you know, the funding reallocation in title two is limited, but is necessary to fund bipartisan priorities that assist beginning farmers advanced soil health initiatives, protect private forest lands and fund advancements in conservation technologies. There's obviously broad support for those allocations, and this amendment under undermines how responsible we pay for it.

Even with the changes in equip provided by the bill, the funding for the program will still be an increase than what was proposed in the 2024 Farm

Bill. That amount is 54% increase for equip over the January 2025 baseline for the program. I think we all support, hopefully we all support equip and recognize the value that. I also want to say that doesn't take into account a piece of legislation that we passed in President Biden's first December, and that was first year or second year I remember what it was the sustains act.

It allows the private sector to invest in these conservation programs. We created that public private partnership that's above and beyond this 54% increase in EQIP and so under the and nearly nearly 50 conservation groups are supporting that allocation that we did equip will still be receiving historic funding levels since reconciliation, and the program will still reach more than $3 billion annually by the end of the decade. Equip, we know is critically important for producers, and this Farm Bill protects the long term investment made into it this year. So I oppose the amendment, urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield and I yield back, seeing no other almost said conservation conversation.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Chairman, I just request a recorded vote,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Recorded but well recorded vote is requested, and it's been Yeah, we'll do a voice one first, yeah, all those in favor of the amendment, signify by saying aye. Those opposed by saying no,. The. Independent.

The Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to a recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee roll three, aye. Two, further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. Further amendments on title two, Mr. Sorensen, Mr. Chairman,

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

I have an amendment at the desk to offer. Amendment number 106 Ms

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Sorensen has an amendment to desk. 106 Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 106 offered by Mr. Sorensen of Illinois.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Just second.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Okay,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Let me get to back up without Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read and now recognize things. Gentleman from Illinois sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, as mentioned this evening by members on both sides of the aisle, farmers want markets and better access to tools and and data that will strengthen their soils, build resilience to extreme weather events and improve agricultural productivity. And I think we all can agree on that, because it's not political, but this is real life. Let me take you to my district for just a second, because right next to most the most fertile fields in the world, lies the Chicago Rockford International Airport. It is one of the fastest growing cargo airports in the entire country.

Getting sustainable aviation fuel or SAF to the airfield will not only support our farmers, but it also powers a growing aviation sector. But we can't just throw up our hands when it comes to innovation. We should be building soil

health and sequester carbon as we move forward, we should be building that soil health. And when it comes to farmers, a low carbon intensity score should mean a better bottom line.

So when our producers adopt the right practices, they will have the competitive edge when it comes to the rewards of a brand new marketplace. It took a while we were waiting and waiting and waiting, but finally, in January, the Treasury and the IRS released the proposed rule when it comes to 40 5z the tax credit that will help us develop the s of the SAP market. But here's the deal, we need to have good, reliable data that helps us figure out the best practices in developing good soil health. Forgive me, I'm going to use my hands, because I'm going back to my meteorology days, my I remember back my slam dunk weather forecasts.

You know, for 22 years, they always happened when I had the clear head, but then I also had the best data in front of me. Now, I know the farmers in my district, they've got very clear heads, but they need a Rasha. Arasha is a my bipartisan, bicameral bill. It is the advancing research on agricultural soil health act that is going to give farmers the data that they need to measure carbon intensity on their own terms, because when we measure, monitor and report what works, we can create the national verification standard that will move us light years ahead of our competition around the world.

America's Heartland is ready to lead the next generation of clean fuel production. It will bring success to Main Street, and it will give growers the value add when it comes to emerging premium markets. Mr. Chairman, thanks to our friends at the National Weather Service, I look there's a 50% chance of rain here in Washington, DC tomorrow, and also 50% chance back in Peoria, Illinois, I hope you can agree with me that we have 100% chance of getting this across the finish line. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any other members seek recognition Speaker Ms. Sorensen's amendment. I will take liberty to speak on that. I mean, soil health is really important. Obviously, it's about increasing profitability, quality, you know, sustainability.

I had the privilege, as when I served as the Chair of the conservation committee, to Chair the very first soil health hearing that we ever did in Congress. But I have to say it's already a key purpose of most of our conservation programs authorized in title two, particularly EQIP and CSP. The numerous practices are a. Are already available to improve soil health and soil testing and planning can already be supported through the existing programs within the within the Farm Bill as drafted, additionally to further support, says conservation practice is this Farm Bill creates a new state and tribal soil health program within CSP, monitoring and evaluation are already included in this new programs list of activities that may be included to to improve soil health.

And so I also can't support a new authorization of tens of millions of dollars. And so with that, with all that in mind, I oppose this amendment. Urge my colleagues to do the same. Ranking Member is recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I just want to speak in favor of this amendment for my colleague, Mr. Sorensen, of course, the IRA established a soil carbon monitoring network of thousands of locations around the country. And of course, the amendment would codify that network and make technical improvements to make sure it's collected as consistent and usual the data. This amendment is also consistent with report language, including in the Fiscal Year 2026, AG appropriations bill that was supported by many of my Republican colleagues, and so this should be fairly non-controversial, and I would urge a yes vote from our colleagues,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And rank member yields back any other members wish we recognize hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,, those opposed by saying no. And the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it, and the amendment is not agreed to

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Mr. Chairman, I ask for the yeas and Nays.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee roll three, aye. Two. Further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed, or is there further debate or amendments to title two, Ms. Davids,

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 69

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of

The Clerk

The amendment. Amendment number 69 offered by Ms. Davids of

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Kansas, without objection, the amendment shall be considered as read, and I'll recognize the distinguished gentlelady from Kansas, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'm offering this amendment to direct the Natural Resources Conservation Service to conduct a study on the benefits of winter wheat as a cover crop when brought through to harvest and share their results with this committee. I do plan to withdraw this amendment, but I will share a little bit before I do that, I'm certainly proud to represent the wheat state in almost 1/5 of all wheat grown in the United States is produced in Kansas. Kansas farmers face unique growing conditions, and winter wheat, when used in a sustainable crop rotation, can offer significant soil health benefits. It helps control erosion, conserve water, regulate soil temperatures, suppress weeds and provide rotational benefits for other crops.

My amendment, calls for a study on the benefits of winter wheat as both a cover crop and a harvestable crop. Promoting this practice would give

Kansas farmers more flexibility. Support would give Kansas farmers more flexibility support the use of cover cropping and improve long term soil health. It's about fairness for Kansas producers and supporting sound agronomic practices.

I hope that we can continue working to address this issue and support wheat growers through the remainder of the Farm Bill process. Mr. Chairman, I withdraw my amendment

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady withdrawal, we yield.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Mr. Chairman, I would. I'm yielding. Yeah,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I think, quite frankly, you have an excellent amendment, and would, and if you choose to withdraw what you can, but certainly I, I would support passage of that amendment the way you've prepared it. But that entirely up to you. Then,

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to yield my time to anyone who would like to speak in support

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members see, well, let them use their own time. Any other members seek recognition to speak when Ms. David

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Said I would simply like to add my support for Mrs. David's amendment that she should definitely not withdraw.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

It's good amendment. Nye that we adopt it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members seek recognition,

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Mr. Chair, Mr. Scott. It seems to me that some people have a difficult time taking yes for the answer.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right, very good. The so let's see. Yeah, I'm getting there. Hold on.

So hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor the amendment signify by saying aye,. All those opposed by saying no, in the opinion of the Chair the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to, we just

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Don't hear yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Hang in there. Very confusing.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right, are they other members further debate or seek recognition under Title two conservation? Any other members seek recognition under title to the conservation title? All right, see, hearing none. Title two is now closed.

Are there any amendments under Title Three, which is, I believe the trade title got a title two, all right, might have a couple point of orders on Title Three. I'll come up here with one of them. Okay, all right, so, Mrs. Hayes, do you have the I do, okay, Ms. Brown is has, has amendment at the desk for under Title two,

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Okay, this is in, I'm doing this on behalf of Representative Jackson, in his absence, and this is for title two. And the purpose to us is to establish a new

sub category under the agriculture conservation easement program for easements that will support urban agriculture. So this

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Will be amendment number 134 134 Clerk will report the title of the amendment, all right.

The Clerk

Amendment number 134, offered by Mr. Jackson of Illinois, proposed by Ms. Brown

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Of Ohio, without objection, the amendment shall be considered, as read, I Neil now recognize the gentlelady from Ohio who is stepping in as sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of the amendment.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Okay, again. Amendment number 34 I'm going to offer and with withdraw, but the purpose of the amendment would be to establish a new sub category under the agriculture conservation easement program for easements that would support urban agriculture, this category of ASAP would have $20 million per year in mandatory spending with an additional $20 million per year in discretionary appropriations. In the absence of Mr. Jackson, I just want to thank him for offering up this amendment, we know that he is spending time with his family, and he is certainly in our thoughts and prayers. We have mentioned multiple times about the loss of his father, a living legend, Reverend Jesse Jackson, which is why he can't be here to speak on behalf of this amendment.

So it is my honor to do so. Urban agriculture cannot only increase access to local fresh foods for many Americans, but also create healthier urban food systems and help combat food insecurity. Farmers face unique challenges to accessing farm land in urban and suburban areas where development can threaten existing urban farms. That is why I support this amendment to protect urban farmland for food production and conservation by explicitly

allowing these lands to be eligible for agriculture conservation easement program and providing dedicated funding for these urban agriculture land easements.

And with that, I withdraw the amendment the balance of

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

My time. I appreciate the general aid offering amendment on behalf Mr. Jackson and and withdrawing any other really is last call for title, title two conservation. All right, for the final time hearing none. Title two is closed.

All right. Are the amendments to Title Three, Ms. Tokuda is recognized.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I seek recognition to call up amendment number 107,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mrkuda has amendment at the desk? Number 107, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 107, offered by Ms. Tokuda of Hawaii.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Bacon reserves a point of order, without objection. The amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the gentlelady, distinguished gentlelady. To sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Of all committees in Congress, only one has the authority and the responsibility to speak directly for America's farmers, ranchers and food

producers. It is this committee. We are the committee farmers turn to when markets fail, when costs rise and when federal policy threatens their ability to stay in business. The jurisdiction entrusted to us is not ceremonial.

It carries responsibility, because when farmers are hurting, the obligation to fight for relief falls here with us, and right now, farmers across this country are hurting no matter what they grow, row crops, specialty crops, lives, stocks or the food products that feed American families. They share one common experience over the past year, tariffs, an $8 billion tax on the people who grow the food, fuel and fiber on which this country runs. They didn't write these policies. They didn't start a trade war, but they are paying for it every single day.

Seed costs more fertilizer cost, more equipment costs, more fuel costs, more margins that were already thin are disappearing. Preliminary estimates show tariffs on essential agriculture inputs alone cost producers more than $8 billion in 2025 farmers don't need a study to tell you what that means. They already know these tariffs are a tax on American agriculture, and while the Supreme Court invalidated the Liberation Day tariffs, the administration's push for sweeping global tariffs means producers continue to face costs they simply cannot afford. So the question before us is straightforward, if the Agriculture Committee is not the place to address the economic survival of farmers, then, where is it?

Some may say, tariffs are not traditionally part of a Farm Bill, but the Farm Bill exists to stabilize agriculture and protect producers from forces beyond their control. When federal policy directly raises the cost of producing food, that becomes an agricultural issue, farmers don't sit on trade committees. They don't negotiate tariff schedules. Their voice in this debate is us, and we should lean into that responsibility, not avoid it.

This amendment is simple. It removes farm inputs from tariffs, not to rewrite trade policy, but to stop taxing the very producers we claim to support. Farmers are not asking for handouts. They're asking the government to stop making their job harder.

A bipartisan group of agriculture leaders recently warned this committee that indiscriminate tariffs are driving up input costs and threatening farm stability nationwide. Their first recommendation was clear, exempt farm

inputs from tariffs. That is exactly what this amendment does, and the consequences reach far beyond the farm gate. When farmers pay more, families pay more, higher production costs become higher food prices every day we delay action is another day those costs ripple through the food system.

The Farm Bill has always succeeded because this committee accepted its responsibility to stand up for agriculture when it mattered most. This is one of the moments we cannot claim to support farmers while ignoring an $8 billion tax pushing them closer to the edge. Our farmers need a voice. Our ranchers need advocates, and that responsibility rests with us.

So let's use the authority this committee was given. Let's deliver real relief, and let's stand with the people who make and grow things right here at home, our farmers, our ranchers, our food producers, they deserve to see where we all stand right now with a vote on this amendment, I urge adoption of the amendment. Thank you. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Shelley yields back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Does the gentleman insist on his point of order?

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Mr. Chairman, I actually agree with almost everything she said there, except for it doesn't fall within this committee's thing. It's Ways and Means. In fact, I have legislation to undo all the tariffs, but it's in the Ways and Means Committee.

So I make the point of order that the amendment contains language relating to subject matter within rule 10 jurisdiction of another committee. Any such language to the bill would violate rule 10.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Chair is prepared to roll the amendment does, in fact, add subject matter within the rule 10 jurisdiction of another committee, and therefore the amendment is in violation and the point of order is upheld.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Mr. Chairman, I would like to be heard on the point of order,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The absolute gentlelady is recognized on the debate on the point of order,

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Mr. Chairman, I respectfully disagree with the ruling. No other committee, as I said, speaks specifically for our farmers, ranchers and our food producers. Farm policy, which is the basis of the Farm Bill, cannot be decoupled from economic viability, and you're literally undercut.

The ability for every farmer, rancher and producer, to be able to survive the kinds of tariffs that they are experiencing right now, the path of least resistance would be to just simply call this not German and abdicate any responsibility. But right now, what they need from us is to stand up and assert our position that our farmers can no longer bear the brunt of these taxes on the most basic things they need to plant the food that we eat to grow the protein that we is essential for our survival, as well as the fuel and the fiber needed to run this country. So with all due respect, I disagree with the ruling. I would order that this is, in fact, germane.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Huda, would you yield? I yield?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yeah, actually, you know, we've had a rolling on this, and as much I'm very supportive of the whole issue on Tariffs and Trade. It is not our jurisdiction. It's clearly Ways and Means, and therefore it would violate rule 10. So we're going to move on to unless there's

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Mr. Chairman,

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Mr. Chair. I would like to appeal the ruling of the Chair.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And okay, very good. The motion the table is not debatable. The question is, shall the committee table the the gentlelady's

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

So state your gentlelady state motion again,

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Motion made to table the appeal. All those in favor saying by signify by saying, aye,. All those opposed by saying Nay. Independent Chair, the ayes have it in the motion to take

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

I request a recorded vote. Mr. Chair,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all other members voted. Anybody wish to change their vote, if not, the Clerk will report the vote.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 26 and the nays are 21

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And the motion to lay the appeal when the table was passed. All right, still working on Title Three. Mr. Gray is recognized. Mr. Gray has got an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Adam Gray (D-Calif.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 75 Five. So what the title was,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment Ms. Gray has amendment number 75 at the desk the Clerk shall report the

The Clerk

Title of the amendment. Amendment number 75 offered by Mr. Gray of California,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment shall be considered as read, I now recognize distinguished gentlemen the sponsor of the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Adam Gray (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, trade is essential to American agriculture and the United States, Mexico, Canada. Agreement provides the certainty that farmers depend on. It secures duty free access to our top markets and ensures that trade across North America operates under clear rules. Our neighbors, Canada and Mexico are some of our most dependable export markets.

Together, they purchase nearly 1/3 of all US agricultural exports, supporting tens of billions of dollars in farm income and more than a million American jobs when trade relationships appear unpredictable, it affects planting decisions, financing and long term planning. My amendment simply requires a report to Congress on how any changes to USMCA or a failure to renew it would impact America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities at a time when uncertainty already weighs heavily on rural America. This amendment is about accountability and informed decision making. Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you gentleman yields back. Any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Gray's amendment? Yes, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Costa is recognized five minutes.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much. I support this amendment, and I remember, as those of you here, when the President in 2016 successfully campaigned against NAFTA. Now let's be clear. I think most of you know that I am generally opposed to tariffs, and I supported and saluted the Supreme Court decision of last week, because it's the jurisdiction of, I think, the Congress to deal with both treaties and trade agreements.

This amendment really speaks to actually a success that the President had. He said he would revise NAFTA. Didn't call it NAFTA too. Of course, it had to be rebranded the USMCA, the best, beautiful, most, greatest trade agreement ever known to mankind.

I think when he signed it in 2020, and it had a good provision among others, and that is, every five years it would be reviewed. Well, guess what? This is the fifth year in terms of review. Why would not the president use this Hallmark treaty that he negotiated with his ambassador, trade ambassador, to work out any differences between ourselves and our two largest trading partners, Mexico and Canada, instead of insulting Canada as a 51st state, I mean, that is not the way to engender good trade relations with our neighbors.

The fact of the matter is, is that the USMCA is a good agreement, and it should be the vehicle that used to resolve any differences between ourselves and our neighbors. And this amendment speaks to that fact. And for the life of me, I can't understand why. I can give all sorts of examples.

85% of America's farmers received their potash from Canada. California. 40% of our wine market went to Canada. You cannot find a bottle of California wine in a Canadian store or restaurant today, they're doing what they should be doing, giving the treatment that their good neighbor has suddenly revoked on them.

So it makes a lot of sense to support this amendment. It would make a lot more sense, I think, if this administration would simply take advantage of this agreement that they in fact, and put in effect in 2020 instead of this, you know, tit for tat and insulting our neighbors. So for a lot of good reasons, and I could give a lot more, I think this amendment makes sense, and I support it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And Chairman yields, I'll take, let me take the opportunity to offer my five minutes. I, I appreciate the gentleman's effort to ensure the US agriculture products are are favored and well represented in the United States, Mexico, Canada agreement, whether it be dairy or forestry issues, we, we must ensure that US agriculture products are given a level playing field under USMCA To that end, I am committed to a robust USMCA agenda following the passage of the Farm Bill to ensure that all agriculture angles are considered. And I thank the gentleman for offering this amendment. Encourage my colleagues to vote yes.

Other members seek. Recognition Ranking Member.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, our economy is incredibly integrated with those of Canada to the north and Mexico to the south. Fostering those trade relationships is healthy. It's good for the American farm economy.

And the data bears this out. American farmers supply nearly 55% of Canada's AG imports and an impressive 70% to Mexico. Put another way, Mexico and Canada are buying what our farmers are selling. When Trump negotiated USMCA in his first term, he described it as a truly historic, wonderful and the best agreement we've ever made, but he changes his mind more often than he changes his tariff rates, and apparently now he thinks the deal is unfair.

In February of last year, he publicly asked, Who would ever sign a thing like this, Mr. President, you did if you feel we've been taken advantage of it was you who negotiated that deal. It clearly doesn't understand the negative impact on us. AG, if the trade deal is not renewed, this committee should support this amendment, because having more information about the consequences of the Trump Administration's actions is important as we consider how to approach trade in North America, we should be going into USMCA with our eyes wide open and a full understanding of what will happen to far country if the president decides on a whim to do away with the deal. So Mr. Chairman, and to my colleagues, I'm glad to support this amendment.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in seeking this common sense solution so we can continue to work and trade effectively with our largest and nearest partners. With that I yield no that's good,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Because you just about talked me out of it, the as any other members seek recognition as being already recorded Mr. Gray's amendment Seeing no other conversation. Ms. Salinas recognized.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate my colleague's amendment this evening, Oregon is the sixth largest state in terms of trade per capita, so we are really feeling the impact right now of the Trump Administration's tariffs, both for our exports and our imports, and this is hitting my specialty crops especially hard. Eliminating tariffs on feed, farm machinery and other essential inputs would be so incredibly helpful, but I certainly think we need to understand better what any impacts from the any changes to the USMCA

might bring and might mean for for crops all across this country and what our producers are doing right now. But I would also encourage my colleagues to to urge the trade Representative to come before this committee, to make sure that we hear from him directly, and we can ask questions of the administration and what they're thinking about trade more broadly, but I do support this, the gray amendment, and I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition. Ms. Adams.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I just want to certainly support it as well. And the comments from my colleagues and I think we should all be be supportive of generating additional data and information in this area. We know that our farmers are struggling right now, and we have a responsibility, I believe, to understand the consequences of the government's policy decision. So I support the amendment.

Encourage my colleagues to do same.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields. Any other members seek recognition, speak on the amendment, seeing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment by Mr. Gray, all those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,. Those opposed by saying no, independent of the Chair.

The ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to other members. Any other members seek further debate or amendments to Title Three, Ms. Brown is recognized, has an amendment to desk Clerk shall report the title, the amendment, I believe number 127

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk shall report the title of

The Clerk

Amendment number 127, offered by Ms. Brown of Ohio.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The now recognize the distinguished lady for the sponsor amendment. For up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, my amendment is a direct response to the number one concern that we are hearing from farmers in Ohio and across the country, tariffs. We know that farmers and ranchers are on the front lines of global trade and market fluctuations and this administration's tariff agenda has created unnecessary and unacceptable uncertainty. My amendment would ensure that before the administration changes tariffs on agricultural imports, Congress and the public receive a clear report on the potential economic impacts. This is a common sense measure.

It doesn't tie the administration's hands. It simply ensures folks on the ground have the information they need to anticipate and respond to market moving economic decisions farmers need reliable information to make planting, marketing and investment decisions, and when Sutton tariffs are imposed, it doesn't just affect farmers, the impact ripples through rural communities, increasing input costs, disrupting processing and logistics and hurting Local Businesses that develop on agriculture that depends on agriculture income by requiring a forward looking economic impact report, producers can get armed with the information they need to plan and Congress can ensure economic impacts are appropriately weighed in trade policy decision Making this administration's trade policy can be summed up as tweet First, write a check later. Time and time again, farmers have been forced to rely on trade mitigation payments that fall short of making them whole. Pick winners and losers in the marketplace and ignore the broader economic ripple effects on rural communities, coming on the heels of the recent Supreme Court decisions, which reaffirmed that the tariff authority resides with Congress, it is clear that Congress must take an active role to ensure transparency, accountability and stability in our trade policies.

Farmers should not be collateral damage in a chaotic trade agenda. They need stability and predictability, not sudden announcements that upend

markets overnight. So Mr. Chairman, that is what my amendment attempts to do compel any administration to show the impacts of proposed tariffs on the farm economy, while giving farmers another tool in the tool box in order to plan for the future. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Julie yields back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank her. Other members seek recognition to speak on Ms. Brown's, Dr. Adams,

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I do seek recognition to speak on the amendment. I am in support of this amendment. Farm groups across the country are making it clear that they want the farm administrator, the Trump Administration, to take a different approach on trade. And so this comes after the ruling from the US Supreme Court, which struck down the Trump tariffs, farm leaders reacted quickly and are urging the President not to reimpose tariffs.

Their message is simple. Farmers need stability. They need reliable markets, and certainly to plan, invest and stay competitive, but But shortly after the court's decision, the President announced new global tariffs. That announcement is now creating new uncertainty, and we need to just pause a bit.

That's why I support this amendment to have the administration submit reports to Congress on the tariff effects on consumer prices, farm revenue and input costs. And I would encourage my colleagues to support this amendment, and thank Ms. Brown for introducing it

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back other members. Members, Mr. Costa, recognize five minutes.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I think we all have had a lot of experience in the last year the impact of this tariff war that the President has initiated. I remember last spring, it was 90 countries, 90 days, no exceptions, and then the next day there were exceptions, and then there were modifications, and then there was, you know, threats and counter threats and and I've been very involved in this California, and I spoke about it earlier, in terms of our agricultural productivity. 44 to 46% of our agricultural production in California is exported, exported.

And. And the impacts on these markets after Trump won resulted in loss of market share. We produce 90, 75% of the world's almonds and pistachios. When the tariffs went in, with China and India as an example, Australia started planting almonds, we lost market share.

We see us losing market share in the Midwest, and soy beans and corn with China to going to Argentina. I mean, there's a whole host of examples. Our agricultural industry around the country works really hard to establish market share and to be competitive. And when we have a level playing field, we can, and we have proven to be competitive.

And it seems to me that the trade promotion agreement, TPP or T tip back then, working together is a much more common sense way to, in fact, establish fair boundaries on reciprocal trade agreements. And I hope that as a result of the Supreme Court's decision, the this amendment, Mr. Gray's amendment, and others, that will come back to a point where we allow our farmers to do what they do best, which is compete when they have a level playing field. And I think this amendment, speaks to that effect. And hopefully we'll get an opportunity to have our trade Ambassador come and we can have a rational discussion on how we go forward.

I know that there's a lot of markets out there that we can compete in, but this, you know, I'll see you 10% I'll raise you 15% I'll go back to 10% No, I really meant 25% farmers markets like certainty. They like stability. And the chaotic nature that has create been created as a result of the effects of this last year have proven evident to really destroy market prices, and therefore, I think we've got to come back to a place where we are able to conduct our trade agreements in a traditional way in which we are trusted and respected and not seem to going off to the to threats and the highest bidders. So I would, for a whole lot of reasons, support this amendment.

Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yield back, gentleman yields back. Ms. Bush is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I just want to speak out in support of Congresswoman Brown's amendment. You know, this amendment is really just about transparency and accountability. It doesn't tie the administration's hands. It simply requires that they lay out the facts before modifying tariffs on agricultural products.

And just to echo a lot of what my colleagues have already talked about, you know, I'd like to emphasize that bankruptcies have jumped by 46% in 2025 of that. 40% of them were Midwestern farmers at the same time, farm operating loans increased by 30% meaning more producers are borrowing just to stay afloat. And this is just to speak to the tremendous pressures that our growers are really facing. And so I think truly, you know, they want access to markets.

They want to know how these tariffs are going to input what they're growing and how that's going to impact the market that they're trying to sell for. So before we make these changes that could drive up these costs even higher, I just believe that Congress should at least see the data and conduct basic due diligence before an administration takes these on. So I yield back Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition. To speak the Ranking Members

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Recognized, I'll be brief, Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank the vice Ranking Member for her amendment and lend my support to it as well.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members seek recognition? If not, I'll take the liberty of my time. I thank you, gentlelady for bringing forward this amendment, President Trump, in coordination with Secretary Rollins and Ambassador Greer, are working hard to ensure American producers are treated fairly in the global markets. USDA and USTR already have the authority to issue joint reports on the economic outlook of agriculture tariffs, and they have done so, but these reports should not be weaponized as bureaucratic red tape to slow down the President's agenda.

And for this reason, I'll be voting no on this amendment, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same if there's no other conversation I The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no. Independent Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to. I.

Recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee rule three I two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. Additional Are there additional amendments to Title Three? Mr. Vasquez is recognized. He has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 141,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. Mr. Vasquez has amendment to desk and the Clerk will report the title

The Clerk

Amendment number 141, offered by Mr. Vasquez New Mexico.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman in New Mexico.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Give me Give me a second sure the, without objection amendment will be considered as read and now recognize distinguished gentleman from Mexico, the sponsor amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman in New Mexico, ranching is a $1 billion industry, and it's a tradition. Our Ranches are tough. They get up at the crack of dawn every day and do whatever it takes to get American beef to our tables. But in recent years, ranchers have faced a host of head winds, new world, screw warm, severe drought, tariffs, wildfire and rising input costs, these are all squeezing profits and forcing premature livestock sales.

And how has the administration thanked them for their hard work in the face of adversity by announcing billion dollar beef imports from Argentina. That's not America first. That's putting Argentina's ranchers first and leaving American ranchers in the dust. I've spoken directly with ranchers in my district who have said these Argentinian beef imports are a slap in the face to their hard work and to our heritage and won't bring down beef prices at the grocery store.

So I think it's enough with the bailouts on the backs of Americans. My amendment would condemn the administration's push to prioritize Argentinian beef at the expense of American cattle ranchers. It would also require the USDA to report in detail how Argentinian beef imports are hurting domestic cattle producers, prices and rural economies. I say, let's support our own ranchers and put a stop to these harmful trade policies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. I thank him. Many other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Ms. Davids, recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Kansas is proud cattle state and Kansas beef industry bless you. The Kansas beef industry generates $13.59 billion in

output and supports more than 45,000 jobs statewide. I consistently hear from producers that amid challenging economic conditions in farm country, cattle ranching is a bright spot. President Trump's recent executive order to allow four times as much beef from Argentina to enter the US this year undermines American cattle ranchers and increases market volatility.

Moreover, economists estimate this will fail to meaningfully lower grocery prices. I am absolutely ready to work in a bipartisan way to invest in American cattle producers and take steps to address the high food costs that are squeezing American families. However, increasing beef imports from Argentina is counterproductive, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. Thank you, and I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thanks the gentlelady yields back other members to seek recognition, to speak. Ms. figures,

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple questions for my colleague, Mr. Vasquez, are you aware of any shortages in beef production here by American farmers?

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Absolutely So. Beef prices have been elevated largely because of those beef shortages. In fact, the US lost roughly 17% of Cal ranch operations, more than 150,000 ranches since 2017

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you. I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any other members seek recognition, speak on the amendment. If not, I'll take the opportunity to weigh in here. I thank the gentleman from Mexico for offering this amendment. This amendment would ensure the impact of additional imports of fresh beef from Argentina

and US producers carefully studied, we must always strive to support us cattle ranchers above all else, which is why I'm happy to support this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same any other con, any other member wish to be recognized, hearing no further conversation.

Mr. Scott just recognized

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I'm not opposed the amendment, but most of what we're importing from Argentina is Lane trimming that gets blended with US beef in the you know, for the consumer and ground beef, that's just the facts of what was being imported. And I hope we do get a detailed report that show how what was the market should not have moved the magnitude that it did when when the announcement was made, and I know it settled back down, but the. US beef heard, is it one of the lowest? Is it the lowest point in decades?

And it's going to take a while for us to recover that with that, I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back Ranking Member's recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I just want to lend my support as well to Mr. Vasquez's amendment, and I hope my colleagues will support it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ranking Member yields back. Someone else, Dr. Adams is recognized.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I do want to lend support to this. You know, importing beef from from Argentina undermines US producers. The US cattle herd is at historic lows right now. For years, cattle producers have suffered through bad markets, and right now they're finally recouping some of those losses, and decisions like the one to import more from Argentina hurts our producers.

So I do want to support this, and I yield back Mr. Chairman gentlelady yields

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Back any other members seek recognition, seeing none, hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,, those opposed by saying no, in the opinion the Chair the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to. Any other members seek recognition for the introduction of an amendment under Title Three trade.

Any other members seek recognition under Title Three? I'm going to say it three times this time, any members seek recognition for the further debate or an amendment under Title Three, hearing non-Title Three is now closed. Yeah, right. I know.

I promise you all, we'd be out here by 12:59, 11:59. We're actually going to leave. We're actually going to leave right now. So the committee shall stand in recess until the call the Chair.

We will reconvene tomorrow at 8am to consider amendments. [RECESS]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The committee's come to order. I note that there's a quorum present. Before recessing last night, the committee Hill had closed. Title Three will now begin consideration of title four.

And I recognize Mr. Crawford, I believe has an amendment

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

At the desk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I do have an amendment at the desk. I'd like to call up amendment number six,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. Crawford amendment number six of the desk, the Clerk shall report the title of the amendment. Amendment number six offered by Mr. Crawford of

Arkansas. The, without objection, the amendment shall be considered as read, I now recognize distinguished gentleman from Arkansas to sponsor the amendment from sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, my amendment today is simple and a no brainer. It adds hot rotisserie chicken to foods eligible for SNAP recipients to purchase hot rotisserie chicken is healthy, widely available at popular grocery stores, and aligns with the new dietary guidelines for Americans, promoting nutrient dense protein, making America healthy again is about encouraging healthy practices, not just discouraging unhealthy eating. That's recognized by my Governor Ms. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who recently requested a waiver to allow Hot Rod history chicken in Arkansas, SNAP program, as well as Red State Governor's from Alabama, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee and West Virginia. Virginia, cold rotisserie chicken is already allowed in SNAP.

Let's take the next obvious step and allow people in need to take home a hot roti chicken from the grocery store that they can put on their dinner table as a healthy meal to feel to feed their families with. Ms. Mr. Sorensen, here I'd yield some time to Mr. Sorensen to speak on the amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. Sorensen is recognized.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hear from so many families in our district that are struggling, sometimes single moms or single dads, working very hard, working two jobs in their in their work day, they're doing everything right, and they're trying to grasp the good life. One of the things that I hear when I hear from these folks and when they go to the grocery store is there is a reason why most of us don't realize it, but there's a reason why there is cold fried chicken. There's cold rotisserie chicken in the deli counter.

It's because, if you are on SNAP, you can't purchase the hot chicken. You should be able to purchase the hot chicken. And one of the things that we look at today, and how I think the families have changed, is it used to be that, you know, we had just mom that was going to get all of the ingredients at the grocery store, you know, to make the casserole that I remember when I was a kid. But today, with everything that's going on with kids that are in in sports, that kids have extra curricular activities, the family is a little bit different today.

And so I support the gentleman from Arkansas, we need to make sure that families can go to the grocery store, get what they need, bring home a hot meal, and not only will it be better for the family, but it will be better for the kids as well. And I yield the balance of my time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I intend to if Mr. Moore is not here to speak on this,

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

I intend to withdraw. Saw this amendment with your commitment to work with me on this issue going forward.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. Thank the gentleman for raising the issue. Snap was designed by Congress to purchase food at eligible retailers be cooked and prepared at home, a change of this kind, especially one that singles out a specific food item really deserves careful consideration debate about the purpose of SNAP, and I yield back my time. Mr. Van Orden seeks recognition on this amendment.

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I actually I wish that Mr. Crawford had not withdrawn this amendment. I was a latchkey kid growing up, and it would have been tremendously helpful if we had had access to this type of food. And I've heard people in this committee and other places say that we already allow people on Snap to have microwaveable food, and I just want to remind them that the United States government doesn't allow American citizens to do anything we set conditions for them to thrive. And I don't appreciate that at all.

I just you know, you could go within a nautical mile of the room we're sitting in and find 10,000 microwaves that are a public health hazard, or you can find people that couldn't afford a microwave to begin with. And to me, this is absolutely absurd, that we would not allow someone to have hot food. So I regret Mr. Crawford withdrawing this amendment. We need to look at things differently.

It's 2026 and if there's a hungry child in the United States of America, and we're not doing everything we can to make sure that they're fed. I don't think we're doing justice to the American people.

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

For just a quick say, of course, yeah, I think the reason for the withdrawing of the amendment is it has to do with the budget neutral issue that we still have to work out some of the specifications on to be able to address it, so that we actually can fix it without it being so that was, that was the reason for the withdrawal. If I understand it correctly,

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Will the gentleman yield Absolutely, Mr. Crawford, I understand your intentions. I know exactly where your heart is and they're in the right place. 100% I'm just saying that. I think collectively that if we apply ourselves to looking at things, we can always find another dollar to buy another bomb, but it seems that we always struggle to find money to feed Americans and and that's all I'm discussing.

I'm not in any way, shape or form, impugning your intention, sir, with that I yield back

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Actually. Ms. McDonald, rivet is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I'd say I fully support this amendment, and in question for the gentleman who introduced the amendment, so average price of a rotisserie chicken, which, by the way, can feed a family for a whole day for under $6 if you go to Costco or somewhere similar, is about $5.66 so I'm wondering, if a family decides to buy that rotisserie chicken instead of other goods valued at the same price, how would that have an impact on the overall budget of SNAP?

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

Well, that's a good question. And one of the things that frustrates me as having been here for as long as I've been here, the CBO analysis of these things, and I'm not sure that that's the root of this, but you know, you make a good point, as does Mr. Van Orden. It really, to me, doesn't make any sense that we would allow for a cold, but not for a hot. So, I mean, I'm, I'm going to, I'm going to, I don't want to mess up the dynamics of this title or the overall bill.

So I will, I will defer to the to the Chairman on the disposition of this. I want to be as helpful as I can be, but I think we're there's general consensus among the members here that it should be cost neutral, because it's just as cheap to buy a hot chicken as it is a cold one.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Vasquez, would you yield?

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

Yes, I'll yell to the Chair

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you,

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

Or to the Chair Ranking

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I'm going to say just a couple things, and I'll yield to Ms. McDonald rivet, I don't think anyone here is against hot chicken, other than just the historical program itself, but I guess I would just ask, why would we arbitrarily do this for hot chicken and not for hot soups and, you Know, hot sandwiches, those sorts of things. So I think it is a little bit dangerous if we pick winners and losers in this space. And that's the only reason that, if this is offered for a vote, I would likely oppose it, is because I think we're having a great conversation. And Mr. Van Orden is correct that it would be terrific if all hot food and.

Already prepared. Could be available through SNAP purchases. And I yield to Ms.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

McDonald rivet, thank you. Ranking Member are we? Is this a is this a joke? This committee can't figure out how to just say, Yeah, okay, have the hot rotisserie chicken if you've been to the grocery store.

My husband and I raised six kids. I can tell you that not only is a hot rotisserie chicken a life saver, and I can give you 10 recipes off the top of my head that you can use it, including the famed tater tot casserole. But yeah, there's more work to done. There's always more work to be done.

But also, I would tell you in my local grocery story store, the hot rotisserie chicken is often far cheaper than buying a whole roaster, which, for those of you don't cook, is the bird that makes a rotisserie chicken, and certainly a million times cheaper than buying the cold rotisserie chicken, which has to be De boned and shredded in order to sell. This is just, this is just dumb. We should. We need to pass this.

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.)

And then would the gentlewoman yield for just a sec? Sure. So I think what, what the Ranking Member was alluding to, is the potential that we're

opening up a can of worms here, as it applies to other items, but, but cold rotisserie chicken is already acceptable. Number one, so it's not necessarily picking winners and losers.

Number two, I think we're making, we're not, we're not trying to put this in the category of the drive through at a local fast food establishment. These are, these are places where SNAP is already, you know, acceptable for purchases of a cold chicken. And to your point, it's cheaper than buying the chicken and roasting it yourself. So I'm sort of at a loss as well.

Mr. Chairman, I, but I, I'll make the appropriate call on this. But it seems like we have a consensus, and if it's if it's if it's acceptable to buy a whole roasted chicken, which costs more, I don't know how this is going to mess up the score, unless there's a scope issue that I'm not aware of that USDA has that but again, that's kind of why we're here, is to address USDA and get them aligned with what Our constituents are asking for.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chairman, thank you, Mr. Let me just provide some clarification. It's not a scoring issue. This is a the nature of SNAP as SNAP is defined, SNAP as it is today, and as it has been from the beginning, is about food that is purchased, taken home and prepared, and I think the Ranking Member did a great job of talking about just the complexity of this, this, it's an issue deserves more debate.

There are, there really is not a consensus on this, because what about soups? What about everything else? Now we do have emergency SNAP. Best place I can point to is Puerto Rico during hurricanes USDA has the authority when people do not have utilities, when they don't have even homes, they're able to use their SNAP benefits at fast food restaurants, but that is emergency Snap.

Snap as a whole, really is, by definition, is food that is purchased and prepared at home, whether that's good or bad, that's subject to, I think, more debate.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Mr. Chairman, if I may reclaim the last 30 seconds of my time, please. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Ranking Members point.

There is a bill that would do this, the hot foods Act, which is a bipartisan bill, which I would encourage any member that supports this general idea of offering hot foods via the SNAP program to support. However, just speaking to the issue of the chicken itself, look, you're looking at a high protein, high value item, easily accessible to families, as Ms. McDonald rivet also stated that many families rely on and so happy to go either way, but hot foods Act of 2025, I think, is a great bill for us all to consider. Here be on this committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. McGovern is recognize five minutes,

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this discussion, but one of the things I want to point out to people is that the average SNAP benefit is about $2 per person per meal. And my there are people on this committee who voted to even lower that with a 200 close to $200 billion cut in the big, ugly bill. So I mean, for a lot of families, a hot rotisserie chicken or a cold rotisserie chicken or any food, quite frankly, that could feed a family, has become a luxury, and it is really frustrating that we are advancing a Farm Bill where we're talking about all these different foods that should be available yet people can't afford it, and with the new work requirements and the red tape that have already gone.

Gone into effect. I think many of you are hearing from your constituents who don't even realize that they've lost their benefit but $2 per person per meal. I mean, you came to buy a damn cup of coffee for that here in the in the Capitol building. And I would just point that out as we move forward here.

You know, SNAP is supposed to make sure the people don't go hungry, that there is a there's a food benefit to sustain families, and we have failed miserably in that. And so I hope, as we move through this title, and we get to

the point where we're talking about fixing some of the harmful cuts that were made to this program, that we can get unanimity. I mean, really, how many of you can live on $2 per person per meal? It is, it is unsustainable, and it is a scandal that we're not dealing with that.

And I thank the gentleman, and I yield to my colleague. Ms. Adams,

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you. Ms. Chairman. Adams, I just wanted to add, you know, we talk about people not having homes and doing hurricanes, but we've got people right now and some in my district who living in hotels. They don't have a kitchen to cook or to heat anything.

So we had this discussion before about rotisserie chicken. I was just surprised that you couldn't do that. You couldn't buy that. But I do think we have to look at the overall cost of what we're giving people, $2 a meal is certainly not going to do it.

But I think we also have to remember that everybody does not have a home like many of us do, where you got a kitchen and you can go in and you've got a microwave and all those other things. So having that coming out of the store, I think it's a good thing, and we should do it. I'm a little bit concerned that we're going to withdraw this amendment. I think if we're serious about it, we need to go ahead and vote on it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. McGovern, that's your time. You will back a recognize the gentleman from Oklahoma, Mr. Lucas, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I very much appreciate my colleague from Arkansas and my colleague from New Mexico and the point they bring up on this. But I also have to acknowledge the Ranking Members point about the nature of the SNAP program and how we do these things. Legislating is about introducing legislation. It's about hearings.

It's about thoughtful discussion. It's about working through the details. Sometimes in a mark up, flying by the city of riches will create more complications on down the road than any of us can imagine, because we haven't had the time and the opportunity to thoughtfully think our way through it. There are other protein sources out there who would argue that they should fall within that same category.

I'm not opposed to the concept of my friends here. I just don't believe this is the right venue to sort this out and potentially make a rather dramatic change and set off a whole slate of unintended consequences. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I would encourage my friends to withdraw their thoughtful amendment and encourage them to work on their legislation in regular order if that still exists in this place. And with that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Chairman yells back, the amendment has been withdrawn. I believe that Mr. Vindman has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment. Amendment number 98 offered by Mr. Vindman of Virginia, without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of this amendment.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I will be speaking in favor of an amendment on Afghan Special Immigrant visas and united for Ukraine SNAP access, as we all know, in this committee, one of the traveses of the big, ugly Bill was its SNAP policies. Specifically, I want to address the policies that took access to SNAP away from our Afghan allies and Ukrainian refugees. Our Afghan allies are not strangers. They're our wartime allies.

They stood shoulder to shoulder with us, with us, with American soldiers, and risk their lives to translate for us, to advise us all while putting targets on their backs and on their families backs. I wore the uniform of this country for 25 years in the United States Army, and I know that when we say we leave no one behind, we have to mean it. We cannot allow our allies to come to this country and go hungry, for their children to go hungry. That is not the promise of America.

Also want to speak about Ukrainian refugees. I came to this country as a refugee from Soviet Ukraine, our current modern Ukrainian refugees. Are fleeing a war, which we just marked the fifth anniversary of just a few days ago, fleeing from Putin's brutal, illegal, thuggish invasion of our country. They are here because the United States led the free world in standing up to authoritarianism.

I will always be grateful to this country for accepting my family, which is why I served 25 years. My twin brother served over 20 years. My older brother served. My wife served.

My entire family, basically served because this country gave our family a shot at the American dream, and we have to maintain that dream, make sure it's accessible to every American, and including our allies and those that have fled war torn parts of the world. I believe that we have to provide the same opportunity so we don't have refugees that have come for shelter this country go hungry because of our inaction. Let's be clear, none of these people are here illegally. They're here in a legal status.

They came the right way under a legal us program and with proper documents. They are integrating and contributing to America the right way. So this isn't about restoring this is isn't about restoring accountability to SNAP or keeping illegal immigrants off of SNAP. This is just cruelty, plain and simple.

I want to give my colleagues an opportunity today to right this terrible wrong and support my amendment. My amendment simply restores the status quo for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa recipients and for the United for Ukraine recipients, and gives these folks access to SNAP. Thank you. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman. I'm going to take the opportunity to just weigh in on this amendment, and we'll see what other members will seek recognition. We'll ask Mr. Costa will be next. I want to thank the gentleman for bringing up this amendment.

H.R. 1 limited SNAP eligibility to US citizens, green card holders or legal permanent residents, Cuban and Haitian entrance or an individual residing in the United States as a result of a Compact of Free Association. Special Immigrant holders or SIVs are legal permanent residents or LPRs under the law, therefore, as USDA guidance confirms, SIVs remain eligible for SNAP under H.R. 1 once they adjust to the LPR status with no waiting period, including Iraqi and Afghan special immigrants, Certain Ukrainian nationals granted parole status between two February 24 2022 and September 30, 2024 and certain Afghan nationals granted parole status between July 31 2021 and September 30. 2023 are also eligible to receive SNAP after adjusting to the LPR status with no waiting period. And for this reason, I will vote no on this amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Costa is recognized.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak on behalf of this amendment and Representative Vindman, your opening comments, I think, speak directly toward the amendment you and your family are a reflection of what America is all about, immigrants past and immigrants present, and the contributions that you and your family and other immigrants have made over generations are, I think, the secret sauce of America. Many of you know. I've been very engaged in supporting the people of Ukraine in their efforts to maintain their sovereignty and fight for their democracy.

I've been there multiple times in the last four years. I remember clearly, clearly on February 24 four years ago, that there was strong bipartisan accord on what this was all about. Specifically in Ukraine, I remember hearing Senator Graham say, Lindsey Graham that this was clear choice between good versus evil, good versus evil. Four years later, I still believe this is about good versus evil, as the Ukrainian people are making progress

beyond anyone's thoughts, especially here recently, I think this amendment has merit.

I think we need to recognize those refugees, whether they be Ukrainian or whether they be from other parts of the world that have heard the siren call of Lady Statue of Liberty when we think about our history. I think the amendment has merit, and I want to associate with supporting it, and I hope we can come to work. This out in some fashion or another, not withstanding the Chairman's comments on the on the on the amendment, I yield back the balance my time.

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have multiple combat tours around the world, including a couple to Afghanistan. There was over 6000 Afghans. They were put at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, of which zero, not one, zero, were eligible for SIVs, meaning, at a minimum, they were ambivalent to the American presence in Afghanistan, and unfortunately, I believe many of them were working against us and our allies in that country.

So I can't support this amendment due to the fact that the vast majority of the 250,000 plus Afghans who were brought here by President Biden were not vetted. An Afghan national who was vetted shot two National Guard men, actually one woman here in the Capitol. That person was vetted to conduct counter terrorism operations, meaning killing the enemy. He was not vetted to come here as an American citizen.

So this is a much more nuanced issue than just saying, you know, these guys helped us because a lot of them didn't, and that's a fact. So I have no issue with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters coming here. I fully acknowledge that Vladimir Putin is a war criminal, but we need to work with DHS to make sure that every single person that comes into this country, especially under the guise of, you know, an SIV, when they it wasn't warranted, actually gets revetted. We just had a terrorist attack in Austin, Texas by someone that came here, you know, married in America, became an American citizen, divorce and then wind up shooting up a nightclub.

So to me, this is a national security issue. I do not believe that we should be funding or feeding people that that hate us as Americans. So with that, I

mean, I respect Mr. Vindman's intention putting this amendment, but I strongly advise my colleagues to vote against it with that I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Ms. Riley is recognized.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate Eugene you introducing this, and you and your family have gotten to know you over the last year, and you're some of the most patriotic folks I know, and I just want to yield the rest of my time to you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Vindman is recognized. Thank you.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

So just a point of clarification, and I agree with Mr. Van Orden that we do national security is a paramount interest and priority of mine, and that we need to make sure that the people that come here are properly vetted, having said that there are thousands of people that are ready here, tens of thousands and in my district, in particular, in Northern Virginia, some of them are my friends and neighbors, and they're here now, whether they're revetted or not, that's fine. We can go through that, have that debate. But while they are here, they ought to be eligible for SNAP benefits. Their families ought to be eligible for SNAP benefits.

They ought not to be going hungry. And the second point I'd like to make is that, you know, it's a lot easier to say that they can become legal permanent residents than to get it done. It can take years to become a legal permanent resident, even without a waiting period. As we know, our immigration system is broken.

There are massive backlogs in the meantime. This is about families, and potentially children going hungry, and so with both the SIV, the Afghan SIV and you for your you parole visa cannot. They cannot get SNAP access after H.R. 1 goes into effect. LPR status isn't just given, and they can't they we

can't simply let these people go hungry while they wait for LPR status to be approved.

And so I urge my colleagues to kind of just recognize the facts on the ground here, that right now, these folks are in a position of losing their SNAP benefits. That means hungry kids, hungry families, and they need a hand up, not a hand out, in order to become really productive members of society. I mean, people may disagree with, you know some of the things that I've done, but my family as out of a sense of patriotism, every member of my family served in uniform to as matter of patriotism for this country. So thank you, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment all.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman Yellen, back, now recognize general from Oklahoma,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for a point of clarification. You explained to us your interpretation and the majority staff interpretation that this amendment was not necessary.

Is that correct?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

That is correct as as as USDA has already issued guidance on this regarding these populations.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I think that's a very strong statement about how we should respond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Vindman's amendment. Seeing none, no further conversation. Question is on the amendment offered by Mr. Van man. All those in favor the amendment.

Sign by signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no. In the pending the Chair, the noes Chair, any amendment is not agreed to.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Chairman I request for roll vote

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee rule three lakh two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. All right. Other amendments we are on title for nutrition, okay? Ms. McDonald rivet is recognized, has a amendment at the desk.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 58

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment number 58. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 58 offered by Ms. McDonald rivet of Michigan,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the gentlelady, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, my amendment would support one of our country's greatest efforts to eliminate hunger, put healthy food on families dinner tables and support local farmers in the process. So of course, I'm calling I'm talking about Gus NiP. For those unfamiliar with the GUS nip program, it provides $1 for dollar match towards SNAP purchases of locally

grown fruits and vegetables. In other words, you spend $5 on vegetables at your local farmers market, and you'll get an additional $5 to spend.

I know this is a priority for us, but in particular, Representative Crawford has done, in particular Representative Crawford has has done to ensure the continuation this important program, and we appreciate it. Well. I plan to withdraw this amendment today. I want to underscore the need for increased investment in programs that help low income families access healthy food while also supporting our local farmers.

The Farm Bill continues, Gus snip and the programs it supports, including Double Up Food Bucks, but a flat renewal is simply not good enough, not while families are facing higher grocery prices every single day, programs like Double Up Food Bucks are working with Gus net, families are buying more fresh produce, helping to feed Healthy Families and supporting our local farmers. It's it's a common sense win for working families and farmers, and exactly the kind of investment we need more of. So I'll continue to push so that our level of investment in the program matches the challenges of rising costs on the ground. And I hope that we can get to we can get something across the finish line in this Congress with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentlelady. Let me weigh in. Well, first of all to say, thank you for offering this amendment. Gus net program really important me as a former Chair of the nutrition subcommittee and a strong supporter of Gus net, which incentivizes the purchase of fruits and vegetables and and SNAP.

But it was honestly the budgetary constraints. Because of that it wasn't possible include this language in the farm food and National Security Act 2026 that said there is good news, though, I'm proud, however, that we were able to within this bill, strengthen this program by improving year round availability of incentives through the use of all forms of produce and by waiving the federal match requirements in persistent poverty counties, which is incredible next step. So I look forward to continue to work with with you on further ways that we can continue to bolster this program. The amendment is withdrawn.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Mr. Chairman,

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

I just want to commend Ms. McDonald rivet for her amendment. Look, you know some of us have been around long enough. We worked on the Reauthorization of Gus net back in 2018 and I think those of us who are familiar with the program know how impactful and how important the program is, and I can't, for the life of me, understand why it's been so controversial to increase funding for the program to help SNAP recipients purchase more fruits and vegetables. I mean, produce is expensive.

I mean, that's just the reality. And Gus nip helps double the purchasing power of SNAP to ensure the families have access to fruits and vegetables. It also helps to fund very successful produce prescription programs, which again, are important to helping Americans eat more nutritiously, Gus snip recipients. But it's also especially good for our farmers, you know, and we hear a lot of talk about fiscal responsibility on this committee all the time.

But let me, let me just point out the obvious. If people are eating more nutritious foods, if people are eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, they're healthier. We control healthcare costs. We control other costs as a result of that.

And so, you know, we should be more aggressively supporting this program, investing in this program. Again, it's good for not only individuals on SNAP. It's good for our farmers. And quite frankly, more of the discussion that we are having on the Farm Bill ought to focus in on that.

How do we improve the quality of people's lives in a meaningful way. And Gus snip does that. And so I, I thank the gentlelady for offering the amendment and for calling attention to this important issue. And I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Recognize the gentlelady from main for five minutes.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And thank you to my colleague from Michigan for introducing this, it's, it's often an under utilized program and under understood one. I mean, certainly not under utilized in our states, but under understood. It's not well understood at times, the huge benefits of Gus NP, and what an important revolution this was for the SNAP benefit program.

And I just want to echo what others have said, there are so many metrics available that show particularly for young people, but for families overall, the opportunity to get fresh fruits and vegetables in the diet makes a huge difference in child development, and it really helps to reduce so many of the Associated Diseases, whether it's obesity, diabetes, heart conditions, high blood pressure, so many things are changed if you have enough fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet. And the very idea that we have not increased funding here, as the sponsor of this amendment said, is really falling behind. I know in my state, this is a greatly appreciated program, way over subscribed, and really makes a huge difference in so many people's lives. And I just want to put it in the context of this title that we're working on today.

You know, we're going to have a lot of different ways to talk about SNAP, and I know my Republican colleagues have said some things about how they understand the value of this program and the important benefit, but let's remember that in the big, ugly bill, this program was cut tremendously. So the funding isn't there going into the future that people will need. We've heard about the fact that it's only $6 a day. There's not enough money there for people to be able to afford fresh and healthy foods, and so putting it into this program is just a really critical way to do it.

One other point I want to make is this administration has really touted their Maha agenda, and I've been pleased to work with many of the people who support Maha on issues like this, the idea of fresh and healthy food or removing toxics from our environment. And you'll hear more from me on amendments that come up later, about the toxic side of this and how we remove toxics from our food. But on this side, there's a lot of talk about

getting rid of ultra processed foods, about taking food dyes out of our food, and a whole variety of other ways to make food healthy. But the fact is, if you don't have enough money, you depend on ultra processed food.

That's just the way it is. There isn't there aren't cheap other alternatives here, and a lot of people turn to ultra processed food to lots of starches. We've got a new food pyramid that's being much touted again by this administration. I think we need to bring these philosophies together.

And if we really want to be supporters of making sure people are healthier going into the future, if we really want to take on this agenda of food is medicine that eating a good diet keeps you from spending later on on healthcare costs. We have to embrace programs like this. So I'm really disappointed to see our priorities around this. We're going to talk a lot about the priorities around SNAP benefits, but I think this is the committee where we have the opportunity to really deal with American nutrition.

So I wish we were putting more money into this. I wholeheartedly support this amendment, and I hope we will take this into consideration. I yield back. Generally

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment which has been withdrawn. Let me, let me just says before we move on. Let me just say, just a reminder with comments I made, we have invested in this. We tried to do it in a budget neutral way, in terms of providing incentives year round, and also taking away the federal cost share, having to have the federal match for certain high poverty counties.

So recognizing the importance of. That any members have seek to be recognized for an additional amendment,

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Mr. Chairman, have an amendment number 30 is

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Recognized that has an amendment at the desk. Which amendment number number 30, number 30, amendment number 30, offered by Ms. Brown of Ohio. Very good. The I now recognize the why the amendment will be considered.

As read, I now recognize the distinguished, gentlelady from Ohio, the sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my amendment strikes the cruel expansion of work requirements that we saw included in H.R. 1, a change used to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. Now, let me remind everyone that this partisan expansion forced seniors, parents, with teenagers, veterans, homeless individuals and those aging out of our foster care system to jump through work and more paperwork requirements to receive basic food benefits. This particular change targeted our most vulnerable neighbors all to pay for tax cuts, tax cuts.

I've said this before, but given what we are seeing in the legislation today, it is clear it bears repeating. Snap is not a jobs program, it is a food program, and I'm not really sure if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would care if it were a job program, because we used to have those, and this administration slashed the funding for those at every term. And since this policy has already been rolled out, mind you, during a government shutdown, when this administration weaponized, once again, the benefits and hunger of our neighbors, we know the effects of this. We know because we have seen that this policy has not created new jobs.

It has created new barriers, more red tape, more paperwork, and what does that lead to? Well, I'm glad you asked, more hungry seniors, more hungry veterans, more hungry foster kids. This policy has not made our country safer, our borders more secure, or children healthier. It's also worth noting that these new requirements were rolled out without any effort to boost job readiness, no expanded job opportunities or investments in child care, transportation or work force training.

Instead of investing in pathways to work, they choose to punish families, seniors, veterans and people who have fallen on hard times. So my amendment here is a chance to course correct for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, to acknowledge that work requirements don't work, and that SNAP program is not a jobs program, but an anti-hunger program. With that. Mr. Chairman, I yield my time to the Ranking Member.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Ranking Member is recognized for the meantime.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you so much. Ms. Brown, this amendment would undo the harmful changes in H.R. 1 that would expand SNAP's harsh time limit, which only allows someone to receive SNAP for three months once every three years if they can't work, can't find work or can't find enough work. We need this amendment to pass and to pass now without it, millions of Americans, including 800,000 older adults, 300,000 veterans, homeless individuals and former foster youth and more than a million people living in communities without enough jobs are expected to lose their food assistance entirely, starting this month, many Americans can't find work, enough work or work that pays enough in this economy, ensuring that they focus On job searching, skill building, training, earning, earning their GED while still being able to feed themselves and their families should be an obvious yes, I encourage all members to vote in support of this important amendment. Thank you and I yield back to my colleague.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you with that, Mr. Chairman, I Mr. Scott from Jordan, were you yielding? Yeah, Okay, nice.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment, and I want to read to you from the law that we passed, and these are the exceptions to the work

requirements. Now the Ranking Member just told you that 800,000 older adults is the way she. Put it would be removed from the SNAP rules, just the facts.

If you're over 65 years of age, you're exempt from the work requirements that we passed. I want to say that again, if you're over 65 years of age, you're exempt from the work requirements in H.R. 1. This is the way it reads, paragraph two, shall not apply to an individual if the individual is under 18 or over 65 years of age, medically certified is physically or mentally unfit for employment. So if you can't work, you're exempt from the work requirements a parent or other member of a household with responsibility for a dependent child under 14 years of age, it goes on from their pregnant women or exempt from the work requirements.

So I mean, the changes that we made were good changes to the program. They put integrity back in the program. We have plenty of money in this country to take care of people who can't work, but no country has enough money to take care of people who simply choose not to work. And with that, Mr. Chair, you yield.

I yield the random

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I appreciate yielding to the Chair. I think calling this work requirements really is a disservice, not that work is a bad thing. Work is about dignity, obviously, but there are three options, and let's admit that for individuals, you just heard a great overview of what the law really is, of who it pertains to. But if they there are two other options, other than working a minimum of 40 hours, I believe it's 2020, hours a month.

Yeah. One is to be engaged in some type of SNAP Employment career and type of education that we pay for, that we pay for, we invest in those families, because you know that, you know the help them, help to pull them out of poverty. And so education is now that may not work for everybody. Where I get work might not be work for everybody in terms of, depending on where you choose to live, or where you do live and and what's in your area.

But the third one applies to everyone. I don't know a community that that would not benefit somewhere from a volunteer, and quite frankly, volunteering an average of 20 hours a month qualifies you to continue with SNAP. And so let's be very clear. I know the focus and the wording is on work requirements, but it really is.

The requirements are three fold. It's work, it's volunteer, or, I'll be honest with you, my favorite as someone who leads on Career and Technical Education. The Education Workforce Committee, it's helping people find some career in technical education, which, by the way, could be online, you know, something they could do from the comfort of their own home, in terms of developing in demand skills. And I yield back, and I recognize Mr. McGovern.

Minutes, yeah, well, I'm sorry. I yield back to Mr. Scott.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. McGovern is recognized. I want to

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Thank you for reading us the law. We know what the law says. Thank you very much. And so a 64 year old worker who gets laid off tell them no food.

That's great. And I want to thank Ms. Brown for bringing up this amendment. Look at thousands of people in my home state of Massachusetts are about to lose access to SNAP because Republicans voted to give their SNAP benefits and their SNAP dollars to multi-millionaires and billionaires. That's just a fact.

Veterans, veterans, families with teenage kids, older adults, teen, teens aging out of foster care, homeless people are all about to get notice that they don't have money for food. This month, four out of five SNAP households include a child, elderly person or a person with a disability. The vast majority of SNAP recipients who can work actually do work. They do work.

And nearly 75% of adults participating in SNAP worked within a year of receiving benefits, and we have study after study after study telling us that time limits do not improve employment or earning outcomes for recipients. So this is not about work. This is not about work. It's about Republicans not giving a damn about hungry people in this country, there isn't a work crisis in SNAP.

The real crisis is that people are working in minimum wage jobs, and they cannot afford to feed their families. I mentioned before, the average benefit is about $2 per person per meal. We actually reduce that benefit from the time of COVID. And, you know, and if this Congress were serious about promoting work, we'd be talking about strengthening and expanding work training programs, and we'd be talking about increasing the minimum wage so that no person who works lives in poverty.

I mean, more and more people are enrolling in SNAP who are working full time. And. And for some reason that doesn't seem to bother anybody on the other side. I mean, you know, you want to tell veterans living in poverty, you know, looking for a job, go volunteer.

I mean, I love the description that my friends kind of paint of people who are on SNAP, and they all fit into these nice, neat categories. Life is very simple, but the reality is, life is very complicated, and some of the people who we are punishing through these work requirements. And by the way, I hate to use the word work requirements, I mean they're basically efforts to try to throw people off the program. Some of these people have had difficult lives, complicated lives.

They've served our country, you know. And I get Yeah, so it doesn't apply to people over 65 but again, try to be 64 year old people looking for work. It's not easy, you know, and it's difficult. So you know this, this already has caused great confusion and concern and hardship all throughout the country, and we haven't even gotten to the nearly $200 billion in cuts that are coming down the road.

So I support Ms. Brown's amendment. I think this is a good amendment, and I think that we put this was put into this big, ugly bill in a way that wasn't given a lot of thought and not a lot of consideration. I think it's cruel,

and I'm seeing it in practice. And I think if you're listening to your constituents, you're hearing from them right now, this isn't working nicely and neatly the way you describe it with that, I yield to the gentlelady,

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, gentlemen for yielding. I want to support this amendment as well, and thank Ms. Brown for bringing it forward. This new SNAP work requirement creates more red tape, not more jobs. Most recipients already work, and they are seeking work, but economic conditions in a slowly labor market make steady employment harder.

Job openings have fallen to 6.5 million, highlighting the gap between stricter SNAP requirements and available work. These mandates increase administrative costs and paperwork for states now, my county was in to talk to me just about that about a week ago, much of which lack the staff. They don't have the staff. They don't have the resources to manage the expanded compliance Republicans one big, ugly Bill made this worse, forcing states to absorb 25% more and SNAP administrative costs when states can't keep up, families lose access to food, not because they won't work, but because of bureaucratic hurdles.

Striking these provisions protects families and prevents costly, unfunded mandates on states. I support this amendment. I hope we would support it, and I'll give it back to the

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Gentleman. All right, seeing no further speakers on the amendment. The Chair is opposed the amendment.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Well that I will say this, Mr. Chairman, it's clear that my colleagues are not serious about improving this bill in a meaningful way for families, and so with that, I will withdraw my amendment.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

All right. Chairman Thompson stepped out for just a second, and we'll find out who's amendment are we taking next? Whose amendment are we taking next?

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

I have an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

All right, we'll take Ms. Hayes amendment.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

It's number Hayes 20 says you recognize for five minutes

The Clerk

Amendment number 28 offered by Ms. Mrs. Hayes of Connecticut.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you. Last year, this committee considered H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill which cut SNAP by $187 billion to give tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans in our country, Republicans have gutted the most effective anti-hunger program in the United States, which will have unforeseen consequences for generations in the wealthiest country on Earth, hunger is a policy choice. One analysis found that H.R. 1 will reduce income for the poorest 20% of Americans by an average of 3.8% while increasing income for the wealthiest 20% by 3.7% my amendment is simple. It would repeal the SNAP cuts in H.R. 1 and restore full benefits to the 42 million Americans who rely on the program for food assistance H.R. 1 expanded work requirements for older Americans and parents with children, prohibited the USDA from evaluating the Thrifty food plan, eliminated the ability for families to use SNAP participation as an indicator for energy energy assistance programs or broadband assistance, which would be required for the jobs that your.

Just talked about and created a massive unfunded mandate on state governments. We had heard directly from states that have said the cost share

and administrative costs may force them to opt out of the SNAP program entirely. These drastic cuts have hurt the farmers, ranchers and producers who grow food, the small business owners who accept EBT dollars and the grocers who serve our communities, farmers stand to lose 24 billion over the next decade as household food purchases decline. Within six months, as participants lose SNAP small grocers could see sales decline by as much as 6.7% my amendment is based on my legislation, the restoring food security for American families and farmers Act, which has the support of 202 members of the House of Representatives and the endorsement of over 1400 organizations.

SNAP benefits are modest, averaging only $6.20 per person per day, or $2 per person per meal, the benefits of SNAP are highly targeted to focus on those with the greatest need. 92% of SNAP benefits go to households with incomes below the poverty line, and 54% go to households at or below half of the poverty line at a time when grocery prices are rising and the tariffs are increasing costs for families and farmers. We should be restoring SNAP and expanding access. To say that I am disappointed with this Farm Bill that we are considering today is an understatement.

This is a Republican wish list with no real desire to secure the bipartisan support needed to pass through the House or the Senate. We voted on a Farm Bill last year that they couldn't even get to the floor because it didn't have the support of their own caucus. The United States should prioritize feeding its own people over funding foreign military engagements. I will take every opportunity to roll back the cuts in H.R. 1, and I implore all my colleagues to support my amendment.

We need to feed people, not a war machine. And with that, I yield back

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Chair now recognition. Ms. Craig,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Congresswoman Hayes for your leadership on the nutrition and foreign AG subcommittee, for your steadfast work on behalf of hungry people across our great nation, I wholeheartedly

support this amendment to restore SNAP food assistance, because no matter how Republicans try to spin it, cutting SNAP by $187 billion has already resulted In hundreds of thousands of Americans having their food assistance either cut or taken away. Keeping these cuts in place will result in millions more Americans, including seniors, children, veterans, having their food assistance reduced at a time when food costs are already unaffordable for way too many Americans further in county administered states like Minnesota, property owners, whether they're home owners or business owners, will see their taxes increase as a result of the Republicans unfunded mandate in SNAP costs in the Big Beautiful Bill. Republicans will shake their heads and mutter, not true. I've heard it all day already today, but these facts are not debatable.

A recent headline by Minnesota Public Radio reads thousands of Minnesotans to be kicked off SNAP due to new eligibility requirements. Eligible. Eligibility requirements is code for additional paperwork and red tape that Republicans Barry hard working Americans in to make accessing food assistance too complicated, too restrictive or too time consuming. The vast majority of our nation's wealth is already concentrated in the pockets of a handful of wealthy elites.

The Big Beautiful Bill cut SNAP to pay for additional tax breaks for the Ultra Rich, while taking food away from parents, grandparents and disabled people. You know, over the last several hours, we've heard that everything has to be cost neutral in this markup today. Well, I can tell you what was not cost neutral. It was the Big Beautiful Bill, and the benefit went to the ultra wealthy, the income disparity in this country only continues to grow, and we wonder why our constituents are pissed off at the government.

It's because we are failing them as a government. We are failing them because we keep making policy that favors the ultra wealthy in this nation and so folks today, we have an opportunity, my colleagues, to right this wrong, to say to the American people, we hear you, we feel you. At a time when food cost continues to rise, at a time when a. Overnight because of wars of choice, gas prices go up 16 cents overnight.

People cannot afford their lives in this nation, and that is just an increasing fact every single day. And Republican policy is only making this work worse. We are here to mark up a so-called Farm Bill, which is kind of ridiculous, as I sit here and think about this. This is not a five year, 12 title Farm Bill.

This is a jigsaw puzzle that Republicans have tried to piece together when Democrats have been willing to negotiate in good faith, a an actual bipartisan Farm Bill, $187 billion in cuts. That's what we did to title for what you did to title for the reconciliation. And now you expect us to sit here and mark up a bill that is a shell of what this country's family farmers and our constituents deserve for some of us, this is your first Farm Bill mark up for all of us, it could likely be our last, because by decimating the nutrition title of the Farm Bill, by splitting the Food and Farm programs apart, as Republicans have done in this process, you have destroyed the Farm Bill coalition. The Farm Bill coalition has been key to passing every bipartisan Farm Bill in modern history, and that was only possible because farmers and families both benefited from this bill, the bill before us today, which continues the SNAP cuts increases hunger in America, could very well be the last Farm Bill in the traditional sense of the word, this next go round, were the last remaining pieces where bipartisan consensus could be forged and policy could be hashed out to rural America and every community in this country could be declared dead.

We could be driving the last nail in the coffin of this coalition today, so I would urge my colleagues, including my Republican colleagues, to vote yes on this amendment restore food assistance for hungry Americans, but also restore hope in the future of bipartisan Farm Bills. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I've got Mr. McGovern, Ms. Davis. I did not see who had their hand up first. I'm sorry, do you know? Mr. McGovern?

I'll just go down the roster. Mr. McGovern, well,

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Thank you. Thank you. I want to thank Representative Hayes for her leadership on this. This is important.

I mean, this is one of the most important amendments that we're going to consider today, this is this gives us a chance to fix a wrong that, quite frankly, should never have occurred to begin with. In July, Republicans made the largest cut to food assistance in American history, in American history, gutting SNAP to pay for tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires. That's what it was. That's what the big, ugly Bill was.

You know, tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, and we got SNAP by close to $200 billion the result, you save Jeff Bezos about $8 billion on Amazon's tax bill, and took a couple of 100 bucks per month for food away from hungry families. Every single Republican on this committee who voted for that disastrous bill should be ashamed of yourselves, and this is an opportunity to make up for that vote. Hunger is a political condition. I mean, we have the money, we have the resources, we have the food to end it, to end it.

And by the way, if you end hunger, as I pointed out before, you know, you also save a lot of money. People who have access to food on a regular basis to good food are healthier. You know, we lower medical costs. Kids who go to school who are not hungry learn are better.

Workers who are not hungry, are more productive in the workplace. You know, senior citizens, by the way, who are hungry, who take their medication on an empty stomach, end up in an emergency room. So I mean, the idea that ending hunger is just some kind of nice thing to do, you know, and that's it. It's more than that.

It's more than that. Hunger in this country is getting worse. It's getting worse, not better, because of your awful policies that are pushing people deeper and deeper into poverty. We have 48 million people who do not know where their next meal is coming from.

48 million people in the richest country in the history of the world, I mean, and this bill doesn't do one damn thing to help them. We have an opportunity to change that reality with Ms. Hayes amendment. This amendment is an opportunity for Republicans to undo the wrong that was

committed in the big ugly bill. You can vote for this amendment right now to restore SNAP as it was before the big ugly bill.

Well, again, I I'm puzzled that so much attention is given to finding ways to enrich the rich in the legislation that comes to the floor. I mean, I mean, there isn't a tax cut or tax break for wealthy interests or big corporations that my friends don't want to embrace, but when it comes to making sure that people have enough to eat, by the way, as we mentioned before, increasingly the people who are going on SNAP right now are working families. They're doing everything right. They're working like just like you want them to.

They're working they don't earn enough to be able to feed themselves and their families. There is something wrong with that. We have an opportunity to change that equation. And I hope my friends will join with all of us and support Ms. Hayes amendment is the right thing to do.

It is the right thing to do. And with that,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back, generally back. Now recognize Mr. Scott from Georgia.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I again want to remind the American citizens that if you're under 18 or over 65 years of age, you're exempt from the changes that we made. If you're medically certified as physical or mentally unfit for employment, you're exempt from the changes we made. If you are a parent or other member of a household with responsibility for a dependent child under 14 years of age, you're exempt from the changes that we made.

If you're a pregnant woman, you're exempt from the changes that we made. And I want you to know that even after all of the changes that we made, SNAP benefits, the current baseline are over over 70% of total Farm Bill spending still go to SNAP benefits and with that, Mr. Chair, I yield the remainder of my time,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields and I recognize Ms. Davids for five minutes.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Chairman Kansas has a proud legacy of leadership on bipartisan Farm Bills, with former Senators Bob Dole and Pat Roberts being key to holding together the coalition of Farm Bill, of sorry, Coalition of farm and nutrition stakeholders that has carried every previous Farm Bill across the finish line in 1977 Senator Dole played a pivotal role in ensuring the Farm Bill included provisions guaranteeing access To nutritious foods for all Americans. Now, this committee addresses a Farm Bill for the first time since the Republicans budget bill passed historic cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP last year, the budget bill has torn apart a vital coalition of farm and nutrition stakeholders. The Farm Bill is incredibly important to the folks who grow our food and feed our families. However, the historic cuts to SNAP jeopardize the path forward for this bill and future Farm Bills.

I support this amendment to reverse SNAP cuts. In my district alone, more than 8000 households depend on Snap to put food on the table, all while keeping our agricultural economy moving by ensuring that people can buy Kansas grown foods. I urge my colleagues to vote for this amendment and restore the traditional Farm Bill coalition that has been responsible for every previous Farm Bill. Thank you, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Joe Lee yields back now represent, recognize generally from Hawaii, mrkuta for five minutes.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of this amendment to restore the $187 billion in SNAP cuts included in the big, ugly bill. Because if we continue down this path, the story of this Farm Bill will be defined as much by what isn't in it as by what is and what isn't in it anymore is food, food taken off the plates of hungry Americans. Let's be honest about what $187 billion means that money didn't just disappear on paper. It came out of grocery carts.

It came off kitchen tables. It came out of family budgets already stretched to the breaking point. It's like serving a meal and taking away the piece of chicken, leaving only the broccoli, the tortilla and one other side, and calling it enough. Families know that's not enough.

Kids know that's not enough. Seniors know that's not enough. Veterans know that's not enough. Working individuals know that's not enough, and Hungary certainly knows the difference.

In Hawaii alone, more than 165,000 people rely on SNAP, working families, seniors, veterans and children. The average benefit is about $346 per person per month. That's not luxury, that's not even supplemental, that's basic survival. Snap doesn't just feed families.

It supports farmers, grocers, truckers and rural communities. Every dollar generates up to $1.80 in economic activity. It keeps communities strong. It keeps families together.

Yet this bill cuts food assistance while shifting new costs on to states and. Local communities already struggling to keep up. So I asked my colleagues, look at what we've left off of people's plates. Look at what isn't there.

Look at what isn't in this bill. Look at how much you've already taken away. And ask yourselves, is this a Farm Bill meant to sustain America, or one that's meant to starve it, because this amendment gives us the chance to correct course, restore these funds, protect families, cancel those cuts, and make sure this Farm Bill lives up to its promise to feed America. Thank you, Mr. Chair and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

La yields back now please to recognize Ms. Salinas for five minutes.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I've had agricultural groups and nutrition groups come into my office, and what I have to tell them is we did not prioritize rural America in this Farm Bill. We had a chance in the last Congress to actually bring a really strong bipartisan bill to the American people, and we didn't, and I know many of us in this room really urged, even in the lame

duck session, to move something, and it didn't happen. But we continue to work, and I continue to talk with my advocates and constituents back home, and what I told them is, this will be a priority. I promise you, this will be a priority because Republicans are in control, and they knew know who brought them to the dance, and President Trump knows who brought him to the dance.

It was rural America, and what ended up happening, instead of right out of the gate working on a Farm Bill, we put Americans in debt an additional $4 trillion so Jeff Bezos could throw himself a $50 million wedding. Meanwhile, people are going hungry. Farmers don't have protection for their crops, and what we are seeing put on states is astronomical. The State of Oregon will see an administrative cost shift of about $150 million every two years.

Now, seniors, veterans, children in my district will go hungry. And right now, about 83% of SNAP households in Oregon includes someone who is working. So this myth about people who need additional supplemental nutrition is just that. It is a myth.

I urge an aye vote on this amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Vasquez is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I stand today in full support of this amendment. You know, before coming to Congress, I had the pleasure of serving on the board of my local food pantry, Casa de pellegrinos in Las Cruces, New Mexico, for many years. It's something that my mom does today in her retirement, and I want to give folks a picture of what that $187 billion in exemptions actually looks like on the ground. Food pantries and soup kitchens like El calito and Casa de Pete greenos are struggling every day to give New Mexicans the food that they ask for when they come and get in line, oftentimes waiting hours just to get a hot meal.

They're hosting fund raisers in the community, asking other people of moderate to low incomes to give what they can, to donate food. I go to my

local barber shop, and for the last year, the cans that are in those donation boxes remain empty, but the call for food remains strong, and so switching this burden from these exemptions to the states and to individuals and to the nonprofit communities doesn't eliminate hunger. It doesn't magically put people back to work. It forces that cost burden on our communities.

And in a state like New Mexico, where we don't have a lot of money to begin with, we're all pitching in to feed our communities. We're raising money on the streets to feed people. These are devastating decisions that were made in H.R. 1 that are made today by Americans at the cash register. To my colleagues who have gone shopping, who go shopping in their local grocery stores, or even here in Washington, DC, I'm sure that you've had a customer in line in front of you who's had to put several food items back because they can't afford it, or who has to pull out a roll of about a dozen coupons just to be able to get the food that they need.

And you see that they may have a chill a child in tow, and that they asked that child to put a candy bar back, or to put food back because they can't afford it. This is what this cut means to Americans. It's not just about exemptions. It is about people.

It is about communities coming together. It is about the poor feeding the poor in states like New Mexico and Americans helping each other any way they can. Meanwhile, I. As of today, $1.8 billion has been spent on the conflict in Iran.

That's what, 18 times what we're asking for here to just restore food to Americans. I think that should be an easy and a moral choice for us, and so I rise to fully support this amendment, and I yield back my time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman yields back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Recognize Dr. Adams for five minutes.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want to speak in support of this amendment. You know, cutting SNAP by 180 $7 billion has already resulted in hundreds

of thousands of Americans having their food assistance taken away. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that at least 4 million Americans will see their benefits cut significantly, or lose access to SNAP entirely. Well, we're talking about seniors and families and with children and veterans.

Food costs are increasing, and these cuts are taking food out of the mouths of babies. It's shameful. Now you want to make America healthy again, where you can't be healthy if you're hungry, and that's less money for people to spend at grocery stores and local farmers markets. Farmers need customers.

Families need food. This program links the two. In my State of North Carolina alone, more than 9000 individuals and families filed for bankruptcy last year, an 11.4% increase across the country. Farm bank was bankruptcies Rose 46% in 2025 and USDA says that 15,000 farms were lost last year alone, when both farm bankruptcies and family bankruptcies are rising.

That's a clear warning sign something isn't something isn't working. So let's repeal the SNAP cuts from this one big, ugly bill. And Chairman, I yield back, I support this amendment, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gen a lady from Maryland is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I represent Maryland 6th District in Western Maryland, with many of our farmers and a lot of rural parts of our state, but in Maryland, our governor, Wes Moore, and many of us believe that no one should be left behind. It is something that is part of our ethos, and we are feeling that with so many in our rural communities are being left behind and are hungry, it's striking to think that just a few months ago, we sat in this very room late into the night voting on a bill that proposed a $3 billion cut to food assistance that was my first mark up in Congress. That night was quiet.

Today, the debate is much louder and more spirited, and this time, all of our heads are up. And to me, that is distinct that matters. I very much support this amendment, which will repeal all the SNAP cuts included in H.R. 1, that big, ugly bill ultimately cut 187 billion from food assistance, a far cry from the 300 billion my colleagues voted to advance from this very room less than a year ago. Now, not much has changed over the past year.

We are still fighting over the same bottom line. What has changed is the reality facing the people who rely on these programs. Many of the people in my district who are on SNAP do work. They just can't make it on a big box retail job, and more are going hungry.

In fact, one in nine constituents in my district, half of them children are on SNAP. And what has also changed in the SNAP paperwork requirements have grown much harsher, affecting families with children 14 and older, older Americans, former foster youth, veterans and people experiencing homelessness. What has also changed is that households that had previously qualified for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program payments no longer automatically receive a standard utility allowance their cuts. This cuts their benefits by an estimated 100 $225 per month.

What has also changed is that 27,000 grocery stores that serve large shares of SNAP recipients are now financial risk, particularly in the rural parts of my district, yet my colleagues chose to cut SNAP by 187 billion and then pass a smart Farm Bill that restores not a single dollar. So from Allegheny to montgomery county, Maryland, you are denying producers serious revenues by slashing these funds. With this, we leave behind 400,000 agricultural jobs that SNAP sports and $1.50 in economic activity for every dollar spent. How can we justify this when farm bankruptcies are up 46% USDA revised farm income down 25 Billion and where 15,000 farms were lost in 2025 alone.

Cutting SNAP hurts families, farmers and our entire community, and it specifically is hurting the rural parts of my district, specifically our elderly and those who are most left behind from rifts in our government and through our contractors and elsewhere, this kind of change is dangerous, and it started here. We cannot turn a blind eye. We can solve this problem. We must solve this problem.

I do want to thank Rep Hayes for her tireless work for food insecurity, for our families, and for her leadership in our Farm Bill coalition and so many of my Democratic colleagues who every day try to further this issue. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. I yield back thanks.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady shields, back any other members seek recognition to speak on the amendment. Ms. Brown,

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, at first I want to say I want to thank Ms. Hayes for the work on this amendment, and I just want to remind folks that no matter how many times you read the legislation or how slowly you do it, it does not change the impact. The impact and supersedes your intentions. And the CBO says that 800,000 older adults through age 64 will lose SNAP. That is a fact.

So with that, I just want to say that I support this legislation, and I'm going to yield the remainder of my time to Ms. Hayes,

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you, Representative Brown, I want to just thank all of my Democratic colleagues for standing up and supporting this amendment, which is very different than a few months ago during the government shutdown, when we saw Republicans and Democrats alike talking about the importance of SNAP in their community, we saw the Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, do several press conferences committing to fully funding SNAP and how important the program was. And now, all of a sudden, we're back here and mum is the word when it's time to stand up for people who are hungry. Quite frankly, we've heard over and over about how this legislation will exempt people who are over six, I'm sorry, yeah, over 65 but it doesn't exempt people who are disabled. It doesn't exempt our veterans.

It doesn't provide the exemptions for work requirements in communities that may be experiencing particular hardships. Many of the thing that I've said this many times before that is particularly egregious to me is that when

families receive SNAP, their kids are also categorically eligible for free or reduced school meals. So now, not only are we taking away food from kids at home, this legislation takes away food from kids at school, and you can, you know, analyze it, talk about it like Ms. Brown said, the impact is recognized when you are in a school and you have to try to collect paperwork and try to reach out to families to make sure that kids don't lose benefits. That is not anything we're talking about here on this committee.

So I don't want to hear about, oh, it's super easy. All these people are exempt. They could work online. Again, as I mentioned in my opening, people who receive SNAP assistance would also be eligible for reduced broadband assistance.

So it just sets up a ripple effect where all of these things are taken away and someone can't even stand on their own two feet. It's really interesting because, as Mr. McGovern says, this is framed as, you know, people high on the hog, living a lifetime of benefits. What it does not acknowledge is that there are many people who are working, who are the working poor, who are just not making enough to get by. You know, I've said on this committee many times.

I was a college student working three jobs, three jobs and still qualified for benefits, and at the point where I graduated, I went back and worked in my community and taught in my community and gave back to my community. So it was just intermittent, intermittent while I was trying to stand on my own two feet, which is a story of so many Americans. I wish we had had even the opportunity to have this kind of a robust debate when we're talking about allocating money for foreign wars, we don't even want to have a vote on that. We don't even want to talk about that.

But when it comes time to feeding people at home, when it comes time to helping out Americans, we you. We are have obstacle after obstacle and push back after push back, I would remind everybody in the room and anybody watching, go back to a few months ago. Listen to some of the comments that my Republican colleagues made about SNAP and how important it was to all of their congressional districts. Go back and look at the tweets and the videos of them visiting food banks and food pantries and telling people how committed they were to helping them, how quickly they forget when it's time to come back here and actually do the work of funding these programs.

I once again thank my colleagues. I urge you all to support this legislation, and even if it fails today in this committee, I urge you all to continue working with me to help roll back these cuts and feed our most vulnerable communities in this country, and with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Jill, I yields back. Ms. fingers from Alabama is recognized.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ms. Hayes, I applaud you for invoking the sentiment of a famous poet that we all know who once said that we have money for wars but can't feed the poor. I represent a district that is in Alabama, a place I know most people in here have probably never visited the individual median income in my district. If you hear me speak, you hear me speak on this quite a bit. Individual median income in my district is just north of $32,000 and for the mathematicians in the house, you know that that means that 50% of the wage earners in my district make less than that number.

So over half of the wage earners in my district earn less than $33,000 you back out from that number, rent, you back out from that number, gas, you back out from that number, water bill, power bill, an internet bill. If you have internet in your area, you back out from that healthcare expenses, you back out from that child care expenses. You're not left with much because we still haven't backed out food. And so what that leads to in my district is an environment where about one in four households rely on SNAP benefits.

One in four. It's one of the highest rates in this nation. The income in my district is one of the lowest in this nation. And so, you know, in growing up in Alabama, one thing is clear that I'm sure you see in Connecticut and North Carolina, Massachusetts and Michigan and all of the states represented by us on this committee, is that poor people don't like being poor.

Poor people don't like being poor. It's not something that they enjoy. You know, it is a it is for for most of the people that I've encountered. You know, it is a very humbling to some embarrassing feeling to need government assistance.

It's not something that people take pride in. And so, you know, I believe we have an obligation here to make sure that we stand up for for people, we stand up for humanity, that we do what is necessary to make sure that people in the richest country that this world has ever known, to make sure that they can have the bare minimum to eat, and let's be honest, SNAP does not even provide the bare minimum to eat. We're talking $6 a day. $6 a day is what we're talking about, and I can't lose sight of that fact.

You know, when I came to Congress, like most of you here, I took a vow to not forget where I came from, and I didn't grow up on SNAP, but I certainly grew up around a hell of a lot of people who did, and I represent a hell of a lot of people who still are, and most, if not all, of those people strive to get off of it. They don't want to be there. You can't take SNAP benefits and put them in a bank. You can't invest SNAP benefits.

SNAP benefits are spent at a local grocery store, which I think is something that's very that has gotten lost in large part in this debate. All of the data, I've not heard any contrary data that suggests that the SNAP benefits to the local economy are staggering, almost two to one, and that's not money that is just going anywhere, that's going to grocery stores, which ultimately filters down to the farmers and the producers that we have a responsibility to make sure we're taken care of with this Farm Bill. There's a reason SNAP benefits are connected to the Farm Bill, because when it all trickles back down, it all starts in a field, or it all starts on a ranch somewhere. And so I think you know, being on this committee, we have an opportunity.

Allegation, not just to protect the hungry, but to protect the producers, the farmers as well. And by making these cuts, we we do neither. And so, you know, I don't, I don't look at the world through rose colored goggles. We know the realities of where this is going to land, but we cannot.

We cannot sit here and not fight and not offer the opportunity or not seek to take advantage of the opportunity to undo what we have seen. My district needs it. Many of your districts need it, whether you are a Democrat or a

Republican, and I just urge people to not forget about those people that rely on SNAP who genuinely do not want to be there, and I urge support of this amendment. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. Chairman yield recognized Chairman from New York, Mr. Riley, five minutes.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and John, I got to say every time I hear you tell your own personal story on this, I just find it so inspiring how you grew up working so hard became Teacher of the Year, and I really appreciate you offering this amendment. One in five households that I represent are on SNAP. And I'll tell you, Shomari is right, these are just hard working families. A lot of them have fallen on really tough times.

All they want to do is feed their kids. Man, like that. They This is just like parents who want to make sure their kids are getting fed. And if you want to go after the Grifters, you want to root out the grift in this thing, stop giving tax breaks to Wall Street, you got people getting tax breaks who have more money than entire rural towns that I represent, and they're exploiting all the tax loopholes that you all have written for them over the years.

They're hiding their money in the tax shelters that the lobbyists and the lawyers built for them. They're paying lower tax rates than the janitors who are cleaning the elementary school if they're paying taxes at all. They're buying up all of our houses. They're buying up all of our utility companies so that they can squeeze more money out of the folks who can least afford it.

And Congress decides that the people who need to be punished and pay more are poor families on SNAP. I'd say you were balancing the budget on the backs of the working class, but you're not even balancing the budget. You got poor families in Walton and Monticello, and they just want their kids to get fed, and Congress is around here deciding they're the ones who have to pay more and get punished. So a bunch of Grifters on Wall Street have more wealth than the entire middle class combined.

Can do better. It's no wonder hardly anybody back home trusts this place when you pull stuff like this. So I'm going to support this amendment. Diana, thanks again for introducing in

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields. Recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Carbajal for five minutes.

Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I speak in support of Representative Hayes amendment. It is deeply frustrating to see that after nine months, the majority has shown little concern in stopping the big, ugly bills, 180 $7 billion billion dollar cut to SNAP. This Farm Bill does nothing to stop even mitigate the harms that H.R. 1 will inflict. In California alone, more than half a million people are at risk of losing critical food assistance through SNAP.

Let me repeat that, more than half a million people with the expanded work requirements and the elimination of exemptions for veterans, former foster youth and individuals experiencing homelessness. Around 20,000 of the 119,000 SNAP recipients in my district could be at risk of losing their benefits. That 17,000 in Santa Barbara County, 2.6 1000 in San Luis Obispo County, and 1.9 1000 in Ventura and Ojai. In addition to significantly reducing eligibility H.R. 1 makes major changes to SNAP financing by shifting more administrative and benefit cost onto states.

It is estimated these cost shifts will result in 2.4 billion increase in cost for California alone. This destabilization and financial strain imposed on state and county SNAP operations will likely lead to higher case loads, growing backlogs, and greater risk of. Administrative errors, all of these misguided and cruel, so-called reforms will ultimately contribute to increase food insecurity, delayed access and loss of assistance for our nation's families, children, seniors, veterans and individuals with disabilities. This Farm Bill is an opportunity to undo, or at the very least reduce, the harm that millions of people will experience as a result of changes to SNAP I remind my colleagues that failing to reverse H.R. 1's cuts will not only affect SNAP recipients, but also the farmers, ranchers, small businesses and grocers who rely on SNAP dollars.

Snap has been shown to improve economic outcomes and serve as an economic stabilizer during downturns, with each additional $1 in SNAP benefits generating about 1.5 $4 in economic activity for all the reasons just mentioned, I call on my colleagues to support Representative Hayes amendment in reversing the drastic and detrimental cuts to SNAP that were included in H.R. 1 I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Now, please recognize the gentlelady, Congresswoman McDonald rivet for five minutes.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I I'm also in support of this amendment, and I want to raise an issue that I don't I don't know that, that we've talked about. So the question I always ask at the start of this is, what is our number of hungry children that we're comfortable with, and I do recognize the text of H.R. 1 exempted people under the age of 18. So the question is, how are we going to get to this number, this gigantic, almost $200 billion number in the cutting of SNAP benefits?

Well, we're going to get to it by putting layers and layers of paperwork and bureaucracy in the way between food and families and kids that need access to it, we're going to make it really hard to continue to show eligibility, to show working when you're working five and six jobs, juggling a kids schedule, trying to figure out how to get food on the table, but for God's sakes not a hot rotisserie chicken. And then you have to over and over and over again prove that you're working in these six jobs, which may come on and off. You may be working at one and then having switched to another. I mean, there's a constant transition in work here all of that.

It's specifically designed to get people off the program because they missed a deadline. So the question is, is, how many hungry children are we okay with? Because this isn't a number on a balance sheet. There are faces associated with this.

There are people, real people, who are going to lose access to food with that. I'll yield the balance of my time to Congresswoman Hayes.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Gentlelady yields to who. Thank you. I'm glad you brought children up Representative McDonald rivet, because one of the things about being a classroom teacher is that you become a part of these children's lives, and they talk to you every day, and they tell you what's happening at home, and they tell you the experiences that their families are going through. This is not just policy.

This is people's lives. And I fully expect that my colleagues are going to vote against this legislation, because SNAP and food security and feeding people has been something that has been under attack over and over and over again, in the debt ceiling, in appropriations, budgets. It's like nibbling around the edges, going after food every single time while making permanent tax cuts for the wealthiest individuals in this country. We shouldn't even be debating this in this way.

But as you've heard, local grocers are going to suffer. Farm stands are going to suffer. Farmers markets are going to suffer for every dollar spent in SNAP, I think it's close to $1.50 goes back into the community. So communities are going to suffer by losing that revenue.

I just it's, it's, it's hard to understand how this is our hard line hungry kids, 14 year old, not 18. I don't know. I'm not sure if we're all reading the same piece of legislation, but we draw the line at a 15 year old. That's where this committee draws the line about our, quite frankly, our responsibility.

Right? And this legislation is our chance to fix that. This amendment is our chance to to make whole the SNAP program. This was not about it started out.

This is about waste fraud and abuse. This is not about waste fraud and abuse. This is about cruelty. This is about cruelty, over and over and over again, once again, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Julia yeo's recognized gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Van Orden for five

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I was raised in abject rural poverty by a single mother, and we had food stamps when it was a stamp that he stuck on a card took to the grocery store. I had subsidized school lunches, and we had government cheese. And I'm so glad that most of the people sitting here watching this hearing don't even know what I'm talking about, and I appreciate that tremendously.

Here's the issue. There's been hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars that have gone to fraudsters. That's that, ma'am. There's been hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars that have gone to fraudsters.

And I want every single taxpayer dollar that is allocated to go to feed a hungry child that I was to go to the hungry child, I want every single dollar that is allocated to go to a family so they don't have to bring their hands about wondering how they feed themselves to go to that family that so that philosophically, ma'am, we agree we're on the same sheet of music 100% and to answer your your question, ma'am, how many hungry children in the United States of America in 2026 is acceptable? The answer is zero. But the issue is, we have to get to zero. And how we get to zero is making sure that there are not people that are taking these monies and abusing these programs.

That's really the way to get there. And you guys know where my heart is, and I know it's shocking that you're hearing me speak like this, but this is who I am. And so if we were to go through and you know, this is a single page, like half a page amendment, I think that it's going to do more harm than good. I really do.

And so I can't support this amendment, but I can support the spirit in which it's offered. I really think that it's important that we collectively understand, you know, I volunteered to be on the SNAP subcommittee. I've been in Congress for three years. If I get reelected, I'll be on the SNAP subcommittee, if the Chairman will keep me there.

Because these programs have merit, they do. And for my Republican colleagues, you know, I tell them the same thing, they got to get over this stuff. We have a collective responsibility as American citizens. We have an

informal contract by being citizens, that we're going to take care of those most in need.

And no one on this committee disagrees with that, but we have to find the most efficient way to do so, so that we can help the most amount of people possible with with a limited amount of resources. And so I respect you for doing this amendment, ma'am, but respectfully, I cannot support it for those, those very clear, evidence based reasons. Ma'am, absolutely

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you. I absolutely agree with you that every dollar of this program that is allocated should go towards feeding people where we fundamentally disagree is that I haven't seen anything to address waste, fraud and abuse. Go after those people. You are absolutely right, and I would stand with you support an amendment pass legislation to make sure that anyone who is defrauding this program and taking food out of the mouths of the children that I am fighting for is is adequately prosecuted.

That is not what we are talking about. And kids cannot fill their bellies with good intentions and and respectful submissions. It's the policy and the legislation that we pass. So if we really wanted to do something about it, we wouldn't.

We wouldn't attack the millions of people who are doing the right thing. We would attend. We would go after the handful of fraudsters that you just talked about and make sure that they are prosecuted. We had someone sit right in this committee and talk about all of the ways that he had defrauded the system and and stolen SNAP funds.

And my question was, why aren't we arresting him right at this table, instead of celebrating him and letting Him tell the story over and over again? Generally it's

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Your time. Thank you, ma'am. Well, you know what? I'm very respectful.

So what we have is like we have several different state governors that refuse to turn over, including my governor. Tony Evers. They weren't. They will not turn over this data.

And my district borders Iowa, Minnesota and Illinois, and I know for a fact there's people in my district that are getting SNAP

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Benefits from multiple states. But that's not why your governor's not turning over that data. Well, I know, what are you going to do with it?

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

I know the guy, but so six, seven, what are you going to do with it? Ma'am, in my in my limited time, here's what I'd like to do. I'd like to sit down with you in a private setting, go through all these numbers and then then come publicly to solve this problem. I mean exactly what I say.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

I'm more interested in policy and votes than press conferences.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very well, I yield my time has expired, and other members seek recognition. The Ranking Member seeks recognition.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I just want to continue to level set for the committee. You know, the SNAP program has one of, if not the lowest, error rate of any government program. And being from Minnesota, the request has come in for our day, but it's private data that by state law, we can't turn over to the United States government the lowest rate of fraud of any government program, and every single one of us on this side of the aisle, too, want to make that number zero, but I fear sometimes that my colleagues don't understand the difference between fraud rates and error rates, which, of course, can be overpayments and under payments in our nation. So I just want to make sure, as we, you know, talk about this issue, that we are not perpetuating the myth or the

stereotype that there is fraud, widespread fraud in this program, because the data just does not support that.

And with that, I will yield to my colleague, Mr. McGovern.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Yeah, no, and I love this attention to fraud and waste and abuse. Where is that outrage when it comes to the Pentagon budget, I'm just looking at one article here how the Pentagon falls victim to price gouging by military contractors. Nothing is done to crack down on fraud, waste and abuse in the Pentagon budget. In fact, this Republican majority actually gave this administration more than they asked for in the Pentagon budget.

And so, I mean, you know, you're we're all upset about nickel and diming people who get an average of $2 per person per meal to put food on the table. But when it comes to defense contractors that are ripping American taxpayers off. There's silence. There's silence.

Not only is there silence, we'll give you more than you even asked for. We'll give you and why? Let's follow the money. Let's look at who contributes to members of Congress here.

I mean, that's the dirty little secret here, the corruption that exists between campaign donations and the way people vote around here. And if you want to be outraged about something. Be outraged by about being ripped off by the by defense contractors who rip off the Pentagon, who rob the American taxpayer, who take money away from programs that, quite frankly, are necessary to feed hungry people. I yield back.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. McGovern and Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Any other members, if not I take the opportunity to speak on this. You know, everybody's entitled to their own opinions, but not your own facts. Now I've heard a lot of mischaracterization today on this program, and

let me just set this just lay out the facts of where we're at whether, first of all, dealing with veterans, and veterans were only eligible for a very short period of time.

President Biden had put veterans and in folks who are transitioning out of foster care into this program. It's not like they've always been there. They're very short period of time that they were totally exempt from any other requirements. I think that's first of all.

I think that's I thought that was awful. I've said that to President Biden when we were negotiating, because I think those folks ought to have a shot at the American Dream, which comes through the dignity of work. And because they were exempt, they didn't, weren't eligible for that financial assistance for SNAP Employment and career and technical education. I've got a son to serve 22 years in the Army, three four nights ago was his last, last night in uniform.

You know, he's looking for a job now, and if there's some assistance, if his income was low enough and he needed assistance, you know, the SNAP program would be there for him to help him find that Now, thankfully, the I will say, the military does a great job. Investing in in the education of our of our soldiers and and he has a master's degree now that he did mostly distant learning from theaters of war on our veterans under H.R. 1 states will once again be required to engage able bodied veterans and SNAP volunteer or education for 20 hours, 20 hours a week. I apologize. I think I misquoted a month in the past, but 20 hour an average of 20 hours a week.

Veterans were over age 64 mentally or physically disabled, taking care of a dependent under the age of 14, taking care of a disabled child or aging parent in the home, participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program in school at least half time, or participating in a job training program at least half time, are all exempt, all exempt from those requirements. Exempting all veterans from work requirements really is misguided and denies them a chance at economic opportunity and brighter futures. Other facts SNAP this Farm Bill we're talking about over 10 years is like $1.3 trillion SNAP is 1.1 trillion of that. I mean, we're not talking like, you guys make it sound like we're starving the program, and that is absolutely not true.

There's there's text in here, or amendments will be coming that will talk about farm to food banks and other expansions. I wish I could have done more. I had two proposals, but in working with the minority team, it was clear they didn't want any kind of amendments and nutrition. It would have added new programs if we couldn't undo what was done.

And so that's why you don't see text in there. Something is very passionate for me, and that is for individuals who are formerly incarcerated, to help them get them on the right path. I'd love to have that in there, but that was that was sort of within negotiations. I was told that they're not going to support any kind of expansion.

Don't look at me and smile. It's I'm just, I'm sharing the facts with you adults who have adult children still in secondary school. You saw the proposal, those of you here in last Congress, you know I wanted to be able to exempt the income that those adult children, most of them have disabilities when they're working, the income of those children. Exempt that from eligibility for that family for SNAP.

I couldn't put that in there because I couldn't get an agreement, because there was going to take some additional investment within this title. That was not Republicans that opposed that, and I understand, because, no, I'm not going to yield. I got too much to cover, and not that much time. And so, so let me just go through it.

Then H.R. 66 does invest in our H.R. 1 does invest in our farmers. $66 billion investment. We did that increase risk management, research, making crop insurance more affordable in Doug trade assistance. And by the way, many you in the room supported that, because those are bipartisan initiatives that we put into the last Farm Bill that we marked up, we were just able to move that as a part of budget reconciliation.

Trust me, I know budget reconciliation is painful. I was here when we did the Affordable Care Act and it got shoved down my throat, because that's what budget reconciliation, the process works, the failure, the reason we didn't after last time going further, because we had a failure of leadership. In the Senate among the Democrats. There was no Farm Bill.

It was not moving. We had Joe Biden raised the benefits 20% arbitrarily, you know, GAO and everybody else said it was not legal. What he did, we didn't roll those back as a part of what we did. We did not roll those back, even though it wasn't done in a proper way.

And you're so talking about people losing their individual benefits that are qualified, it's just not true. They have not been reduced despite everything we did. We did not go in and target the individual benefits of the SNAP program for people truly eligible. And then I gotta address this Farm Bill coalition.

I've heard it over and over again like a broken record that we broke the long term AG and food coalition. Well, if the Farm Bill, and that's what we call it, although I kind of renamed it this time around, farm food and National Security Act is $1.3 trillion and 1.1 trillion is the food side of it. That doesn't seem like a very strong coalition that broke a long time ago and we disadvantaged the people for decades who actually grow the food is consumed by everybody, and it is important to everybody, the anyway, my time is expired at this point, and we will Mr. Recognize Mr. Thanedar. For five minutes.

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Thank you. Thank you. Chairman, you know, growing up in India in poverty, I remember times when I didn't know where my next meal is going to come from. Now here, sitting in the richest nation in the world, while billions of dollars are being spent dropping bombs in Iran, we are still fighting to provide food to the hungry families, to the children.

I represent Detroit area, a district that is fourth lowest in income in the nation, with almost 30% people utilizing the SNAP benefits. It just seems so, so cruel. So so you know, I understand the struggles of my district, the people and I, I really wish that we were able to help them and not take the money away. So from the food for their table, Mr. Chairman, I want to yield my rest of my time to Ms. Hayes and possibly Mr. McGovern, if they have anything more to add to this

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

I do, I would just say that we absolutely cannot choose the facts. And you know, if veterans were not included, and they had not previously been exempt, and then we made them exempt, then we need to continue to build on those things, not roll it back, but also this idea about amendments not being able to be added unless they were bipartisan. Anyone who was watching this can clearly identify that many of the amendments that were placed in this bill from the other side were not bipartisan amendments. They were not negotiated with us.

We did not have the opportunity to work on them together. And as the Chairman, I believe that you could have put this in there if it was something that you care deeply about or you were passionate about, absent Democrat approval. They don't need our approval to do this. If you're listening to these amendments while we're here, I hope no one in this room believes that Democrats agree to many of the amendments that are added in here.

These are Republican choices. These are Republican policy choices to cut food assistance from people, and that's exactly what it is. I yield back to

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Mr. Thanedar and I yield back to

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Mr. McAleer. No, I would just I've heard a lot today, but for the Chairman to basically say that his hands are tied, that he can't do more on nutrition because of Democrats. I've heard everything.

You're the Chairman of this committee. The Republicans are in charge. I mean, much of what is in this bill, quite frankly, some of it I find just outright offensive, the giveaways to the pesticide companies, for example. I find that offensive.

That's dangerous for my constituents, but the idea to somehow say that your hands are tied in terms of, you know, expanding the nutrition benefits if you want to, and on the veterans. I mean the idea that somehow you know. I

mean the choice to basically say to a veteran that if you're you know, you're not working, within three months, we're going to take your food benefit away from you. That is your choice.

That is not our choice. I mean, the people who served our country with bravery and distinction deserve a hell of a lot better than that. They shouldn't have to worry about going hungry after three months. But you know the fact of the matter is, Republicans are in charge.

You are the Chairman of this committee. You have made these decisions to give away to do giveaways to pesticide companies and to cut food benefits. I yield to the Ranking Member.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member is recognized. Thank you so much. Look, I won't get into a back and forth on negotiations, but Democrats gave the majority a very long list of title four priorities from Democrats for mediation, for BBB and the majority basically said, well, we'll consider our priorities, but we will not consider your priorities. So take it or leave it on.

Title four, you know, we keep coming back to cost neutral, cost neutral in this conversation and and look, reconciliation was not cost neutral. $3.4 trillion added to our deficits, 4.1 trillion, if you include the interest cost of this. So we could sit here and talk. All day.

But if we're going to get into a conversation during this markup about the process, I'm happy to get into it, but I don't think the majority wants to get into this process. When you read us through this damn thing the last week, you wouldn't give us a copy of it until I complain to Politico. And so if we want to continue down that road, I'm ready to go, but I'm not bringing it up, and it's going to continue to really annoy me if the majority continues to bring this up, and I'm just going to say one last thing, if getting 24 million Americans healthcare as part of the Affordable Care Act was shoving something down your throat, then I'm telling you right here now, Democrats are going to keep shoving

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And I yield yields. By the way, most of the provisions in this bill were in the version 2024 you need should have read the bill. Any other, any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. All right, I think we've exhausted all the oxygen, so we will move on hearing no further conversation.

The question is on the amendment offered by Mrs. Hayes. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no. In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it, and the amendment is not agreed to Mr. Chairman, I'd like a recorded vote. A recorded vote has been requested, pursuant to committee rule 312, further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed, and I believe that they've already reached out Mr. Harris on Republican side.

We'll go back and forth. As has a minute at the desk.

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 39

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 39 offered by Mr. Harris of North Carolina.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. A recorded the amendment will be considered as read, a recorded vote. Yeah, wrong. Spent way too much time.

Thank you, and now recognize distinguished gentleman from North Carolina to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman offered an amendment today to restore integrity and fiscal responsibility to SNAP by ending broad based categorical eligibility and restoring clear, uniform standards for program eligibility, as we all know, SNAP exists to provide temporary assistance to Americans who truly are in need. However, under broad based categorical eligibility, states have been allowed to bypass the income and asset test Congress put in place. Under this reckless policy, individuals can qualify for SNAP despite having incomes far above the federal limits or significant assets on hand or in the bank.

In 2019 for example, a retired millionaire in Minnesota was able to enroll in his state's SNAP program, showing just how easy it is to enroll when a state completely ignores asset tests. This should concern every taxpayer and serve as a wake up call to my colleagues in Congress, and that was not an isolated case. In 2023 the foundation for government accountability found that one in five SNAP recipients had at least $100,000 in assets. To put that in perspective, according to the FGA, more than 5.4 million recipients are estimated to exceed federal income or asset limits.

This was never the purpose of this program, and this loophole hurts the program's integrity and unfortunately diverts resources away from those who truly need it. At a time when our nation faces a $38 trillion national debt and persistent and proper payment concerns across federal programs, I believe we have a responsibility to ensure that taxpayer dollars are carefully stewarded. Let me be clear, my amendment in no way eliminates SNAP, nor does it reduce benefits for those who genuinely qualify under federal standards. It simply restores uniform eligibility criteria set by Congress by ending this administrative work around I believe we reaffirm Congress' constitutional role in overseeing the program promote fairness among the states and ensure that limited resources are directed to the most vulnerable Americans, as we've listened to the discussion today, this is something I think we all.

All could support. This is a measured reform rooted in accountability and good governance, and I urge my colleagues to support the amendment. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And while I appreciate the intent from the author of this amendment, I just want to explain why it lacks common sense. Remember when the movement started to instead of going to very limited eligibility and proof of eligibility in the free and produced lunch program in our schools, started looking at a space where we would just give free lunch to every student in school districts that met overall a threshold. And here's why that mattered, the layers and layers of bureaucracy and paperwork and regulation that Republicans often put on programs for the poor that they would never consider for billionaires and corporations, actually costs more money than just doing things like presumed eligibility, like categorical eligibility, Across poverty programs.

If you are in an office, like in Michigan, where you are in danger of getting your heat shut off, you also need food. Should you have to go to two separate departments, apply for it on separate applications with different timelines, with different categories, that sort of mean the same thing, but not entirely. Heat and food go hand in hand. In Michigan, you die without both.

What this will actually do is not ensure it goes to the most needy, but rather add layers and most importantly, hours of paperwork and regulatory regulatory misdirection, in order to just simply slough people off the program, this is food. This is food, and there are many programs that have close to the same eligibility and the ability for states to streamline that process to get people immediate emergency basic needs help when they need it is incredibly important. I urge members of this committee to oppose this amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you General lace yield back. Mr. Taylor is recognized for five minutes. Thank you, Chairman.

Rep. Dave Taylor (R-Ohio)

I support this amendment. This amendment would work to preserve the SNAP program for the most vulnerable among us by eliminating the broad based category, categorical eligibility in SNAP. You really don't need to read

much beyond the name to know that this is a bad idea, ripe for abuse. We've seen this loophole taken advantage of by several states to open the doors for people who are ineligible for SNAP to still receive benefits from the program.

Based on a study in 2023 it was found that nearly 6 million people enrolled in SNAP did not meet federal eligibility requirements. This amendment would reassert Congress' rightful oversight and authority over the SNAP program and stop a massive leak that has been there for far too long. Snap is meant to be a supplemental and temporary safety net for Americans in true need, not a permanent program that only continues to expand in perpetuity. When ineligible people receive benefits, it's those who truly are in need that suffer.

So I thank Mr. Harris for introducing this amendment. I look forward to working with him and the Chairman to ensure that SNAP benefits are going to those that deserve it. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Thank you, gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

He yelled back, now recognize the Ranking Member for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, broad based categorical eligibility is a long standing state option that supports working families by easing the benefit cliff when they pick up extra shifts or take a small raise. It also reduces states administrative burden and allows SNAP households to put away modest savings. That's incredibly important, because the average person that in that's income eligible for SNAP only has about $141 in their bank account. The number of bipartisan states opting in to broad based categorical eligibility has been increasing steadily over time because they see its positive impact on both participants and program administration.

Currently, 46 states red and blue alike elect to use broad based categorical eligibility. Just last July, Alaska transition to broad based, categorical eligibility? Because, according to a spokesperson for the Department of Health, it will result in faster, more streamlined eligibility determinations for

many households, which will improve timeliness and reduce the risk of errors associated with incomplete or delayed documentation. In June 2024 Ohio opted in to broad based categorical eligibility to in the words of Ohio's Director of the Department of job and family services, provide participants an incentive to accept promotions and pay raises knowing they won't immediately lose benefits.

Eliminating broad based categorical eligibility would result in 6 million Americans, including at least 1.8 million children, getting kicked off SNAP entirely and losing all food assistance. In my home state of Minnesota, 90,000 households would lose their SNAP benefits, including more than 70,000 households with children and 22,000 households with seniors and people with disabilities would lose their SNAP benefits entirely. Those losing food assistance would largely be seniors, people with disabilities and working families that receive less benefits because they have earnings, but who still need help as they work to achieve financial stability, it's exactly who my Republican colleagues say they want to help the most. Mr. Chairman, I oppose this amendment.

I oppose benefit cliffs. I oppose discouraging people from working. I oppose 6 million more Americans losing their food assistance on top of the 4 million Americans. H.R. 1 is already estimated to kick off the program, and with that, I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any members seek additional members seek recognition. Does the Chair speak? Mr. McGovern.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Thank you. It's so frustrating to have these discussions, because what we're talking about here are people who are in economic distress, people who are poor in this country, people who are struggling to put food on the table, and broad based categorical eligibility, as our Ranking Member pointed out, is a state option that red states and blue states have utilized, basically to support working families by easing the benefit cliff that would otherwise exist if they pick up extra shifts or take a small raise. These people are struggling. These aren't rich people.

These aren't people who have, you know, who are doing this just for the hell of it. I mean, the average SNAP benefit is about $2 per person per meal. Do you think people are going to try to bend the rules and go through all these machinations just to qualify for this measly benefit? I mean, come on.

I mean, this is about demonizing low income people. That's what this is about. And really, it is unfortunate that this is where, this is where the discussion has focused. Again as the Ranking Member pointed out, eliminating broad based, categorical eligibility would result in 6 million Americans, 6 million Americans, including at least 1.8 million children, getting kicked off of SNAP entirely and losing all food assistance.

Is that what we want? I mean, you want to talk about fraud, waste and abuse again. Look at the Pentagon budget, I mean. And the silence when it comes to that, not only silence, but my friends, vote to increase the budget, you know, no no appropriate oversight, nothing tax cuts for multi-millionaires and billionaires, you know, and the richest people in the world are getting tax cuts, and we are in this committee, nickel and diming a program to provide a measly, on average, $2 per person benefit for food.

I mean, this is crazy that we're doing this again. This is not just democratic states, but Republican states are using this. This is a, you know, this is a federal requirement, and it's a state option that is allowed by the federal government, I mean, to make this program more difficult for people to get food. I don't understand, like, why anybody would want to do that.

This is a bad amendment, and I urge my colleagues to reject it. And I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. He yields back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on the amendment. Mr. Weed from Wisconsin is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Tony Wied (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield balancing my time to Mr. Harris.

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Wied, listen, I want to just make very clear in response to some of the things that we have heard again about this amendment. This amendment is not meant to eliminate SNAP it does not cut benefits for anyone who meets the federal eligibility standards. It simply restores the income and asset limits that Congress originally set, and finally, it protects the program integrity that strengthens SNAP, not ultimately weakens it. And I think that we're living in a day and a time that we've got to recognize that while people around the country have all kinds of suspicions and all kinds of questions about what.

Going on in many of these programs, anything that we can do to add the integrity and add the strength of these programs. In fact, if we don't do something, we will not have these programs in infinite time. We just won't, and we've got to be real about that, and getting ourselves in a place where we can manage it. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to withdraw my amendment at this time.

But I do think it's important for us to recognize the reality of this. And with that, I yield back to Mr. Weed, the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment is withdrawn. And thank the gentleman for raising the issue. Under my leadership, this committee has been examining ways to close the the broad based categorical eligibility loop hole, while also modernizing and increasing SNAP income and asset limits, I look forward to working with the gentleman on those issues. Does any member seek recognition under Actually, Mr. Gray seeks recognition for an amendment.

Ms. gray. Mr. Gray. Has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Adam Gray (D-Calif.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment, 74 amendment,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

74 Mr. Gray, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

Rep. Adam Gray (D-Calif.)

Amendment number 74 offered by Mr. Gray of California. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, as you know,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Give me give me a second. Adam just got stick with the script here and the, without objection amendment, we consider it as red, and I now recognize distinguished gentlemen to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation

Rep. Adam Gray (D-Calif.)

Of their amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you know, California grows over 400 commodities, and California's 13th District is home to some of the country's most productive specialty crop growers, almonds, pistachios, grapes, citrus and so much more, these growers face massive challenges that traditional commodity crop farmers don't not only do they not benefit from long standing subsidy structures that many of my colleagues district spend benefit from, but their products are perishable, labor intensive, highly vulnerable to market volatility. When prices fluctuate or supply chains tighten, these farmers feel it immediately.

That's where procurement programs like section 32 and the DOD Fresh program make a real difference. The DOD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program creates a direct, reliable market for specialty crop growers by connecting them with schools across the country, it strengthens domestic food systems and helps ensure that federal food dollars are supporting the growers that need it most. It enables economic development by supporting packers, truck drivers, distributors and small businesses throughout the supply chain. It helps level the playing field for specialty crop producers who deserve fair access to federal procurement opportunities.

It's an amazing example of efficient public private partnership. It uses existing federal infrastructure to support American farmers, reduce food waste, improve supply chain efficiency and ensure high quality products

reach schools in a timely manner. My amendment would give the states the flexibility to allocate up to 20% of their emergency food assistance program funding towards DOD Fresh allowing states to use their resources on locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Strengthening the DOD Fresh program, it means supporting our children and specialty crop farmers, and it means strengthening our agricultural economy in a way that is practical, efficient and results driven.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. Chairman Jill back, I claim my time to speak on this amendment. I want to thank the gentleman for introducing this amendment. This is a no cost option for states that will support specially crop growers in California and all across the country through the DOD Fresh program.

Procurement programs such as DOD Fresh section 32 and TEFAP are crucial for specialty crop growers, and this amendment will allow states to increase procurement of fresh produce through tfap at their option. I want to congratulate the gentleman again for working with us on this bipartisan effort, and I support the amendment. Encourage all members to do so, other members that seek recognition to speak on Mr. Gray's amendment. Ranking Member is recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to start by saying I love this amendment, but I'm sitting here incredibly frustrated because the. Minority asked for this provision to be included in the majority's base text, and it wasn't. And so what we are seeing happen today, just so we're all very clear, is that the majority ignored the bipartisan asks in the negotiation process, and the majority in the last several days has reached out to members who they would like to work with directly in this process.

So of course, this amendment would allow states to use tfap dollars to buy food through the DOD Fresh fruits and vegetables program, giving states more choices when procuring foods, but without pairing it with a more with more funding for tfap entitlements, it is not going to move the needle. Food

banks are operating under immense strain with high demand and only getting higher as millions lose access to SNAP and more and more middle class families struggle to pay their bills, their rent, their utilities and put food on the table. And without additional tfap funding, food banks are going to continue to struggle to meet the demand. So I'm not speaking against this amendment, per se from my colleague.

We asked as a minority for this to be in the damn thing to begin with, but here we are today, and the majority now says it's a good idea, but if it was such a great idea and the majority is so supportive, then why isn't it in the base text to begin with? So with that, while the amendment improves food purchasing options for tfap, it does nothing to address the high demand and limited resources that will continue to make it difficult for food banks to afford to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables in the first place. My counsel to the minority is to vote your district here on this particular amendment, and my counsel to everyone is it would have been terrific to have an actual bipartisan process, and I continue to hope that in the Senate we can get a more bipartisan process and a bill that more of us can support in the end. So Mr. Gray, thank you so much for your work here.

And with that, I'll yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Recognize the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Wied, for five minutes. Oh new amendment, I'm sorry. Recognize the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Fence said,

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have to point out, I mean, what I just heard was absolutely crazy, the fact that you, as the Chairman of the committee, just openly accepted and said, I'm willing to work with you. I support this amendment from the minority, and then to hear the Ranking Member have a hissy fit about not being bipartisan, which is exactly what you just did. I mean, this is political theater, and this is why people absolutely are disgusted with politics in our country.

Just be real. Be real. We all saw what just happened. The Chairman said, I accept this amendment.

I think it's a good idea. We want to work with you. Makes perfect sense, Mr. Chairman, I applaud your leadership.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back, gentleman yields back. Other members seek recognition. Ms. figure or Ms. figures recognized.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you. I I hear my colleagues point, but I don't think the issue was as much about what just happened as what everybody saw, as much as it was about what everybody didn't see behind the scenes. And with that, I yield to the Ranking Member.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Figures, that's exactly right. If we're going to continue, the majority is going to continue to talk about the process here today, in which I did not start talking about the process. Was not intending to talk about the process, I think it is only fair to make sure that the committee members know that this was one of the bipartisan offers and requests we made of the majority, and so the way that the majority is behaving in this markup is that We're going to reject everything in the bipartisan negotiation process, but I tell you what at the mark up, we're going to, you know, make sure that we are reaching out and doing these things. So Mr. Finstad, I'm not sure what a hissy fit looks like to you, but you haven't seen me throw a hissy fit.

But if you want me to, I just might. And if you want me to come back to your congressional district and do another town hall, because you won't do one, I might do that as well. So if we're going to go down this road today, Mr. Pennstad, you know I'm going to go down that road with you, and I yield back to Mr. Figures, you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back, I'll take it, and he yields back. Mr. Johnson is recognized, so

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

I want to make sure I understand the Ranking Members. Concern is that the Chairman is today agreeing with Democratic amendments that that's that's your complaint.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Would you yield? Yes? Oh yes, ma'am, yeah. My complaint today is that the minority offered this as a bipartisan discussion and the majority rejected it during this bipartisan, supposed bipartisan discussion.

I'm simply making the point that this is not a bipartisan process that you have gone through, and you continue to claim that. Okay, so I would say, is great. Wish you'd considered it in the bipart in the supposed bipartisan.

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

So here's how real humans look at a situation where maybe people start with disagreement, but then they get to a point of agreement. Maybe Mr. Thompson didn't understand the value of the gray amendment during negotiations. He does now, I mean, I'm grateful that the Chairman and I assume a big chunk of the majority understand the value of Mr. Gray's amendment. I think normal people would say, This is great.

Let's get this democratic amendment made in order. Let's add it to the base text. I think you would have criticized Mr. Thompson had he rejected the gray amendment. You're also criticizing him now that he accepts it.

It might be that you were going to criticize the Chairman no matter what he did. And I think that seems indeed like politics, as Mr. Finstad said, rather than being happy about the fact that we're coming closer together on a bipartisan work product. And with that, if Mr. Finstad has any additional comments you'd like to make, I'm happy to yield

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

To him. Yeah. Thank you, Congressman Johnson. I listen.

I feel like we are at a moment in time in our country, where we need to start figuring out how to behave better and act like normal humans that the constituents that we wrap we represent expect from us. And so we can choose. We can play political theater. We can run for higher office and decide we have to go one way or the other on the political spectrum.

We can ignore the fact that we have a history of working together because it doesn't suit us in our political aspirations, we can ignore the fact that we've, you know, worked together on co-authoring so many pieces of legislation in this bill. I mean, in my opening statement, I talked about many of you across the aisle, where I've worked with you, we have co-authored things that are in this bill. The Chairman has done more than I've seen most Chairman do in my short time here in Congress, to try to appeal and to have conversations with folks. The fact is, we have a Ranking Member That's running for higher office that's ignoring the fact that she has her fingerprints on a lot of things that are in here, whether it's the pesticide piece of legislation which her and I co-authored.

Now she's running from whether it's the you know, outside of this committee's jurisdiction, you know she, she was with us on the lake and Riley act. I mean it. This is political theater, and it's unfortunate that it's crept its way into the committee hearing when we have a really good product in front of us that we should figure out ways to come together, not ways to just continue to go to our corners and and scream and holler Thank you. And so

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

I would just note this, I assume the Ranking Member will support the gray amendment. I assume the Ranking Member would like the gray amendment to prevail. I would assume that the Ranking Member would like the support of Republicans to help her get that done. It's like, what are we arguing about here?

You know, with that,

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

I would yield back, assume, right,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good, Mr. Governor is recognized.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Let me just say I support the gray amendment. I thank the gentleman for introducing it. I wish it were accompanied with more tfap money. But to suggest that this makes this a bipartisan product is laughable, you know.

So, I mean, this bill, this, this so-called Farm Bill, is problematic because it screws over a lot of poor people in this country, you know, it guts it doesn't do anything to repair the $200 billion in cuts to SNAP. I mean, it doesn't do anything to deal with the onerous new work requirements and new red tape that have been thrust on people on SNAP that are throwing millions of people off of the program. So I support this amendment. I will vote for this amendment, but when it comes to final passage, I am a hell no.

I'm not a cheap date on this, on this issue. You know the idea that we have millions and millions of people in this country, the richest country in the history of the world who are hungry, and we get crickets from the other side. You know, all kinds of excuses about why we can't do anything to address that issue. I mean, it is shameful.

So yeah, and the people that I represent, the regular nor the normal people that I represent, are just stunned that we have a Congress that has. No problem with adding to the debt, $4 trillion $3 trillion whatever, for tax cuts for rich people, for millionaires and billionaires. But want to nickel and dine the SNAP program, which is about, on average, about $2 per person per meal. I mean, give me a break.

I yield to the Ranking Member.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member is recognized. Thank you. I do want to point out that in my comments, I also mentioned that this policy was intended to be paired with more funding for tfap to help food banks afford more fruits and vegetables and so without that side of it, there is a problem with this amendment.

However, I would say my broader point is that the majority is behaving in a very duplicitous way, and has in this negotiation because those items we have presented as bipartisan that clearly we agree on here in this markup today, you rejected from the minority staff, but you are utilizing it here today to try to pick off Democrats.

So I'm simply pointing out and I appreciate that this process, again, was not my intention to bring the process out into the open, but you open the barn door. And so here we are, and I would yield back to Mr. McGovern, who I believe is to Ms. Hayes. Oh, Mr. McGovern,

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you. I just want to say I think it's frustrating. The point of frustration here for the for the majority side, is that we asked for the provision to be included in majority space text, and it wasn't. And while this amendment improves food purchasing options for T fab, it does nothing to address the high demand and limited resources that will continue to make it difficult for food banks to afford to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables in the first place.

So that is our frustration. And when we talk about you want to talk about political theater, I mean insulting us, calling us names, saying that we are not normal people, that we need to be better human beings questioning, I'm curious as to if Mr. Finstad would ever ask a man if he had a hissy fit, or even insult that. So you are insulting the process and the members here, as we try to do due diligence to make a better product and to put it on public display, is an insult to everyone on the minority side and the process when this is something that we could have had done in the base text. So with that, I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Van Orden is recognized for five Thank you,

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Mr. Chairman, ma'am, I can positively affirm that Mr. Finstad has accused me of having a hissy fit, and I am a man, so we put that one to bet. I just want to clear something up here. So we're talking about making sure that states can use specialty crops 20% of their T fab for the DOD, right?

That's, that's, this is the amendment we're talking about. Okay, well, I mean, I would just like to make a recommendation that maybe we stick to the amendment and stop making campaign commercials, and let's just make sure that our Department of War folks have access to fresh fruits. I think this is an awesome amendment, and I whole heartedly support it. And maybe if we in the military, in the SEAL teams, which I was there for a long time, you know, the process is important, but it's the product that is paramount.

So the product of this discussion, I don't know what to call this any longer, is that this amendment is going to pass and that our service men and women are going to have access to fresh fruits, and it's going to help our farmers. And that's all goodness. So I would encourage my colleagues, and I'll do the same, to stick to the program, because it ain't about us, it's not about a higher office. It's about making sure that our farmers can succeed and that the Department of War personnel can get healthy food, and with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yield back. Yes, Mrs. Hayes, you have your own five minutes.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

So thank you. I'd just like to start by saying, Physician, heal Thyself in the same sentence where you're saying, let's not make this about political theater. You talk about running for higher office and making a political ad. I'm not really sure what all the passive aggressive attacks at the Ranking Member are.

Yes, she is running for the US Senate because she truly believes in the people. In her state and wants to be there to help them. She also shows up to work every day, does not miss votes, does not miss hearings, does not miss any of her responsibilities of her current job. So if that is the metric for evaluation, I might suggest that a professional development be run within

the conference for people to show up to work who are running for higher office.

This is a good amendment, and I appreciate my colleague for introducing this amendment. The problem that we have, and what we are trying to articulate on this side is that this is gamesmanship. It is not bipartisan negotiation. We showed up in good faith.

We sat down in small meetings. We had conversations the last go round, and when we got to this space, it was, as the Ranking Member said, to pick off vulnerable members, to offer them an amendment to get them to vote for with no expectation that we would have a better work product at the end. So these small wins do nothing to improve this bill. And it is very telling.

It is very telling to everyone who is paying attention, the members that have been approached to offer amendments for inclusion. It is very telling. It is an attempt to pick off Democrats and divide us and get us off focus of what is truly important, and that is improving a Farm Bill that has the best outcomes for our constituents. That is not what we're doing here, and no matter how many times you circle back to what people are doing in their in their time, it does not distract from the fact the Ranking Member has been laser focused on showing up for negotiations, on showing up for the members of this committee, on showing up for her constituents and still running for Senate.

I guess we're just better at it with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition,

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Mr. Scott Georgia, well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just like to point out that as Vice Chair of the committee, there are things that I would have liked to have had in the base text that are not in the base text. It's just the way it is when you're going through committee markup, and we all have the opportunity to speak on that.

I mean, it's, it's a,

[IN PROGRESS]

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I don't understand the Ranking Members as someone said temper tantrum or hissy fit or whatever it was. I mean, I can tell you, Mr. Finstad, he, he accuses a lot of us a lot of things, sometimes all in good fun. And I don't know, but, but I just, I'm, I'm the Vice Chair of the committee. I have things I want in the base text that are not in the base text.

I hope the Chair will support my stuff. I don't know if he will or if he won't, but I'm looking forward to putting this amendment in the bill. And this is the way the legislative process works, and so Chair, I appreciate your your support, and I look forward to being here long past seven o'clock, and, you know, working into the next day if we need to. And with that, I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Chairman Gill, Mr. Lucas from Oklahoma is recognized.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And if I could, I'd like to take the old uncle moment here and remind all my colleagues on this committee that you're not a member of judiciary or oversight. This is a committee that historically, while we disagree sometimes by policy, we disagree by reason, region and we fight with intensity, we still have traditionally been a committee that came together to move policy that was the best achievable for the common good of the country. I've been around here for 30 years.

The last time we had a partisan Farm Bill was 1996 and it was moved in sum in total in the reconciliation bill that year, you don't want to go that route. Always remember that the minority has both the right and the responsibility to be the conscience of the body, and I respect that, to offer all perspectives, to look at every different angle, but the majority has the right and the responsibility to govern whatever legislative process that the leadership on both sides of our committee use. We have to believe it's in the best interest of moving the process forward for the common good. So let's all act like members of the House Agriculture Committee.

Let's all focus on the subject matter. Let's all focus on moving product forward the best possible product we can achieve, and if that best possible product is not sufficient, then everyone with their conscience vote accordingly. But let's not act like a half a dozen other committees of the United States House of Representatives and Mr. Chairman, I apologize for dragging on and droning, but you have a legacy here, my friends, let's work hard for our folks. And Mr. Chairman, I would yield to you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, thank you. I think the Ranking Member actually gave the the reason why, you know, we had to work through refinement with this, because she talked about how this amendment was accompany with an increase in funding for for tfap. And unfortunately, in a budget neutral situation, the monies just were not there to do it so, but I didn't, I don't give up on great ideas. Mr. Gray, has been wonderful to work with.

Ms. Gray, apologize that such a good amendment has resulted in such interesting and heated debate, but, but that is a refinement process things that just don't check all the boxes. As Chairman, I don't give up and just say we're not going to do it. You know, I try to work with members where I can to be able to get to yes, and this is definitely one where we got to Yes. I yield back.

Is any other members seek recognition? Or can we vote on this amendment? I'm sorry, yeah, Mr. Lucas, is your time you yield back. All right, seeing, hearing no further conversation.

The question is on the amendment offered by Mr. Gray. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no. Independent Chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to do other members, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chair. Mr. Weed is recognized for purposes of an amendment.

He has amendment at the desk.

Rep. Tony Wied (R-Wis.)

Mr. Chairman. I first want to express my appreciation and support for this bill's dairy nutrition incentives project on

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

[CROSS TALK], the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 11, offered by Mr. Weed of Wisconsin.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin, the sponsor amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Tony Wied (R-Wis.)

Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I first want to express my appreciation and support for this bill's dairy nutrition incentives project to incentivize healthier purchases for SNAP households, including milk and certain cheeses. This provision builds upon healthy fluid milk incentives, projects that were included in the 2018 Farm Bill for the same purpose, starting with non-fat and low fat milk, while these milk incentive projects have been successfully up and running over the last five years in more than 30 states, we've heard from SNAP families, retailers and dairy farmers of the need to include additional nutrient rich dairy items. Dairy has 13 essential nutrients, including three essential nutrients, calcium, vitamin D and potassium, milk cheese and yogurt each offer key nutrients, while dairy products, particularly milk yogurt and cheese, are repeatedly recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans as part of a healthy eating pattern.

Nearly 90% of Americans do not consume enough milk and other nutritious dairy products, SNAP purchases of more varieties of dairy also means more milk from us. Dairy farmers going into nutrient rich dairy products, 10 pounds of milk make one pound of cheese. Two and a half pounds of milk make one pound of yogurt. Dairy nutrition incentives continues the momentum for more accessible, nutritious options for SNAP families.

Mr. Chairman, since yogurt is considered to be part of the nutrient rich dairy categories included, along with milk and cheese to be part of a healthy diet, I would like to offer an amendment to allow certain yogurts to also be included as part of the dairy nutrition incentives projects in Section 4305, of this bill. Yogurt is a nutrient dense food that is good source of protein, calcium, riboflavin, vitamin B, 12 and phosphorus. Yogurt is a fermented dairy product that is known to be a very healthy choice for American families. Yogurt consumption has been associated with lower incidences of cardiovascular risk factors in adolescence, particularly total and abdominal excess body fat.

This amendment would also allow yogurt with limited added sugar to be eligible for this bill SNAP dairy nutrition incentives. This will incentivize SNAP purchases of yogurts that are nutritious, a good source of protein, and are low in sugar. We also know that these limited sugar yogurts are currently in the marketplace and will likely incentivize more to come. Mr. Chairman, I ask for you and the Ranking Member and all of my committee colleagues to support this amendment for dairy nutrition incentives.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman Yellen, back recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. Riley, for five minutes. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thanks Tony for leading this, this amendment. This is a really good, really, really important amendment, Tony, I know you and I disagree on probably most things, but I really appreciate we've always been able to come together in helping dairy country, because, as we've said before, we don't have democratic cows or republican cows. We just we have cows and they got to get milked. We've got dairy farmers who deserve a fair shot, and that really shouldn't be partisan.

So thanks for leading on this. The debate in my house in the morning is it's not usually what we're going to have for breakfast, it's what flavor of Chobani Yogurt we're going to have for breakfast. My kids lately are into the vanilla stuff. Sometimes we'll do the strawberry and actually cut up some strawberries in it, and we keep the fridge stocked with Chobani yogurt.

It's healthy. It tastes great, and it supports our local upstate New York economy. Chobani was was founded in New Berlin. And if you haven't learned the history of this, this company, you really have to it's an American Dream story.

Turkish immigrant buys an abandoned plant in rural northern Chenango County, transforms it, over the years, into the world's best yogurt company. Employs thousands of our neighbors, including hundreds of refugees who have who flee war torn parts of the world to come here. He gives them a real stake in the company, and they do a ton of work to support our local food banks, our youth based youth soccer programs. One of my favorite events of the last year was going to a day where we pack up a whole bunch of packages of food to get out to the food banks and to the schools.

And one of the most important things they do is they source literally, literally. Tons and tons and tons of local milk. So when I was talking to my five year old Patricio, a couple days ago about the Farm Bill and what it entails and everything, talked to him at breakfast eating our Chobani yogurt, and I asked him, you know, what are the big priorities he has for this? I think I told you all yesterday my two and a half year old biggest priorities we're dealing with all the cow poop.

My five year old, his biggest priority is he said, it's really important, Dad, that every single kid is able to have access to the same yogurt and breakfast that he gets and and that's coming from a five year old. And so that's what this really this bipartisan amendments all about this is going to be great for kids, it's going to be great for dairy farmers. It's going to be great for yogurt producers. And I would urge all of my colleagues to strongly support this.

Thank you. I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any other any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Weed's amendment? Yes, Mr. Sherman, Ms. Costa is recognized?

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Yeah, I'd just like to join in on the bipartisan support. I come from a long line of dairy families, and we know milk and milk products are really terrific nutrition, and we especially for our young people, and with the expansion of the use of yogurt in our diets, I think this amendment is appropriate, and it ought to be a part of the underlying Farm Bill, and hopefully we'll continue this bipartisan effort and make it work.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you very much. Thank you, gentlemen gentlemen back. Mr. Van Orden is recognized.

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman. I I Why I sit in strong support, supposed to rise, strong support of my fellow Wisconsin Mr. Weed's amendment. It's just fantastic.

I mean, as I said my opening statements, Wisconsin is not a dairy state. We are the dairy state. I do, however, take umbrage with my colleague from New York. We have yodele yogurt in the state of Wisconsin, and if you want to bring some your Chu Bonnie, bye, and I'll bring some yo lane, we can have a little little lactose summit or something

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Like that. Would the gentleman yield? I shall. I'd be very happy here on live TV with the cameras rolling to accept your yogurt off yogurt.

What would you call like it would be a lacto Summit, sir, a lacto summit that is whatever, whatever you want to call it. I'll bring it, you name the time, you name the place, I'll bring my chip on you and I'll put it up again. You heard that here

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

First people. So again I I rise in strong support of this. This is awesome, and it is directly in line with Secretary Kennedy's make America healthy again agenda, which I think is fantastic, and I urge all my colleagues to support this. And with with that, I yield back, and I'll see you later, buddy.

All right.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman, Mr. Scott from Georgia,

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I think this is another good Bob bartson amendment, and I notice that everybody is going to vote for this one, just like they did the last one. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. I will say this is also one that originally had some issues. I had issues with it anyways, and but, but we use the legislative process, and I did refinement. I appreciate Mr. Wied working with me to to address those issues so we could all get to yes.

So that is the legislative process that some may have been complaining about. Other members of seek recognition to speak on this particular amendment, if not. Let me just close it up with my remarks. I want to thank the gentleman for bringing up this program, quite frankly, somebody from a long line of dairy farmers, and also the privilege of representing two young ladies that save their their family farm in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, Pa 15, by creating some of the best tasting yogurt you might ever experience, called painterland Sister yogurt.

These two gals have just amazing her yogurt now is sold in Wegmans all over the country, and they save their family farm, by the way, as a result of that, I recognize the strong nutritional profile dairy and I'm proud that the farm food National Security Act 2026 expands the SNAP dairy incentive program to include all forms of fluid milk, including flavored and nutritious hard cheeses. We were intentional expanding this program by only including hard cheeses and keeping out sugary products. This gentleman has offered an amendment that is carefully crafted and maintains the nutritional integrity of the incentive. And I thank him for his work.

Seeing no other conversation on Mr. Weed's amendment. All those in favor of the weed amendment. Signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no and independent. The Chair the ayes have it, and the amendment is in is agreed to.

I want to take the opportunity to Ms. Carbajal, if I could, I wanted to introduce you, for the purpose of an introduction of some special guests that have joined us in the hearing room. Thank you.

Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.)

Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Craig. I know Representative van Orn said that his state was not a dairy state. It was the dairy state. Well, let me tell you, California is not an AG state.

It's the agriculture state, the fourth largest economy in the world, that we were our own country, but we're not. But today, we have some special guests that I think are here to witness our hearing, and they're here to conduct other business for the state of California. I'm very honored to have our California State Senate President Pro Tem Monique Limon here, who runs the Senate with her colleagues who are part of her leadership team, and also Senators. I didn't write down their names, so I apologize, but wanted to welcome you all to our hearing and for your advocacy on behalf of California.

Thank you so much. The rest of our colleagues are here. I don't know what the rest of my colleagues are doing in that crowd, but they're not being recognized. Welcome, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, thank you to our guests. Thank you for your leadership. You are from a great agriculture state. I won't get into the dairy fight, although I am from Pennsylvania, but thank you for your leadership, and make sure you take care of those farmers in California.

We're now going to move on to next amendment, and I believe that Dr. Adams has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. I know you can support this amendment number 92

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Dr. Adams has amendment number 92 The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 92 offered by Ms. Adams of North Carolina.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment will be considered as read now recognize the distinguished lady, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment reinstates the household food security report, a comprehensive, consistent report that measures food insecurity on the national and state levels on September 20, 2025 the USDA announced the cancelation of the report, calling the survey redundant, costly, politicized and extraneous. However, the report reflects years of bipartisan work to improve how we measure and understand hunger in America, although the first report was released during the Clinton administration, its roots trace back to a food assistance task force established under Ronald Regan. Five years later, Congress strengthened federal food and nutrition data collection through the National Nutrition monitoring and related research act of 1990 legislation that passed both chambers unanimously and was signed into law by George HW Bush, according to the latest and last USDA report published in December, 48 million people in this country live in food and secure households. Well, that means that at some point during the year they did not know when or how they would be able to afford their next meal.

More than 14 million children live in food insecure households. The rates among children continue to be the highest since 2014 and over 1 million

more senior household members experience hunger in 2024 compared to 2023 for some families, hunger is temporary, an unexpected medical bill or sudden expense stretching an already tight budget past its limit. For others, it's a constant strain, as the cost of housing and child care and and other essentials continue to rise faster than their wages, and while this administration's USDA decided to cancel the survey, you cannot erase people's experiences. I think about the older adult who rolls up the sleeves of their bath robe to show the burn marks that they sustain while trying to boil water, knowing that pasta is a low cost meal that they can stretch for a few days.

I think about the parents who cut their food intake so that their children can have full bellies. I think about the student that's trying to learn simple addition and subtraction, but is distracted by their age. Aching, hungry stomach. Listen, the timing of this cancelation is suspicious.

Republicans made a $187 billion cut and SNAP in their one big, ugly bill, and now they don't want the data to show its impacts without the data. How we going to suppose? How are we supposed to fix the problem, unless that's something you're not concerned about. Well, you know, at the State of the Union, Donald Trump said that he lifted 2.4 million Americans a record off of food stamps.

But that's not because of economic conditions. It's because people are losing their eligibility through the one big, ugly bill. Look, if you say this Farm Bill is a bipartisan effort, then I see no issue in supporting this amendment, which is reinstating something that historically has strong bipartisan support. And if you believe 2.1 million Americans are being lifted off of SNAP because they don't need it, then let's see the numbers.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield I'm going to yield to I'll yield back. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I appreciate the gentlelady, and she yields back other members that seek recognition to speak on the amendment. Mr. McGovern.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank Ms. Adams for introducing this amendment. Look at the Trump Administration has done a lot of stupid things when it comes to food and nutrition, but among the stupidest is the cancelation of the annual food security report. I was, you know, I was hoping that maybe somebody could enlighten us and help us understand why USDA canceled the report. I mean, this is about data.

This is about facts. This is about providing us with necessary information for 30 years. 30 years, this report has provided us with critical data to help address food security in communities all across America, in rural areas, in urban areas and suburban areas. It has been an important report.

The only reason that I can think for its cancelation is the administration is trying to bury the data to hide how awful and damaging the big, ugly bill that you pass really is close to $200 billion in cuts to SNAP. I think this is a deliberate attempt to try to try to make it more difficult for people to have consensus on the negative impacts of those cuts. You know, you know that. You know that this big, ugly bill is unpopular, and it's especially unpopular, and you guys have just kind of illustrated it by wanting to cover your tracks again.

I, you know, we can argue about data, we can argue about what it means, but we ought not to be canceling programs that actually provide us with objective data. I mean, I can cite, you know, statistics about 1000 different groups that are that are documenting hunger in this country and my friends on the other side will question their political, you know, inclinations, but this is USDA. This is the USDA report, and that it was canceled makes absolutely no sense to me. I think the gentlelady's amendment should be supported.

I urge everybody to support it, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Thank you for that. Other members who seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Ms. Salinas,

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also support this amendment. The fact that we would not gather, collect and survey people who are hungry tells me that we are trying to silence the opinions and the realities of people who are food insecure. I went on a visit with our local Meals on Wheels program to visit older people who needed two hot meals a week, and I talked to one woman, a constituent from my district, and she was about 65 years old.

And I asked her, I said, What does this meal mean to you? I was taking my own little survey as we were going around to visit folks. And she said, Well, Congresswoman Salinas, this meal means I'm alive today. And I said, What do you mean by that?

She said, about a year ago she was about my height and about my weight. She said about a year ago I was 30 pounds lighter. And she said, and my doctor basically said, if I don't start getting nutrition and a warm meal once, at least once a week, I will die. And she said, and I'm alive today.

We need to hear the voices of people who do not have the warm meals that they need every week to survive. We need to understand what it's like to live in a food desert. We need to understand what it's like to skip meals so you can give them to their children. We need to understand.

Us. We need to hear it. We need it in the data, and we need to then act on it. I support this amendment, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. I thank her. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? If not, I'll take the liberty of my time.

I want to say thank you to the gentlelady for raising this issue. The USDA household food security reports, which were paused by USDA last September, have long conflated food insecurity with hunger, exaggerating the true picture of hunger in the United States as such. For decades, these reports have been used to justify expansions to safety net and fear monger the American people. And it's important to note that trends in the prevalence of food insecurity have remained virtually unchanged despite an 87% and SNAP spending between 2019 and 2023 the service the survey, more importantly to me, this survey is is redundant.

Currently, 11 other government sponsored surveys collect information on food insecurity from Representative samples of American households or individuals. These are publicly available data, such as the National Health Interview Survey from the CDC. That's just one of the 11. For these reasons, I recommend a no vote on this amendment Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, seeing no further conversation.

The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye. Those opposed by saying no, independent, the Chair, the noes have it the amendment is not agreed. [CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

A recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee roll 312, further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

You. Does anyone seek to offer an additional amendment to this

Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.)

Title? Mr. Chairman,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Rouzer, you're recognized.

Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.)

I think the gentleman, my amendment is really for the purpose of highlighting an issue, and so I intend to withdraw it after I make a few points the senior and wick Farmers Market

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Nutrition, Mr. Chairman, oh, I'm sorry, if my colleague would suspend for just a moment, would the Clerk report the amendment got ahead of number

The Clerk

133, offered by Mr. Rouzer of North Carolina, Jill.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman is recognized.

Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, we'll start again. The purpose of the amendment is to raise an issue as it relates to the senior and wick Farmers Market Nutrition programs, which I support by the way, they provide low income seniors, mothers and children with access to locally grown foods, while connecting farmers markets and local growers directly to customers. The senior program is supported through this legislation, while the WIC program is funded annually through appropriations. Both programs are administered by the United States Department of Agriculture and state agencies.

Yet the WIC program is under jurisdiction of the education and work force Committee, and the senior program is under the jurisdiction of this committee. Although similar, both programs require separate rule making from USDA to be implemented, and are inconsistent with the peak season for farmers markets. Much of this is due to the WIC program's reliance on the appropriation cycle. The bottom line here is this, we have two very similar programs, two committees of jurisdiction, two different funding streams and two different rule makings, all at USDA.

So Mr. Chairman, I understand merging the two programs, and one requires collaboration with our colleagues at the Education and Workforce Committee, and I urge the committee, this committee, to work towards that end, to create a more streamlined and efficient program that better connects our growers directly to consumers, with that, I yield to the Chairman.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I want to thank the gentleman for offering this amendment. The senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program is a noble nutrition program that supports seniors and our producers. Due to budgetary constraints, it was not possible to include this language in the food farm food and National Security Act of 2026 and I'm proud, however, that we were able to make tree nuts and

maple syrup eligible for purchase. And I look forward to continuing to work with the gentleman on further ways to boost this program.

Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.)

I appreciate the Chairman's comments, and I might add, I don't think it's too unso. Letter to our work with the Financial Services Committee to produce the CLARITY Act. I really would like to see a joint effort with education and work force in this committee to address the redundancies and strengthen this program, which I think would serve the taxpayer very well, as well as the consumers who need this. I yield back and I withdraw my amendment.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman draws his amendment, and The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the congressman, Chantel.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you. I have an amendment at the desk, number 28 at nine,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

With the Clerk just a second

The Clerk

Amendment number 29 offered by Ms. Brown of Ohio,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Yes, Clerk has reported the amendment. gentlelady is recognized for five minutes to explain her amendment.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, my amendment would delay the administrative cost shift and benefit cost shift passed last year as part of the Republican reconciliation package by two years and four years respectively. As you all will remember, the big, ugly bill included trillions in tax breaks for

our county's wealthiest individuals, and then stuck states and middle class Americans with the bill, they passed the largest unfunded mandate in our nation's history, and the fallout if we do not course correct, will be devastating. Now look, I would reverse every change made to H.R. 1 if I could, but this particular provision is straightforward and desperately need it.

Here's the part that should concern every member of this committee. The amount states will owe is being determined right now. It's being calculated based on error rates during a rushed implementation of an extremely complex bill. We handed states a complicated and an expensive unfunded mandate.

We told them to implement it quickly, and now we're saying, if you don't do it perfectly, you pay this is just wrong. About half of the states, based on current data, are facing more than $100 million a year in new costs. That's not a rounding error. That's a massive budget deficit that will force states, no matter if they are red, blue or purple in the Northeast or the southwest, to make impossible choices, cut SNAP benefits or cut public safety programming, cut SNAP eligibility or cut teachers in classrooms.

I would like to enter into the record a letter that the bipartisan National Governor's Association sent to House and Senate leadership earlier this year that asked for a delay in the cost shift in states that the cuts passed in H.R. 1, coupled with the design chaos of the USDA during the government shutdown have caused Significant, I quote, significant operational disruption for states and counties. The gentlelady, I want to enter into the record,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I see no objection, so

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Shall be honored. Thank you. My amendment gives states what they are asking for a little more time to plan for these cuts, time to balance budgets and raise revenue before these cuts come into place, states are facing a massive fiscal hole for states and an unrealistic timeline for making sure that

states are able to continue operating the SNAP program as it needs to. So once again, I urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment and course correct.

I yield back.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentlelady yields back. Does any other member wish to be recognized to speak on the amendment? The gentlelady is recognized for five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

I do rise in support of this amendment. This summer, Republican slashed SNAP by $187 billion forcing states and counties already stretched to the breaking point to fill the gap. Families are hungry. Governors and lawmakers, Democrats and Republicans alike, are scrambling just to keep people fed.

We know this because they've told us, and they said that annual SNAP expenditures could increase, and average $218 million per state after 20 years that I spent in the General Assembly, I can tell you that states cannot absorb these costs without cutting other essential services that our communities rely on. Some states were given delays, but every state deserves that same relief. I yield back.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentlelady yields back. Does any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Gentlemen is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

I rise in support of the amendment, Mr. Chair and Congresswoman Brown, thank you for introducing this at the end of the day. So we understand where H.R. 1 left us in terms of what the law and what the requirements are for states now in terms of cost shifting and cost sharing. But that law does not

change the fiscal realities of states across the country. It certainly does not change the fiscal realities of the state of Alabama, where I from, where I am from, I think, at a minimum.

What we should do is give states time to adjust, to adapt to the new requirements. I have met directly with state legislators, both Democrats and Republicans in the state of Alabama, and I can tell you there are concerns about where hundreds of millions of dollars will come from in the state of Alabama, especially in 12 months, or less than 12 months, and so that is a that's a big hit. It's a big adjustment. It's a historical change, and something that I don't think anybody you know with any good sense in terms of budget management would tell you that it's a great idea to just all of a sudden shift that large of a financial burden onto the states with such a short ramp.

Again, we understand the realities of where we are. We get that, but states needs time to adjust. And we have heard this from Republican governors, from Democratic governors, from Republican state legislators, democratic state legislators, and this amendment does just that. I think it is a wise amendment.

I think it is the responsible thing to do. And I think if we're going to, you know, adjust which we, which states, have no other alternative but to do now under this law, if they're going to adjust, we can at least do so in a way that gives them the greatest likelihood of being able to successfully do so and maintain benefits for as many people as we possibly can under the current status of the law. With that, I'll yield the balance of my time to the Ranking Member. gentleman yields.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you. When we talk about these, these costs in a state like Ohio, where we're already stretched thin, these, this just is an impossible lift. It is an impossible task. And so the greater concern is, how do we how do we continue to help vulnerable people who are seeking to be fed?

That's what this comes down to. And so when you have states that are already stretched thin, we know that services or programs will have to be eliminated, and we'd like to be able to avoid that, and this provision does that. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentlelady yields back. gentleman yields back, and gentlelady from always recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I speak in strong support of this amendment. We've heard not once but twice before this committee that if states are forced to endure these increased cost shares, there are those states facing literally hundreds of millions of dollars in additional costs annually that will simply choose not to do the program, not funding the EBT SNAP program means that pregnant women, senior citizens, families with young children under the age of 15, our veterans, the working Poor, will simply have no money on their cards, no money at all. For too many states, the ask to fund an additional 100 million, let alone hundreds of millions of dollars, is an impossible choice. They can't pick off schools, they can't pick off healthcare, they can't pick off improvements to roadways, security, safety, law enforcement.

We have heard from expert witnesses sitting right there at that table, and again, not once, but twice, say there are those states, there are those counties and jurisdictions that will simply choose not to participate in the program because they can no longer afford the cost share that the big, ugly Bill has instituted on them. And so this simple ask, this simple ask, to delay these additional cost shares that will place impossible burdens on our states and our counties, this is a good amendment that must be passed for the sake of making sure those pregnant women, everyone's so concerned about those senior citizens, that everyone's so concerned about those families with children under the age of 15, are so concerned about and for the rest of us, all those other normal people that are working hard but still can't afford to eat, we need to make sure that we have passed this amendment for them. Thank you. And I yield that

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentlelady yields back as the gentleman Georgia seek to be recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I know we have different situations in different states, and I just want to commend my governor, Brian Kemp, and the state legislature. The state of Georgia has 14.6 billion in reserves.

Now 5.6 billion in what we would call a revenue short fall reserve. And you know, we are cutting taxes and reducing the size of government, government in the state of Georgia, and I think that's why our state is so well positioned to accept the integrity measures that were put in in the SNAP program and the Big Beautiful Bill and so well run States certainly have the capacity to handle this. And I, again, I just want to thank my Republican governor and my Republican legislature for operating our state in a fiscally sound manner, where where we have 14.6 billion in reserves while we're at the same time cutting taxes with that I yield.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman yields back. Does any other member wish to seek recognition? Speaker the gentleman is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to yield my time to Shomari Figures.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman yields, thank you.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

We don't have the luxury of that in Alabama, $14.6 billion in reserves. You know, Georgia has a sort of cheat code in Atlanta, with a lot of industry, and a lot of, you know, a lot of other things going on in that state. We got a lot of great things going on in the state of Alabama. We are seeing growth.

We're seeing economic growth, but that is the product of, you know, two, three plus decades of economic development, of legislative efforts that have all been devoted and sort of mapped out and strategize in terms of how those revenues can be, can be spent. I'm not saying that the state of Alabama is

broke. That is not at all the picture I'm attempting to paint. What I'm attempting to paint is that the state of Alabama, in all of its glory and everything that we have going on economically, was not budgeting for 200 plus million dollars in contributions towards SNAP program.

And I've heard this from literally leadership, Republican leadership in the Alabama State Legislature. My mother is a Senator in the Alabama State Senate. And so we've talked extensively about this. The state is not, I mean, this is a this is a big blow to absorb in a short amount of time.

I think anybody in any business setting, you know, understands that. And so I we obviously certainly understand the the intent behind the cost sharing, we understand the results of the cost sharing. This is not an attempt out through this amendment to run from either of those. This is, this is an attempt to give states a fighting chance to absorb these new requirements in a way that does not jeopardize the programs as a whole.

And with that, I yield back to Mr. Riley.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you. I'd like to yield time to Jill Tokuda.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you very much. I appreciate that Georgia is a master $14 billion stockpile. But for the sake of Georgia, I think it's important to note that right now, an increased cost share based upon the changes, will result in $80 million more annually that they have to put into the SNAP program, and based on their error rate, just about half a billion dollars more annually as well. And so as somebody who ran the money committee in the State Senate, I can tell you why $14 billion sounds like a lot, an additional over half billion dollars a year that is already being budgeted for this state, in addition to other costs that you will have to bear as a result of Medicaid and Medicare cuts and that big, ugly bill that $14 billion is going to disappear fast, and people will, in fact, be hungry in the state of Georgia.

Thank you very much, and I yield back the remainder of my time

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Lady controls the time

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

To be clear, I was talking about the additional cost that Georgia will have to incur based upon the cost share, but also reminded them that it's not just about the cuts to SNAP when we take a look at state budgets and their ability to manage that under their surplus, we have to consider all the cuts we've done in totality as a result of this Congress's action on the big, ugly bill, including Medicaid and Medicare

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman yields tag,

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Yeah, I look. I'm passionate about this issue, because the state that I, that I represent, like we are. I mean, there's no other way to put it. It's one of the poorest states out there.

Individual median income, about $33,000 in my state. Snap is a is a it hits a little bit different when one in four households in your district rely on it. And so we know changes are coming. We know that the state's responsibility with this program has historically and drastically shifted.

All we are asking for in this amendment is time reasonable. Have time to allow state budgets to adjust. State budgets don't work based on mandates from federal budgets. We know that, and so they need time to adjust.

And again, this is, I mean, we got support from a number of organizations, bipartisan organizations, governors from both Republican and Democratic states that understand the impact that this is going to have on a budget. This is a, this is a, you know, this, this is pretty, this is pretty basic, you know, hundreds of millions of dollars added to a state like Alabama's budget, or

any state for that matter, that is a blow and a shock that is tough to absorb without an appropriate runway. And so that is what this amendment seeks. And I yield back the balance of my time.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman yields back. Does the gentlelady seek to be recognized?

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Mr. Chairman, yes, I see recognition. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support also of this amendment, which would delay the SNAP administration and benefit cost shifts.

Right now, as we know, the federal government covers 50% of SNAP administrative costs. But with this, states will be now starting to pick up 75% starting in Fiscal Year 27 for us in Maryland and for Governor West Moore, that's not a small adjustment. It is a major cost shift. It will place an additional estimated 412.5 million burden on our taxpayers, and more than 300 million above the state currently contributes to administer SNAP.

That's and not an insignificant increase for any state budget. And as some of my colleagues have said, that is in addition to what the tsunami of cuts that are coming at our state budget, both from rifts that have happened across our agencies, and so we have less tax dollars into our state coffers, but also because of all these rifts and cuts that are happening, it's impacting state budgets as they have to deal with Medicaid and so many other costs as well. And we have to remember what SNAP does in Maryland, the SNAP program feeds more than 680,000 people each month, including nearly 270,000 children. The average benefit is about 180 per month, and that's not excessive.

It just helps basic families put food on the table. In FY 26 we expect to issue more than 1.6 billion in SNAP benefits, and these changes enacted in H.R. 1 and signed into law and 25 will make it harder for states to maintain this support and harder families. So I'm just asking that this amendment simply provides time, time for states to plan, time to adjust and time to avoid

sudden harm to both state budgets and the families who will rely on this program we have to mitigate the carnage that can happen. I strongly support this, this amendment, and yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Now recognize the gentleman from Wisconsin for five minutes.

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Wisconsin's error rate is 4.47% a year ago, Alaska's error rate was about 60% it's now at 24.66% so Alaska has proven, which is a Republican run state, and Wisconsin is a Democrat run state, that you can move with alacrity when required. And all this is doing is trying to encourage responsible bureaucracy. And I know that sounds like an oxymoron, but it's not trying to encourage responsible bureaucracy in the state of Alaska, has proven to reduce their error rate by two thirds within a single year. One of the issues that we have with administrative costs is that there's no parameter set by the federal government.

So states have been using this, including the state of Wisconsin, as a way to pad other parts of their budget. They just send a bill to DC and we pay the bill. So if we're talking about increasing the state cost share by 25% for administrative costs, which we are it will encourage responsible bureaucracy by the states only charging the federal government or submitting a bill what they're actually using for administrative costs. One of the things the state of Wisconsin bills the federal government for is job training under administrative costs.

Guess what's in here? Job training so they're they've been double dipping for a while. And I know this to be true because we called Tony Evers administration on this and they stop responding to our emails and phone calls. So that's the type of stuff we're talking about.

If a state is required to pay an additional portion of their administrative costs, I believe firmly that they will only charge the federal government for actual administrative costs and not try to float other things under the guise of that. That's why, you know, I do not support this amendment. And as I

said, the state of Alaska has proven that that when they're encouraged to exercise responsible, responsible bureaucracy, that it can be done within a timely man. There with that.

I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Chairman yields back. Now recognize Congresswoman McDonald rivet for five minutes.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, as I, as I said earlier, the state share of this is going to collapse. Many state economies that are thriving, not to mention the ones that are state economies that are really struggling. And to hear more about that, I yield the rest of my time to Representative Figures,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Figures recognized. Thank you.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

I hear you on the air rates, and I think everybody shares the the ambition and the goal that we root out all unnecessary expenses, all double dipping, all double billing, anybody defrauding the system. We're with you on that. But the administrative expenses are not the bulk of the cost sharing that the states are about to absorb. Hundreds of millions of dollars to the state of Alabama.

I mean, that is a that is a shock that we just cannot absorb. I mean, it is, it is going to jeopardize the program. And I'll be introducing an amendment later to hopefully come up with another alternative here. But, you know, if this is not successful, but at the end of the day, I mean, this is the equivalent of, let's say you got a million dollars in savings, and your wife or husband comes home and says, Hey, next year we got to pay $250,000 bill.

And by the way, the year after that, we got to pay it again. The year after that, we got to pay it again. The year after that, we got to pay it again and

again and again. Those Those million dollars, that million dollar savings is, is, you know, without proper timing and proper ability to restructure some things fiscally, to reassess revenue streams, to reassess expense streams, with, without the ability to do that sufficiently, you're gonna go broke.

You're going to go bankrupt, like you won't be able to possibly afford that home you live in, the car you drive, or or vacations, or whatever else you spend your money on. And so again, this, this is not some underhanded attempt to undo, you know, anything about what was pushed through with it. This is about the only commodity that you cannot replace on this earth, time you cannot get time back. And this is what this is about.

This is about giving states time to adjust to such a significant change in circumstances and what they have to allocate money towards. With that, I yield back to balance of my time applause.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

I yield the rest of my time to Ranking Member. Chantel Brown, thank you.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

I just want to, I just want to kind of point out the that Alaska was used as an example of improvement the 9% of the population that which comes about to about less than 70,000 people are on SNAP in Alaska. So to say that we're in my in my district alone, 120,000 people depend on SNAP. So while I appreciate the example, I think it is a little bit misleading to use that as as a barometer of metrics on how quickly people can states can adjust, because that is a fraction of what number of users in the state of Ohio are dependent on SNAP. So I think we have to take those things into account when we're when we're starting to talk about how quickly people can turn or states can turn things around.

That is, in my humble and respectful opinion, a fine example, but misleading when it comes to the tall task that many of our states are up against when we are coming towards facing an administrative cost, a burden to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars in a state like Ohio to try to shoulder. So with that, I yield to Ms. Hayes. Ms. Hayes is recognized.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

I just want to say Democrats also want accountability and responsible bureaucracy to use your term. I don't want this to be framed as if Democrats are not looking for any accountability, or we want these programs to run in a way that is not the most effective and the most efficient, because we want the maximum amount of these dollars to go to the people that need them the most. What this amendment is about is the time to do that. There seems to be this juxtaposition, as if Democrats just want to give away everything with no accountability.

That is inherently false. We want to make sure that every dollar that. We appropriate through this committee has the most impact on the communities that we serve. We're just asking for the time to do that properly.

With that I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Time has expired. Recognize general from Nebraska, Mr. Bacon, for five minutes

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

When I raised my hand up, this topic hadn't come up yet, but we've now beat up on it a little bit, but I was part of the negotiations when this first came out under the reconciliation bill cost sharing. And I personally thought the original postal proposal was too steep. And so I remember sitting down with the Chairman said, Hey, this is, this is, you know, an exorbitant cost on states I thought we came up with over time. I think a reasonable compromise here, states that have high error rates should pay more, and states that have low error rates should pay less.

We've given we added time to do it, and this way here, we incentivize states to administer, administrate the program better, and those states with low costs actually save a lot of money in the long run. So it's a win, win thing, and it does. It puts pressure on states to do a better job. Some states were at terrible rates.

Nebraska has a reasonably good rate. Could be better still, but I think we got us to a much better spot. I yield, gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yelled Any other members? Ms. Hayes recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you Mr. Chair. I yield to Representative Figures.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you Representative bacon. I hear you, and I don't disagree with a word that you, that you just said this amendment is not about that, though. This is literally just about giving states like Nebraska, like and I don't know Nebraska's budget situation. If I was guessing, I would presume it's something similar to Alabama, and that if they get stuck with a $220 million bill in nine months, it's problematic.

They got to make some adjustments. They got to, you know, rob Peter to pay Paul. They got to shift some things around. And so this, again, is just about time.

Just give states time to adjust to this, because states are going to have to make we made a tough decision here, collectively as a congress, obviously, this Saturday, I voted against it. We made it a very tough decision to shift the cost sharing burden onto states. Well now states, when they absorb this, they have to make some tough decisions too, what programs to cut, what programs to no longer fund, and how to move money around. And so I urge my colleagues to support this amendment to give states.

And again, this is a, you know, in the grand scheme of things, this is a bipartisan request, because we have, you know, letters of support from bipartisan leadership at the gubernatorial levels and other levels across this country that too are asking just for the time to make these, these substantial changes. And with that, I yield back to Ms. Hayes,

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you. I just would also like to add something that we haven't really touched upon. We're talking about error rates as if some states are just better at doing it right than others. As Representative brown pointed out, you have to take into consideration the populations, the economies, but also, I mean, I'm from the state of Connecticut.

We're a donor state. We pay more into the federal government than we get back effectively subsidizing many of the states that we're talking about here today. So this idea that including, including, not just yours Representative Figures, but this idea that if states wanted to do it right, they just could, I mean, we, we are a nation. We're no longer, you know, a confederacy, where every state is on their own.

We make laws for the entire country. So this is what it looks like for the collective and the idea that one state might have lower, you're absolutely right, and I applaud that. And we need to get these error rates down. But it's not as simple as just if you wanted to do it right, you could, you know, we're dealing about pop the economies, the population, the demographics, you know, all of these things have to be taken into consideration.

And once again, I'll say it as many times as I need to my state gives more to the federal government than we get back. So this idea, if you make a mistake, you should pay for it. Then everybody else should pay for their own states as well. You know, California, literally.

Thank you, Mr. Costa, on behalf of a nation. So this idea, I mean, this is a little bit more nuance than it's being presented here today. And again, all of this, and all this amendment does is just ask for time for all the states to get it right. And with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Ms. Brown's amendment. Salinas is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I support Ms. Brown's amendment. Oregon does have one of the highest error rates in the nation. But to Ms. Hayes, I think point a

big part of that is over payments. So whether you're paying too much or too little, that counts as a mistake, which equals an error.

And so for the state of Oregon, having these new rules that we will have to implement to the tune of $150 million in our biennium budget is only going to cause additional errors if we do not have the time to think through it, to change our programs, to change the back end of the computer programs that are required. This is a self fulfilling prophecy if we don't have more time to give to states to actually implement this in a way that reduces errors. If that is truly what we're talking about, I actually don't think that's what we're talking about. I think the intent here is to actually kick people off of food that they need, and with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Ms. Brown's amendment. Members, I will let me get the final word here, and then we'll, we'll go vote from there, just a couple of things. I don't want us picking on Alaska. I know they have a whole lot fewer people than Ohio, but what they have and what Pennsylvania and Ohio don't have.

We can put 15 Ohio's in Alaska. They have the challenge of amazing rural we're talking rural all upper case, which pretty impressive the fact that Alaska can lean in and improve their error rate, given giving all those miles and that geographic area, I give them a lot of credit. I think they deserve credit. There's error rate was traditionally very high and and they're leaning into it, just like I know the state of Pennsylvania is leaning into reducing their error rate, which two years ago was 17% then 11% and the the other thing is error rates do come with a price tag.

Comes to a price tag for for states and and we're actually incentivizing them to to save money in the long run. Since Fiscal Year 2014 FNS has assessed total liabilities of 73 million over $73 million in fines from the States, because when they do have an error rate, there's a fine that comes with it, and so incentivizing states to do a better job is going to save some money, and that at least in that column, will save some significant dollars. The working family tax cut signed into law last year delivered long overdue

reforms to the SNAP program, controlling costs and preserving the program for those who need it most. The amendment, this amendment chooses the status quo over the $10 billion in erroneous SNAP payments per year.

The bureaucratic state mismanagement and fraud and blank checks are for bloated state administrative expenses. And yes, I get it. You know, some of the errors are clerical in nature, and that's why the error rates were carefully designed with encouragement to get to zero. Let's be clear about who the status quo really hurts.

A single mom on SNAP working two jobs to get back on her feet, who has to repay hundreds of dollars in SNAP payments that the state overpaid her through no fault of her own. I don't know where she's going to pull that money from. You know, when SNAP EBT card is is inappropriately over, you know, over funded. You know, if you're a family, you're going to use that because that's you're shocked by it.

You don't know why, but you obviously think that this is something you're entitled to and you're going to spend that money. But the fact is, on an over, on an overpayment, the state is going to come back, and it's going to claw that money back in the future, future charge, future putting benefits on your EBT card, or a grandmother raising her grandchildren, who, unbeknownst to her, has been underpaid in her SNAP benefit for months due to calculation errors by her state. So I want to remind everyone that if states decrease these errors, they didn't, they don't need to pay for any portion of the SNAP benefit, you know, and encouraging folks to do better. I don't know when that became an unpopular or a bad thing.

Quite frankly, I see most of the states have really taken this very seriously, and they've stepped up and and they're doing a bet much better job. And I'm hoping that they all get to the point where they reach that threshold in terms of Air Race, where they don't have to pay anything, because it means that the system is working better that way. On the on the administrative side, the cost. Administrative costs just kept increasing exponentially.

And it really came down to, you know, when you're spending other people's money, you're you're just not as careful if you're spending your own. And so there is an opportunity for for states to be able to not spend as much there, if they just got serious, did a root cause analysis about their administration of

the SNAP program and put thing, put actions in place to be able to be efficient. In fact, with technology today, there are great opportunities to reduce the cost of administration if they're willing to do that. That is a state decision on how they pursue their administration.

So it's imperative that these reforms go into effect when intended a delay would be a disgrace to the taxpayers and our neighbors in need, and unfortunately for those reasons, I will be opposing this amendment with that seeing no other conversation my script,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Hearing, no further conversation. The question is on Ms. Brown's amendment, all those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no. In the append the Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to, I'd like to request a recorded vote. Yes, ma'am, a recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee roll three, aye, two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed.

Is there further debate or amendments? I know that Mr. Vasquez has an amendment he had notified me of The Clerk will report the title of Mr. Vasquez amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

I have an amendment at the desk, number 140 amendment.

The Clerk

Number 140 offered by Mr. Vasquez of New Mexico.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an easy fix for us

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

On title four, Gim me a second sure the amendment will considered as as read, I now recognize English general from New Mexico to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their of your amendment.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this afternoon, I have an easy fix for us here in Title four, a mistake from H.R. 1. My amendment would cut the red tape and pose under H.R. 1 to ensure that no veteran is forced to go hungry after serving their country for decades. Federal law has recognized the value of military service by exempting veterans from SNAP work requirements. This was done pre H.R. 1, this allowed our veterans, many of whom live with service related health conditions which limit their ability to work, to use food assistance to feed themselves or their families after they worked hard to protect our American freedoms.

However, under H.R. 1, the 8% of veterans nationwide that rely on SNAP face these new work requirements in order to keep their benefits beyond three months, New Mexico is among the top four states in which veterans rely on Snap to feed themselves, a list that includes Oregon, Louisiana and West Virginia. Making it harder for those who served our nation to eat each day is no way to thank them or to honor their service. We often talk about not doing enough domestically for veterans, and I've heard complaints from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that we spend too much on immigrants and not enough on veterans facing hardship. Well, here's your chance to live those values.

While I understand that my amendment has an impact to the overall SNAP budget and restores partial funding to serve veterans, I can't imagine how anyone in this room can look a hungry veteran in their district in the face and say, You voted against feeding them because they're considered they aren't considered budget neutral in the Agriculture Committee. That's an insult to their service. So I think everyone in this room can agree that our service members have already worked hard to protect our freedom and have earned our attention and our support in this committee, I hope that we can work across the aisle to cut the red tape on veteran work requirements that were put in H.R. 1 and send them instead. A big thank you from this committee for their service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

General yields back. Thank you for that other members that seek recognition to speak. Mr. McGovern,

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

I want to thank Mr. Vasquez for offering this amendment, and I agree with him. I think veterans deserve a hell of a lot better. And Mr. Chairman, I don't know if I misheard you, but during the debate on Ms. Adams amendment on the USDA report, I thought I heard you say that the figures with regard to hunger and food insecurity in this country have been exaggerated. And if that is indeed what you said, I strongly, strongly object.

If anything, it's under reported. And within our veteran community in particular, it is under reported veterans who. Have served our country who put their lives on the line for our country deserve a hell of a lot better. Certainly, they should not go hungry.

They should not be in the condition of food insecurity. And the idea, you know, that somehow we are kind of targeting this group and basically saying we are not going to provide them these benefits, that they now have to be subject to these new requirements, I think is particularly offensive, it's being the justification is that somehow we're trying to save money. Well, I mean, I hate to tell you, but since you guys have been in charge, the debt has increased, in large part because of huge tax cuts from multi-millionaires and billionaires and big corporations. Nobody has any problem with that.

But the reality is that hunger is a real problem in America, and it is a big problem in America. I suppose if you're looking at life through the eyes of Mar-a-Lago, you don't see the extent of hunger in our communities. It's everywhere. It's in rural areas, it's in suburban areas, it's in urban areas.

But I mean, we ought to understand that we have a special obligation to our veteran community. And again, I want to thank Mr. Vasquez for offering this amendment. I wholeheartedly support it. I would like to think that we could, at a bipartisan basis, you know, unanimously approve this amendment.

And again, I thank the gentleman for offering it, and I yield to the Ranking Member.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you so much. Ms. rankup member is recognized. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, I simply want to add my support for this very strong amendment. I'll be voting yes on this amendment to restore veterans exemption from these paperwork requirements, and I would urge my colleagues to do the same,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Governor, time is yours.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

I do need more. Yes, no, okay yield the gentleLady. I rise in

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Support of this amendment. It's a great amendment. Honestly, if I have to explain why or try to convince people why it's important, then that's the problem. But I will point out that, point out that these work requirements for veterans exist because of the one big ugly bill.

The one big ugly bill that Republicans drafted, passed over the summer, removed previous SNAP exemptions for veterans. North Carolina is home to 46,000 veterans who receive SNAP benefits fits each month, men and women who served our country, they defended our freedoms, and now they deserve our support at home, not additional hurdles just because of a partisan bill. So let's fix this. Let's protect our veterans, make sure that the benefits that they rely on aren't taken away.

Thank you. I go back to gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Back Mr. Bacon from Nebraska is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Thank you, Chairman, 70% of Americans in every poll, some up to 80% support work requirements. Now I would agree, if there was no special protections, this is a legitimate concern, but under H.R. 1 states will once again, be required to engage able bodied veterans who receive SNAP it and ask for 20 hours of work, or if they can't find a job, 20 hours of volunteering, or if that's not available, 20 hours of education or 20 hours of job training, or 20 hours of looking for a job, but it does give special guard rails for our veterans. Veterans who are over the age of 64 will not have to have work requirements. If they have mental or physical disabilities, they will not have to have work requirements.

If they have PTS, they will not have to have work requirements. If they're taking care of a dependent under the age of 14, they will not have to have work requirements. Taking care of a disabled child or an aging parent. They will not have work requirements.

If they're participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program, they will not have to have work requirements if they're in school, as already mentioned, their school getting training at least 20 hours a week, they could still be eligible for SNAP. So I just, I think we got the guard rails in here, and when the American people hear these safety precautions, the guard rails that we have in there, poll after poll, American support work requirements at 70% I yield you.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

A nice thank you. I rise in support of this amendment. And as Dr. Adams said, if we have to explain why it's important to support our veterans who are in these unique situations. That's already a problem.

I'm just thinking like in our community, in my community, you how painful it is to see someone with you know. A hat or shirt or something that identifies them as a veteran, and you see that they are homeless or unemployed, it's not enough to just keep saying thank you for your service, if we are not actively working to support these veterans and then to take away food for three years. I mean, this gets more and more egregious. Many of these veterans have trouble finding a suitable role.

Many have little work experience beyond the military, or just need support adjusting back to civilian life. I would argue that their debt to our country has been paid, and we need to do all we can to help them get back on their feet. And I just think about my interactions with my constituents, who are veterans, and even people in my family, some of these things are not as obvious as as they're being played out here. It's not like people just come home and go right back into society.

Many of our veterans have a hard time even asking for help. You know, many of them literally are just devastated by the fact that they're even in that position to need help. And this seems like a very easy one that we can address. I mean, we've talked about all of the people who don't want to work, who don't want to do anything.

These are people who literally were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for this country and and this is the group that we want to target here with this legislation. I mean, all this proves is that this is equal opportunity cruelty. No, no community is exempt. No person is exempt, you know, and again, we're doing all of these things on the in contrast to a bill that made tax breaks for the wealthiest individuals permanent, you know, at a time where it's been revealed that the commander-in-chief only paid $750 in federal taxes, you know, and this is the group that that we want to target.

So I will be supporting this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. If there's a group that we can agree that we need to support, I would, I would argue that this is it with that I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Mr. Sorensen is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Somebody remind me to call my cardiologist, because I'm going to need some more blood pressure medicine. I cannot believe that we are here today, and people on the other side of the aisle are saying, You know what, sorry. You may have gone off to war, but go get a job and then come back to us for your six bucks. I sit on the House Armed Services Committee right now where we have tens of thousands of Americans in harm's way.

These are the future veterans that we are going to need to take care of. How do you have it in your conscience to not say very simply in this amendment, the amendment would exempt veterans from SNAP work requirements to improve access to nutrition assistance for those who have served. That's how easy this is, and you know what as as Mr. Lucas? I wish he was in the committee right now, because he could help talk me down.

He would probably so eloquently say that and remind me that this isn't a political issue. Look, we're all running for reelection. We all need to prove to every veteran that we have their back and that we will do everything for every veteran, no matter where they served, no matter who they are, no matter what circumstance they find themselves in today. So let's find a way to make this the bipartisan amendment that we can all support.

And with that, I yield to my colleague from New Mexico.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you. Thank you, Eric. Well, let me just say that for decades, federal, existing federal law recognize the value of military service by exempting veterans from SNAP work requirements. Again, prior to H.R. 1 was this was the law of the land.

This is the way that Congress recognized we could give back to those veterans who served now some of the exemptions that the gentleman from Nebraska mentioned, although they seem seemingly harmless, you know, this is more red tape. This is part of the problem. When you add all these different categories, and you're asking a veteran who's recently returned from war to see which category he fits into, where he's going to volunteer, how he's going to complete these 20 work hours. Look.

Said in my office, we deal with veterans that are dealing with the most basic issues to seek access to mental healthcare from their local VA or their local see buck. There we are in short supply of VSOs. It is not that easy to reintegrate and fit yourself into one of these categories, and that's one of the reasons why veterans were exempt prior to H.R. 1 from the SNAP work requirements in the first place we should be making life easier for veterans for the most basic needs, like feeding themselves. And we did that.

We have a legacy of doing that in a bipartisan way. That was the federal law that was recognized prior to H.R. 1. And so I want to thank Mr. Riley and Mr. Gray for Co-sponsoring the feed our veterans act with me and for Congresswoman Hayes for leading on this issue as well for so many years in the past. So with that, I do urge a bipartisan support again.

If you look at my amendment, it's probably the shortest amendment, if not one of the shortest amendments you'll see in this markup today. It restores in H.R. 1, this exemption for veterans, easy to do. It's a great way for all of us to go back to our district and say, Hey, we're not just talking about how we're helping you here in Congress. We actually did it by making sure that we restored the exemption for you to make sure that you have something to eat every day.

I think that's a pretty noble thing for all of us to be able to do when we get back home to our districts following this Farm Bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time to

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Sorensen. Sorensen is recognized.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

To the gentleman from Alabama,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Figures recognized,

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Mr. Vasquez. How long are the benefits we're talking about extending the veterans? How long would they be eligible for the benefits here

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

In perpetuity,

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

I yield back Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

General from Illinois yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Mr. Van Orden is recognized for five minutes. Thank you,

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Mr. Chairman, I am the longest serving enlisted member of the United States military to ever get elected to Congress in the history of our country. I'm also the senior navy seal here, meaning time, team time. I believe I have more combat time than any member of Congress in the history of our country.

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

And I do have to say, you know, we are different people as veterans, and you know, we're not children. We're not and we are. We are more than capable of doing things that oftentimes, other people with the greatest intention, you know, believe that we need to be done for us, and that's just not the case. And I serve as a subcommittee Chair for economic opportunity, responsible for the GI Bill, the Home Loan Guarantee prevention of veteran suicide, of which I'm failing objectively at that right now, trying to get that done with the VA.

And I'm going to support this amendment. The reason being is, you know, oftentimes we are expected to carry some water that other people aren't. And so with everything I just said, you know, it seems like I'm contradicting myself, but I'm not, and this is why there is, there's text in here and H.R. 1 we're honestly this amendment is redundant because it doesn't apply. But I think it's very important that we send a signal to the less than 1% of Americans that serve in the military.

So even though, let me be explicitly clear, the provisions in H.R. 1 do not prevent veterans from doing this. So I view this as duplicative. But for me,

it's it's critically important, Mr. Vasquez, that our veterans do understand that we will go the extra mile for them, and that is why I'll be supporting this amendment. I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Costa is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I've been listening carefully to the comments of our colleagues on this amendment, and I too support it. We all draw from our own personal experiences, our families and our constituents who we represent, as I said last night, I have the highest SNAP recipients in the state of California out of 52 districts. And when we talk about those who have served our nation, in my case, three generations of my family, my grandmother was. A gold star mother, as was my aunt, making the ultimate sacrifice.

We understand what it does to families, and we're talking about families here of veterans who in my district, for the most part, are those who come back and who we salute and we try to respond to who, in many of the cases that we deal with and our constituent services have come back with disabilities. We work on their on their efforts, with the Veterans Administration on sometimes, as they age, their disabilities grow in challenges that they have to face. And so I think there's tremendous merit, I think not just in my congressional district, but in all of our districts, when we talk about our veterans who have to deal with challenges that because of their service to our country that otherwise were not a part of their makeup prior to their service that needs to be taken into account, and I think this amendment attempts to deal with that. So I think, you know, we all have different circumstances, but for the veterans in my district, I think this amendment will help help our constituent efforts to try to respond to their needs, so that they and their family and can be able to at least enjoy a quality meal every night knowing that that in fact, they are sometimes transition to a place of food insecurity, and I think this amendment helps address that issue.

And I, for all those reasons, support the amendment and its efforts. I yield back to balance my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Chairman yields back any other members seek recognition to speak when Mr. Riley is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thanks Gabe for leading this and thanks Derek for supporting it. I just for the life of me, I don't know why this is so complicated. We're here debating whether a previous law and then a subsequent law made it so that certain veterans meet certain criteria, or certain veterans require satisfy certain requirements. I mean, they're veterans.

They're veterans like that. That's good enough for me. It's that simple. In my mind, if you're a veteran, you've served our country, you're some of the most patriotic people and self sacrificing people around if you're a veteran and you're hungry, the very least this place can do is give you six bucks a day for a meal.

So I am proud to support this amendment and the underlying bill, and encourage my colleagues to do so too,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And I yield back any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Any other members seek recognition? If not, I'll share my perspective, and then we will call for a vote. You know, after the passage of H. R. 1 last summer, the states will once again be required to engage SNAP recipients who are veterans in work volunteer opportunities or job training for 20 hours a week after the first three months of to continue extend beyond the first three months of receiving SNAP.

That was the status quo for 26 years before the Democrats demanded that we deny veterans a chance at the opportunity and upward mobility that comes from work and career and technical education and the Fiscal Responsibility Act negotiations, as you've heard previously, veterans were over the age of 64 mentally or physically disabled, taking care of a dependent under the age of 14, taking care of a disabled child or aging parent in their

home, participating in drug or alcohol treatment programs in school at least half time or participating in a job training program at least half time are exempt from the work requirement, exempting every veteran outright from this chance at climbing the ladder of opportunity is misguided. I think it's awful to deny these veterans an opportunity to be able to have when they return to the community and take, you know, the first three months, it takes a little while. Like I said, my my son his last day in uniform after 22 years was, was just about four nights ago and and so there's a three months transition period, but to deny veterans an opportunity to have our country in. Vest in their future through SNAP Employment and career and technical education.

I think that's disgusting, quite frankly. Of course, I'm a huge fan of career and technical education. I think it's education is the pathway to opportunity and so. So I strongly oppose this amendment, and urge all members do the same.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Chairman, sorry, I'm I'm late. Can I can I make a comment? Or is that time over now?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, it's technically over, and I can't see who's speaking. Who? Oh, there you go. Mr. Vindman, here you go.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Go ahead. Mr. Recognize you. Thank you. Just briefly here, I mean as a veteran myself, as a Representative of 72,000 veterans in my district and nearly 20,000 active duty service members, and having been minted a veteran as a result of a couple of decades of conflict in the Middle East and now on the precipice of minting, God knows how many more veterans In a new conflict, a war of choice in the Middle East.

I think what we're actually losing is the opportunity to provide veterans a hand up when they're in need. This is not obviously every veteran that's seeking SNAP. It's veterans that are in a particular situation, that have found

themselves in a situation where they need six bucks a day of support, and I think that's just not too much to ask, is that we provide veterans that are put their butts on the line and are ready to make the ultimate sacrifice for this country, six bucks a day, and that's what It comes down to, for me. So thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Aye, the hearing, no further conversation. Question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,. All those opposed by saying no, and the pen and the Chair, the noes, have it?

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yes, sir, a recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee rule 312, further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. And I've got a running list of folks who have reached out, starting with Ms. Tokuda, from Hawaii, has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I seek recognition to call up amendment number 128, supposed to

The Clerk

Be can The Clerk will report the title of the amendment. Amendment number 128 offered by Ms. Tokuda of Hawaii. Very good having

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair, without objection

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment, which should be considered as read and I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady sponsor amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, last year, the administration eliminated $660 million in local food for schools funding. That's 42 benefits throughout the country that benefited from these funds. Secretary Rollins said it wasn't in alignment with department priorities, feeding children fresh food grown by American farmers, helping schools buy directly from local producers, making sure kids have healthy meals on their trays, providing a $660 million guaranteed market for American farmers. If this isn't a priority of the USDA, we should be asking ourselves, why not?

On the USDA website, it specifically states, we have a vision to promote agriculture production that better nourishes Americans. Call me crazy, but this sure sounds like it's in alignment. What this really was about, though, was taking locally grown food out of the mouths of children to feed more tax breaks for billionaires who have already gotten fat off of our tax dollars. That is the truth behind these cuts, because these weren't abstract dollars on a spreadsheet.

There were real contracts, real crops, real expectations. Farmers planted fields, believing there would be markets, small producers invested in certifications and infrastructure. Schools built procurement plans around serving fresher, healthier meals. For millions of kids, school lunch isn't optional.

For many, it may be the only meal that they get that day. The local food for Schools program made sure school meals were healthier, while driving dollars back into rural economies, strengthening small farms and keeping food supply chains rooted in their communities. Programs like local food for schools are rare in government because they work on every level. Local farmers and ranchers need stable markets.

Hungry children need nutritious foods. Putting those two needs together strengthens rural economies, shorten supply chains, improves public health and encourages and introduces young Americans to the value of locally grown food, creating the next generation of consumers who will sustain American agriculture that is not waste. Not misalignment. That's smart policy.

And for anyone questioning whether this amendment is germane to the Farm Bill or this committee's jurisdiction, the answer is quite simple. This program is funded through the commodity credit corporation, an entity directly under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture, the very department overseen by this committee. Secretary Rollins was the one who made the determine termination to cut this funding. Schools and child care centers are merely the distribution point.

This is, in fact, an agriculture program food from our farmers, which means the responsibility to restore these cuts belongs to us. We cannot claim to stand for farmers while eliminating their markets. We cannot claim to care about nutrition while cutting programs that put fresh food in front of children. And we cannot claim to make America healthy again while dismantling one of the most effective farm to table programs this country has ever implemented.

My amendment is straightforward. It restores the funding that was terminated by the USDA. It honors commitments made to farmers. It gives schools and child care centers certainty, and most importantly, it ensures that our kids eat.

We can disagree passionately, as we have all day today on many amendments before this committee. That's part of the process, but this should not be one of those fights, because at its core, this is about something bigger than politics. It's about whether we can come together around a simple idea, American farmers should be the ones feeding American kids. Canceling these cuts means farmers sell what they produce.

Canceling these cuts means communities grow stronger. And canceling these cuts mean our children are able to eat. I strongly urge my colleagues on both sides of this aisle to support this amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chair and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentlelady shields back other members that seek recognition to speak on to Mr. Costa is recognized. Thank you very much.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

I want to speak to support in this amendment, as I noted earlier, several different times about the level of SNAP recipients in my congressional district. This afternoon, I'll meet with Natalie Caples, who's the CEO of the Central California Food Bank, the food bank in in our area provides is trying to make up the difference for the gaps that have now only grown greater for those folks that are sued and food insecure. And this program that was ceased last year is the author of the of the amendment noted, has really made a difference in our area in terms of negatively impacting the schools and negatively impacting the farmers that participated in the program and and the fact that these farmers were able to do what they do so well, which is grow some of the most nutritious food and To make it available for the school. Schools in the four county area has really created a vacuum, and this amendment obviously would restore that program.

It's good public policy for the farmers that participate in the program, because they economically benefit it's good for the schools. I have the third largest school district in California, Fresno Unified, every day, they provide 55,000 lunches in 85 school sites and 19,000 breakfasts. I mean, it's amazing, and so when this program was cut last year, it created a vacuum. It impacted the school districts in the four county area, it affected the food banks, and it affected the farmers and affected people who are food insecure.

For all of those reasons, I urge you to consider supporting this amendment, because it just makes good sense. It's good public policy when you can marry together the important needs of people who are food insecure and the farmers who are preferring to be able to provide that to local markets and also support the food banks and their efforts for all of those reasons, this is a very good amendment. We should restore this program. It was effective until it was ended, and I think we need to put it back in place.

I yield back to balance

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

My time. Generally yells back other members to seek recognition. Ms. Pingree,

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to my colleague for submitting this amendment about an extremely important, maybe not well known, program that did so many good things while it was operating. And I have to say, I just shake my head when I think about why the USDA would cut off this program had huge bipartisan support, and it did all of the things that we say as members of the AG committee and as supporters of American agriculture that we're here to do. It was the perfect coming together of giving farmers con. Tracks to sell food locally and making sure the kids got more healthy food in their school lunch programs, two things we talk about all the time now, in a state like mine, in the state of Maine, this was very beneficial to many farmers who were able to get contracts with local school districts for something that they were producing.

Perhaps they increased the amount of carrots they were growing that this year, that year, or somebody like the milk house dairy farm in Monmouth Maine, their Creamery, was supplying yogurt to many main schools. And while I didn't participate earlier in the yogurt debate, let's just make it clear, the best yogurt is produced in Maine by some of our farmers. And if you haven't tried it, please enter me in the yogurt yogurt contest, because you will admit without a doubt that this is the best but that give kit gave kids an opportunity to try these locally grown foods, foods that taste better. I know from talking to parents and teachers and others that often when a kid is eating some food, if a carrot shows up or Brussels sprouts on their lunch plate, but they know it came from a local farm.

They know the farmer, or maybe they've been able to visit, or the farmers come to visit, it makes them even that much more enthusiastic about eating those healthy foods. And that's the other side of this. School lunches are an important place for kids to try new foods and to get a healthy meal every day. For many kids, it's the only important meal that they get during the day, and it gives them that opportunity to make sure that they're getting the proper nutrition and eating the foods that are going to make them have a productive day at school.

It also is a way for school lunch programs to stretch their budgets. We all meet with so many of the people who work behind the scenes in our school lunch program food service, people who tell us all the time they're just barely scraping by to put enough food on the plate, and they often have to feed kids things that they know aren't as healthy as they would like, but it's just what

fits in the budget, more rice, more starchy food, less protein, less fruits and vegetables. And so the fact that this was also supplementing that program was so critically important, I want to just tell you that we have never had a farmers rally in the State Capitol in Maine before this past year, and the first time that I had witnessed farmers coming in on their tractors and showing up to show how mad they were last year about the agriculture policies of this administration was right around the time that their contracts got canceled. They were so angry that the USDA would turn the back their back on them midstream and cancel these contracts that they had, that they had counted on to produce enough income to get through the year and planned on to make sure that they could make ends meet.

And we all give pay lip service to farmers bankruptcies and trying to help farmers make ends meet. Well, this was a simple program that accomplished so many things, but made sure it was another source of income to our farmers. So why the USDA would cancel a program like this, and why this committee wouldn't make it a priority to reinstate it is truly beyond me, as I said, it did all of the right things. It promoted more local foods.

It put money in the pocket of our farmers. It gave kids healthier school lunches, helped out our schools and made sure we got more healthy, nutritious food on kids plates. Again, this is such an important part of the MaHA min agenda. We've heard RFK talking about making school lunches healthy again.

We've heard him talk about getting kids healthier food and fruits and vegetables, all of these things could be accomplished with this program. So I wholeheartedly support this amendment. I hope for all of the reasons I've stated, you will support it, and we will continue to do what we know is an important thing for our states and our communities. And I thank the sponsor again, and I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Julie yields back any members of Mr. Governor's recognized for five minutes. I want to

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Thank the gentlelady from Hawaii for the amendment. I think it's an important amendment. And like the gentlelady from Maine, Ms. Pingree, I don't understand why USDA canceled this. I mean, I thought this had broad bipartisan support.

I thought everybody thought this was a good idea, and then all of a sudden it's gone, and everybody is now rallying around defending it being cut. You know, the new dietary guidelines call for eating more whole foods, and our school meal programs are supposed to align with the dietary guidelines. I mean eating whole foods like fruits and vegetables and meals that are scratch cooked are more costly, quite frankly, than serving our kids frozen pizza. That's just a reality, I mean, but we owe it to our kids to serve them nutritious breakfasts and lunches in schools, they learn better when they have access to nutritious food.

That's why I have long champion. La. Legislation to increase the reimbursement rate for school breakfast and lunches. But what I can't understand is how the Trump Administration is, on one hand, telling schools to serve kids Whole Foods, and on the other hand cutting the very programs that actually help schools purchase those foods.

It just doesn't make any sense. So I strongly support Representative Tokuda's amendment to reinstate the local food for school program which helps schools, which helps school districts buy fruits and vegetables from local farmers, local farmers. It's good for our kids, it's great for our farmers, and it makes no sense as to why this administration wants to kill this successful program. I've visited schools all across Massachusetts that have used this funding to transform meals programs.

I taught a farm in Hadley, Massachusetts, which is the western part of the state, with the mayor of Boston, and to where they were purchasing vegetables from this farm to be used in meals in Boston Public Schools, and she was making the connection with the farmers about the good that they were doing in Boston. But she was also going back to Boston and telling the kids and teachers about where this food comes from, and about the importance of supporting our local farmers. These kids are now more aware of where their food comes from and how it's grown. The kids love the food and the farmers love the program because it gives them new markets for their products.

So if we want to transform school meals and help make them more nutritious, we have to restore the local food for Schools program, again, this is hugely successful. It used to be bipartisan until this latest until this latest administration took place. But it just doesn't make any sense, you know. And I want my Republican colleagues to defend some of these programs that you know are good.

Push back a little bit on this administration when they're overreaching, when they're doing things that, quite frankly, are not only harmful to our farmers, but harmful to the health and well being of our students. And so I support this amendment wholeheartedly. I hope we get a unanimous vote with that. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. fingers is recognized. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

I associate myself with the remarks of all of my colleagues on this point. This is an opportunity, I think again, for us to, you know, show the American people that in working on the Farm Bill, we actually remember where food comes from and who helps grow it and produce it for us. This is a wildly successful program, something that had tangible benefits and tangible outcomes, tangible productive and positive outcomes for hundreds of thousands of students across this country. State of Alabama lost $16 million in this project.

When this funding went away, we lost $16 million now that's not $16 million to the state of Alabama. That is $16 million to the farmers in the state of Alabama. That is $16 million to the people that are out there in the dirt, in the mud, planning, harvesting these, these fresh fruits and vegetables, and that's what this bill is supposed to be about, is supporting the people that are supporting this country, supporting the people we say that we all want to support, supporting the people that are producing the things that we say are critical to our national security. I think national security is even in the title of this year's iteration of the bill.

And I too, think that food is a issue of of national security, but these are the people that are out there doing it. And you know, they aren't veterans in the sense of the military, but they are veterans in the sense of providing this country with the fuel it needs to go, literally, for human consumption. And so I think we have an obligation to restore this program. I think it is consistent with a lot of bipartisan goals that we want regarding health and nutrition and well being of children.

And it's a program that has made sense. There's not been any evidence produced of any fraud or any waste or any abuse or any gross mismanagement of the funds associated with this program. It's a program that's been around for a very long time, a program that has been doing exactly what it was designed to do, in a program that, at the same time, while achieving those outcomes, is benefiting and supporting our local farmers, our local farmers, not a bunch of middle men involved in this process. This is literally directly from the farms to the school systems, and in some cases, directly from the farms to the individual schools.

This is common sense. We haven't been provided with a sufficient explanation as to why this program was cut in the first place, but it has tangible results. I've met with some of the farmers who had contracts under this program in the state of Alabama, and it's a big hit. It's a big hit.

$16 million in farm revenue. That's a big hit. And so it's my hope that we can take this opportunity to show the people that we know where food comes from, know who produces it. With that, I'll yield the balance of my time to Mr. Kudo.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. gentleman yields back. Dr. Adams recognized. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

I do support this amendment at a time when farmers are facing increased input costs and uncertainty due to tariffs, and when grocery costs have not come down. More families are relying on food banks and school mills. It's reckless and cruel to not reestablish this program. I've heard from farmers

food banks and schools in my district that were devastated to see this program canceled by the administration last year.

The program is simple, and it makes sense, this program created a market for farmers. It helped farmers connect with community and vice versa. It allowed children to have access to local healthy foods. This amendment reestablished local food for schools with $660 million a year in annual mandatory funding, which matches what the program received in 2025 before the administration canceled it.

I support the amendment. It's a good amendment, and I appreciate the member for bringing it forward. And I would ask that we get support, that we support this amendment, because it's very much needed. Our children can't wait.

Thank you. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back other members who seek recognition to speak on this amendment, the other members seek recognition. Ranking Member's recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I'd just like to reiterate my support.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you and generally you'll bet, okay, if there's no other members seeking recognition, I weigh in on this, and then we'll call for a vote. Just a little background, the local food for schools cooperative agreement program was a temporary USDA program funded by the commodity credit corporation in the Biden Administration. It was not authorized by Congress. I'll be on with, honest with you, and give some inside baseball.

You know, I thought it was a really good proposal, but, but unfortunately, Secretary Vilsack saw no use of the legislative branch. You know, I thought this is how we do it. We're supposed to legislate it and not and not go ahead without that. USDA awarded funds to states in that circumstances for food

assistance, purchases of domestic local foods, for distribution of schools and child care institutions.

I really liked it, not as Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, but quite frankly, as a senior member on education work force, you know, connecting our kids with where their food comes from. But that's I was shocked when the parliamentarians actually approved this amendment in our jurisdiction, and they did, but clearly we don't, you know, we don't provide for the food. It may be administered by USDA, but that's education work force, and I'm not pushing that issue of jurisdiction. The parliamentarian said it was okay to do this.

Amendment would reinstate the local food for Schools program with $660.1 million in annual funding from the CCC was, I'm not sure it can handle. Well, I know it can handle, beginning in the year 2027 the this bill we have, we were able to work with you, another author. It authorizes the state led local food purchasing program, similar to the local food purchase assistance cooperative agreement, which was a sister program to LFS that provides food for distribution to food banks and food pantries. That's a PART part of this bill.

And so, you know, I thank the gentlelady for offering this amendment. I want to work with with her going forward as Chair and also senior member in education, workforce. You know, I'm proud that the farm food and National Security Act, 2026 authorizes new state led local food purchasing program, similar to the local food purchase assistance cooperative agreement Program, or lfpa, which USDA operated with temporary funds until last year, this program will provide whole, nutritious foods for food banks and food pantries. But because of the budgetary constraints at this moment, I have to recommend a no vote on this amendment.

But I would really like to work with Ms. Tokuda on on ways to support local purchasing programs into our school system. I think it's not just great nutritional. Food, but having these kids connect with where their food comes from. But we do, you know, we may need to be creative and find some ways to to be able to get that funded.

I'm not sure the CCC is going to be able to handle it. Maybe in the future, we could, anyways, look forward to working with you on that. Sadly, we have to

recommend a no vote at this at this moment, so hearing no further conversation questions on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye.

Those opposed by saying no. Independent Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee roll, 312, further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed, and I believe there. Let's see. Mrs. Cammack has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Kat Cammack (R-Fla.)

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, and this amendment is

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 126 offered by Ms. Cammack of Florida,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection. The amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished, gentlelady from Florida, to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Kat Cammack (R-Fla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment is simple. If SNAP benefits are used to produce meat, if SNAP benefits are used to purchase meat, seafood,

dairy, eggs, fruits and vegetables, then these products should be grown, raised, harvested, or produced here in the United States, with the reasonable exception being that if something isn't available or it would create a financial burden, this requirement could be waived. I believe if American taxpayers are funding the program, then it should be American veggies, fruits, meat and dairy products that should be used. This amendment is about strengthening our domestic agricultural production.

It is about strengthening our supply chains. And yes, it is about national security, because, as we all know, a nation that cannot feed itself is not secure. Snap represents tens of billions of dollars in annual food purchasing power. That purchasing power should support the farmers and ranchers who operate under some of the highest labor safety and environmental standards in the world.

It shouldn't undercut them with imports produced under much weaker standards. But that is exactly what is happening. Decades of poor record keeping can only give us ball park estimates of imports, which is why I am grateful for the report language included in this package, which will require that data finally be acquired, updated and maintained. In Florida, our farmers and ranchers have weathered hurricanes, inflation, freezes and unstable markets, and they're not asking for special treatment.

They're asking for fairness when federal nutrition dollars are spent, those dollars should strengthen the American producer and our supply chain. I want to be clear, this amendment does not restrict access. It includes flexibility if products are not available or if there would be an undue burden. I have to emphasize that, because there have been questions on this, it provides time for our retailers to adapt.

This is practical balanced, and it aligns with nutritional policy and our domestic production capability. We talk a lot in this committee about food security. Food Security starts with producing that food right here at home. And again, if the American taxpayer is paying for it than it should be an American product that they are purchasing.

I look forward to continuing the conversation and about implementation and jurisdiction, but my goal here today is to highlight this critical adjustment, very much needed in our system today, and to continue working towards a

solution that supports American agriculture. With that, I am willing to withdraw the amendment, and I look forward to working with the Chairman and this committee to advance this. Advance this I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Our federal nutrition programs clean SNAP should support the purchase of food products grown, produced and manufactured in United States. To extend practical look forward to continuing to work with the gentlelady in assessing the feasibility and the impact of this change. Any other members have? Well, I know there are.

We have a have a queue here. People have indicated Mr. Figures from Alabama is in the queue. Thank you.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 88 The Clerk will

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Report the title of the amendment,

The Clerk

Amendment number 88 offered by Mr. Figures of Alabama,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Alabama, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker I think this is an amendment I will. Will be honest with I would like to think that we can get unanimous support for because it offers every member on this committee an opportunity to put a stamp on something that we all have said and or affirmed, regardless of how bitter the

H.R. 1 process got, regardless of how divisive or how divided our ideologies have seemed over the SNAP programs. One thing I will give credit to everyone in here for doing is I never heard a single member of this committee say it was their intent or their goal to eliminate the SNAP program. Not a Republican, not a Democrat, has said that that is their goal.

This amendment gives us an opportunity to stand by that goal, we created a significant problem in H.R. 1 with SNAP. What we did was, we'll call it an unintended consequence, but what we did was, for the first time in that program's history, created the potential for a state to eliminate the program altogether if they cannot meet the cost sharing. We are well aware of the cost sharing requirements that have been implemented. But what was not addressed in H.R. 1, and what has not been addressed by USDA is what happens if a state cannot or does not meet the cost sharing for whatever reason, whether intentional, whether unintentional, whether fiscally related or whether politically related, what happens if a state does not meet the cost sharing?

We had a hearing here with several witnesses from around this country, where I asked their understanding of what happens. And this is a bipartisan panel. These are witnesses I had no hand in picking, and I presume the majority picked the majority of the witnesses. I asked each one of those SNAP program administrators, what is your understanding?

Or is it your understanding that if a state does not meet the cost sharing. Will SNAP program exist in your state? And their answer was, it was their understanding that it would not exist. If a state could not meet the cost sharing, then there would be no federal share to come with it.

And in sitting on this committee, when we went through this process, that was nobody's stated intent, that was no one's stated goal, to put states in a position where they had the authority to, for all intents and purposes, eliminate the SNAP program altogether. And so what this amendment does is provide a safeguard. It provides a guarantee that if a state cannot meet the cost sharing for whatever reason, if they do not meet the cost sharing, then the federal share will still be paid. It does not mean that the federal government will take on the state's share that they were supposed to share.

It only states that the federal government share will still come to those states, so that the states will at least still be able to provide benefits to the SNAP recipients that otherwise would have been there, albeit it will be without the state share show so it will still be a lower amount than the state should have had altogether. This is pretty straightforward. I think this is, this is something that no one here wants to have, and I will give that benefit to everybody here that you do not want to see states eliminate the SNAP program, but that is the dynamic that we created. That is the potential that we created with a lack of clarity within H.R. 1 and a lack of subsequent clarity to come out of USDA.

And so I urge all of my colleagues to stand with me on this issue and provide that clarity, provide that certainty, because if we do not, then we run the risk of states refusing to participate in SNAP programs, and all of the passionate dialogue and talk that I've heard in this committee today about wanting to preserve and maintain SNAP and get the benefits to the people that need it the most, we cannot stand by those words If we do not support this amendment because this amendment ensures that at least the federal share, at least the federal share, will come to those states again. I will say this again for clarity. This is not this is not an amendment that says, hey, if a state doesn't meet the cost share that the federal government picks up their cost share. That is not what this amendment is seeking to do.

This is seeking to ensure that there are SNAP benefits available in every single state, in every single state, and I would like to believe that everyone shares that same ambition, that same goal. We understand where we are with what has passed with H.R. 1, and I understand a realist, I know we aren't rolling back any in all likelihood, of the cuts associated with it. But at a bare minimum, at a bare minimum, we can ensure that the SNAP programs are not eliminated in states across this country if they, for whatever reason, do not meet the cost share. This does not cost the federal government a single extra penny than what it would already be on the hook for if the state did meet the cost share.

So Mr. Chairman, I yield back and ask for unanimous support of this amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman. He yields back other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. I. Any other the Ranking Member's recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, I simply want to say that bipartisan governors and state and local officials have spoken out very strongly about their concerns with H.R. 1's SNAP cost shifts, and they've asked members of Congress to delay these unfunded mandates, citing fears that it will undermine the program's viability in many of their states. Some have suggested their states may opt out of SNAP entirely due to this unfunded mandate. This amendment would ensure that states that can't meet their match aren't forced to stop participating in SNAP altogether, and that hard working families struggling to afford groceries.

Aren't the only ones forced to pay the price by losing their food assistance. I urge my colleagues to please support the amendment by our colleague and join me in supporting this amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I recognize Dr. Adams.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to support the amendment as well, and thank the gentleman for bringing it forward. It's about protecting families access to food while ensuring that states can continue to participate in SNAP. Now, under Republicans, big ugly bill, some states will struggle to meet new benefit cost shift.

I know North Carolina is already grappling with this. This is a hard decision of possibly not being able to carry SNAP. This approach recognizes the fiscal realities that states face, while keeping the focus where it belongs, making sure children, seniors, working families do not see their food assistance taken away. Snap supports not only households, but also local grocers and rural economies, ensuring continued participation in the program protects both families and communities.

I support the amendment, and I would certainly urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you for bringing it forward.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. Julie yields back. Ms. McGovern is recognized.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

No, I would just say Mr. Figures, I strongly support the amendment. You know, I have a radical idea that, that when we deal with Farm Bills and we get to the nutrition title, we ought to be talking about how you end hunger in this country once and for all. And instead, we're here, you know, offering amendments to kind of block attempts to basically take food away from hungry people. And it really kind of misses the point, in my opinion.

Look, I mean, the notion that we may have some governors, we may have some states that may not be able to meet the match, and then they can't provide food for the people in their in their states, is unconscionable, and there may be even some governors out there that may intentionally want to opt out of this program because they don't believe that this is an appropriate role for government. But I just, I mean, what is frustrating to me is that we live in a country that where we have a hunger problem. You know, tens of millions of Americans are food insecure. Are hungry.

That is a national tragedy. It is costly, and at a time when you know, the federal government is now cutting all kinds of benefits to the state. In the Big Beautiful Bill, we cut Medicaid by a trillion dollars. We're cutting programs left and right that are essential to states to maintain a clean environment, to, you know, to be able to feed hungry people in their state.

We're cutting all this stuff, and we know states are going to struggle to try to make up the difference. We ought to be committed to making sure that nobody, nobody loses these very, very, quite frankly small benefits. These aren't even adequate. $2 per person per meal is not an adequate benefit.

We ought to be talking about how we expand the program, how you know, and how we get more people access to good nutrition this country. But I strongly support the amendment, and I yield back my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Anyone yields back any other members see correct Nish Riley for five minutes.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want to yield to Shomari.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Figures is recognized.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Riley, the you know, this is about us doing what we said we all wanted to do, or certainly not doing what we what no one said they wanted to do, in terms of eliminating the SNAP program. There was a H.R. 1 was a big it was a big bill. I'll give you, I'll give you that B. It was those two b's.

It was a big bill. A lot of changes and relatively a rushed and condensed time frame. And when you rush big bills through short time frames, there's a lot of what ifs. There are a lot of things that are not addressed.

There's a lot of lack of clarity. There are a lot of questions that are presented. What we did not get was clarity regarding the long term viability and sustainability and existence of the SNAP program in the event that a state cannot meet the cost sharing. What happens to the benefits?

What happens to you know, in a situation where a state can only meet part of the cost sharing, right? Is this, the federal government send zero money? Do they send a allocated percentage of the money? We don't know.

It's not answered in that bill. We've not gotten that clarity from USDA, but what we do know is that under the current state of the law. There's nothing that prohibits USDA from saying we ain't sending anything. We're not doing anything that is a risk that is not worth taking, not in my district, not in Mr. Moore's district, not in Mr. Fence was district, not in Mr. Bacon's district, not in your district, Mr. Chairman, not in anybody's district.

On this side of the aye Lee, that is not a risk that we signed up to take. I don't think, look, I didn't vote for H.R. 1, but I don't think that's the risk any of you guys signed up to take. I do not think that that is the optimist in me, right? But we have a chance to put that doubt to rest in a way that will have real consequences for people, because we have now complicated this process so much that, you know, it's complicated enough to get, you know, through a committee here, authorizing language and appropriating language for a SNAP program.

Now we have shifted this to the States as well. Now it has to go through a state committee in some states, multiple states, then through a full, you know, a full legislative process on a house side, a Senate side, then get a governor to sign it. At any point in that that chain of events, there could be a hiccup, and it could lead for regardless of people's intentions, it could realistically lead to a state not passing a budget that is inclusive of the money that's required of them for the cost share. Should the citizens in that state be left with nothing in terms of SNAP benefits.

I think if we went around this room and polled everybody individually, everybody would say the same thing, no, they should not sign up for that risk. That is not what we intended. And so now we have an opportunity to fix this. We can provide that clarity, we can provide that certainty, we can ensure that SNAP is not eliminated.

One in four families in my district, one in four households in my district rely on SNAP. That's 25% that's 25% of households assuming those statistics stay the same after the new changes. But either way, even one person being in doubt is too many, right? We're talking about all of the the vulnerable populations.

When we've gone through around this committee, and people have talked about all of the exceptions and what's included in the bill and what's not included, and when we've seen the differences of opinion in terms of who's eligible, who's not eligible, well, regardless of what your standard of eligibility is, it's everybody that we're talking about that's at risk now. These are the children. These are the pregnant women, these are the veterans. These are the people who are laid off at 64 years old.

These are all of those people. If we do not clarify this, we run the risk of states literally saying we can't do SNAP. And I don't think that's what any of us intended. So I think this is very straightforward, very common sensical, and some clarity that we can provide that doesn't require us to alter H.R. 1.

Doesn't require us to spend a single extra penny than what's envisioned by H. R. 1. All this does is provide the certainty to say if a state cannot or does not, for whatever reason, meet the cost sharing, that the federal share will still come and that federal share does not have to compensate for the state share. It's just what the federal share would have been under the current calculations, given the current error rates. And you know, at that time, I think this is just as basic as it gets, and I think this is something we have the authority to do, and something that we have all stated that we have the courage to do, in terms of preserving SNAP for the people who need it.

With that, I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Ms. figures amendment. Any other members see. If not, I will add the final word here. I want to thank the gentleman for raising the issue today.

This amendment would It would allow the Secretary to waive the SNAP benefit cost share for a state who's unable or unwilling to pay for any reason. I want to remind everyone that states who have SNAP payment error rates under 6% do not have to pay a penny towards SNAP benefits. I think transparency and accountability is responsibility of every level of government, and that includes the folks in the state and in some states, unfortunately, they kind of like California, I know is one of them. It's on a county level that they administer.

The state kind of passes the buck on to the county to administer that. But so there's an opportunity here. We are incentivizing better behavior. We're incentivizing better management.

We're incentivizing taking care of the beneficiaries, but not under paying or overpaying those benefits. I think that's a good thing. You know, we did do it so on, get it under 6% because, you know, 6% was fair. There's some errors.

Are counting. They're just clerical. Somebody didn't fill out the form correctly, something like that. So that was the minimum.

And then on the on the and I don't think we the cost share in terms of administrative costs. I mean, our states have a great opportunity to be more efficient. Honestly, I have watched the the administrative costs by these states just balloon. When it was 5050, I mean, they didn't, it's like they didn't care.

You know, it's I if you have a state where your state elected officials are are not getting a job done, they're not serving these most vulnerable people in the most efficient way. Well, that's what elections are for. You know, we somebody else more competent needs to probably be in place, you know, that will do the root cause analysis. Look at what the actions are to take, you know, to avoid, to get the error rate under 6% and, quite frankly, to be very efficient, to bring their administrative costs down.

They have that control. Every state on that list of all 50 states has achieved that less than 6% in the past at one time or another, federal policy should not excuse more waste and mismanagement in the SNAP program. So based on that, I strong, I urge a strong no vote on this amendment. Uh, conversation questions on the amendment.

All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, and depending the Chair the noes have it, the amendment is not agreed to speak. I request a recorded vote. A recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee rule 313, I two further proceedings on this amendment shall be postponed. And I think that are there any additional trying to go back and forth, best I can, any additional Republican amendments pending?

If not, we're going to go to Mr. Riley from New York.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, number 43

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Good Ms. Riley has a amendment number 43 amendment number 43 at at the desk, the Clerk will report the title the amendment. Amendment number 43 offered by Mr. Riley of New York, without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from New York to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Great. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, I really appreciate the debate we've been having throughout much in the morning about SNAP and look, we can disagree with each other. We have some real differences.

But we also need to be able to use this process to try to find some common ground where we can and I'll tell you, most of the folks, a lot of the folks, at least, who sent me here, they don't really care all that much about political parties. Don't really like political parties. They just really want us to come together and get some stuff done. And so I listened to the debate about SNAP benefits and all everything, and I found two things that I heard in that debate that I think are common ground.

One of them just this, is taking everybody at their word and giving everybody the benefit of the doubt. One of the things I heard is nobody wants kids to go hungry, and the other thing is nobody wants to tolerate waste and fraud and abuse and theft and all that kind of stuff. If we all, I think, based on the conversation, is, you know, the heated debate, but I think we all share those principles, and so I want to see if we can do something together about it. So this amendment number 43 that I've got, this is a bipartisan amendment that I'm leading here in the house with Mike Lawler and Dan Goldman.

Over in the Senate, it's John Fetterman, Ron Wyden and Bill Cassidy. So this is a real, truly bipartisan bill. About one in five of the households that I represent, maybe one in six of the households I represent get SNAP benefits, and we talked about this earlier. They're working families trying to make ends meet feed their kids, seniors on fixed incomes who can't afford the utility bills and the groceries.

I was talking to DEREK VAN Orden about this earlier. It's, you know, a lot of families like Derek's from growing up in rural poverty. And the problem is,

you've got these criminals who are preying on these folks by stealing their SNAP benefits. I mean, these are these folks with SNAP benefits are some of the most vulnerable folks in our community, and the criminals are literally stealing their lunch money from them.

So this amendment here, it's to fight that crime and also protect the crime victims. It's also about fiscal responsibility, because this vulnerability of SNAP theft has already cost the taxpayers tens of millions of dollars, and just a month or two ago, the USDA inspector general published a study showing that it's going to cost over half a billion dollars more if we don't get our act together and fix it. That's money we should be spending, obviously, I think, to feed these families and not enrich a bunch of criminals. And so what this bipartisan amendment does super simple.

It's going to equip SNAP cards with secure chips. So if you have a credit card, it probably has got a chip on it at this point. And what that's going to do is it's going to make it so the criminals can't access the card. Cards.

Because right now, what they're doing, it's they're doing, it's called skimming and cloning, where they're basically copying the magnetic strips and the numbers, and that lets people steal the benefits, and so put the chips on the cards. It's going to keep the benefits safe and get make sure they're going where they're supposed to go. So I'd encourage everyone to support this bipartisan amendment. Let's crack down on the criminals, protect taxpayer dollars and feed families who need a hand.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The old back any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Mr. Moss is recognized for five minutes,

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Maybe bacon. I'm just teasing on you. He's a little bit older than me. No, just I speak in favor of the amendment.

I'm the cyber subcommittee Chairman on the Armed Services Committee. We focus on external threats there. But we also have a cyber subcommittee

within Homeland Security. We know our agriculture is being targeted significantly from foreign actors, but also criminal actors out there, and I think we need to put more emphasis on defense.

And so I've been just being short, I support the amendment I yield.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I think Mr. Bacon got it right that time. Other members seek recognition. Mr. Van Orden,

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

I'd like to also speak in support of this amendment. You know, we talk about waste, fraud and abuse, and how it's ramp in the system. This is just a very a practical way to bring 21st technology, 21st century technologies, into the realm to prevent, in this case, fraud from taking place, so that we can get the money that we allocate for hungry kids to hungry kids where it belongs and not in some fraudster's pocket. So I I speak in strong support of this amendment, and I encourage my colleagues to do so also.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back Ranking Members

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Recognize Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want to speak in strong support of this amendment from my colleague, but I do want to point out here that USDA has been required to issue a rule on EBT security since the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023 in December 2022 in October of last year, the administration told GAO they plan to publish the rule in January of 26 and as of yesterday, the unified regulatory agenda website still indicates the same past due January 2026, timeline. So I want to congratulate my colleague, Mr. Riley, for his diligence here in encouraging everyone to vote for this, even though this should have already happened. But thank you for continuing your push, Mr. Riley and I, I. Support this bill, and we encourage all of my colleagues to support as well.

Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members seek recognition to speak on the amendment?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

If not, I will let me get a final word on this. You know, this amendment require USDA to issue regulations related to EBT chip cars and theft. The amendment would also require which, by the way, the states have always been empowered, or at least for for many years, the states have always been empowered and have had the options to utilize a chip device within their within the EBT card. And we know it works.

The fraud and abuse at the gas pump was rampant before, before they added those chip cards, the chips within those credit cards. And so we know it's a very effective method, but it was the states add that this, this amendment would require USDA to cover the costs, all the costs associated with transitioning to EBT chip cars so it has a scoring problem financially. I want to thank the gentleman for raising this issue. It's an important issue.

We're all concerned on both sides of the aisle about increased rates of card cloning and theft and skimming and SNAP we know SNAP EBT cards are more vulnerable to criminals due to the lack of chip technology and due to budgetary constraints, as I mentioned before, the scoring, because this amendment puts it all on USDA to pay the way for the for The states, which is, we're unable to include it in the text of the gentleman's amendment in the in the bill. However, I'm proud that the farm food and nest Security Act 2026 does address skimming and other card theft schemes that by requiring USDA to publish that proposed rule on EBT card security measures no later than six months after enactment of the farm food and National Security Act. So look forward to continuing to partner with the gentleman in this effort. I think it's a but it did run into some scoring issues that I'm able to support at this time.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Can I just Mr. Chairman? Yeah, so just, I think whatever amount is going to be spent here to get these chips on these cards and make these cards more secure, I guarantee it's going to be less than the half billion dollars that the

criminals are stealing from these families. This is probably, I would venture to guess, one of the smartest investments we could make, because, as you noted, these families are already vulnerable. The USDA inspector general just showed that if we don't do this, it's going to cost us half a billion dollars.

I would also say the provision in the current base tax section, 4108 on EBT card security regulations. It's basically just telling USDA to do what they've had a legal obligation to do for years now. So we clearly have to put some more teeth into this, which is what my amendment does, the current base tax, at least as I'm reading it doesn't include the chip requirement, which everybody knows is the most state of the art security technology. Whereas this amendment is going to be real clear to USDA, we're not screwing around anymore.

You got to get this done. And so I'd really encourage everybody to vote for this. Let's get it into the bill that we're that we're working on now, and that I'd love to work with you on scoring and budgeting after that.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Love to work with you going forward, on on this. Do I agree from a practical perspective that there would be significant savings getting correctional budget office to recognize that is impossible? Unfortunately, they that it's just can be very, very frustrating dealing with the accountants, the folks in CBO that on how they score these things. They don't see that as a as a pay for so.

So I, unfortunately, at this point in time, I'm gonna have to vote no, but look forward to continuing to work with you and see what we can work out here. We got to go to the floor and in order to Senate side and figure out some some solution to that dilemma. So, all right, hearing no more conversation. The question is on the amendment.

All. For by Mr. Riley, all those in favor of the amendment signify by saying, aye, those opposed by saying no. Independent Chair, the noes have it, the amendment is not agreed to

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Mr. Chairman, I'd ask for a recorded vote. Recorded

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Vote has been requested, pursuing the committee Rule three, aye, two. Further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. I believe that we have a cue here, working with the Ranking Member of folks who have indicated so. Mr. Tan door is recognized with an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 117,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The, without objection, allow the Clerk will report the title of the amendment. Amendment number 117, offered by Mr. Thandar of Michigan, without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the gentleman, distinguished gentleman, that sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Thank you. Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Craig, Mr. Chairman, I want to be clear, the recent Republican proposal in the one big, ugly bill that completely eliminates SNAP Ed is not only harmful to the American people today, but it will also make it harder for the working class to achieve the American Dream for generations to come. The Department of Health and Human Services claims it wants to improve the health of Americans through the Make America Healthy Again initiative, this Farm Bill even includes changes to the purpose of SNAP, saying that SNAP should be designated to prevent diseases like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, if that is the case, Mr. Chairman, why are you and the Trump Administration so hell bent on eliminating programs that give participants the knowledge and tools to make the nutritional food choices that leads to a healthier life all across the country. Snap Ed has made an incredible impact on the health of the American people the two state states implementing agencies in Michigan are Michigan State University Extension and the Michigan fitness foundation.

Together, they serve more than 4000 sites across the great state of Michigan. In my district alone, there were a total of 263 sites that provided SNAP Ed programming in 2024 the last full year before the changes to the SNAP ed in your big, ugly bill, historically, SNAP Ed has contributed to reducing food insecurity among children, older adults and people with disabilities. The program has also proven to increase the consumption of nutritious food such as fruits and vegetables and boost physical activity in those enrolled in the program. Mr. Chairman, the fact is that SNAP Ed is a highly effective, evidence based program that helps individuals and families make more nutritious food choices, stretch limited food budgets, increase physical activity and make healthier choices easier in their communities, the fact that Republicans are willing to sacrifice the health and well being of Americans in order to spend money on tax cuts for their billionaire donors is frankly disheartening and disappointing with that, Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Chairman yields back. Ms. Pingree is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to my colleague for submitting this amendment about SNAP Ed. And I just want to add my voice to all the others who have been talking for these many hours about Title four. The Farm Bill and just the egregious cuts to SNAP benefits that occurred in the big, ugly bill.

It is hard to fathom, as we have said so many times, how in the wealthiest country in the world, we insist on debating whether or not people deserve to have enough food on their table and how much they should be allowed to purchase this committee should be fully dedicated to making sure that every opportunity we get we are looking for ways to support that and the idea that we allowed this to be cut $186 billion which it was in the big, ugly bill, and that funding went to tax cuts for the wealthiest people in this nation. We saw just recently that Amazon's tax bill because of those tax cuts went from 7.6 billion down to 2.8 in a year, they had a 45% increase in their profit profits.

Is egregious. This is such a valuable program, and it meets so many of the criteria of the valuable things that we want to do to make sure that people eat more healthy foods.

When you look at the USDA website, and they talk about some of the reform and innovation that they're trying to do at the SNAP program, they're looking at restricting certain foods and making sure there are stocking standards in the stores. And one of the things they've said is they're asking states for reform and innovation of enhanced nutritional programs. Well, nothing is better than SNAP ed. So many of us were able to see in our home states how well this program has been used.

In my state, it's it's been implemented in all 16 counties. Over 20,000 people participated. And one of the things that people routinely said Was it increased their confidence in buying food and cooking food. And if you're trying to feed each individual in your family for $2 per person per meal, you need a lot of assistance in figuring out how to cook the most inexpensive yet nutritious foods.

And so this program has been incredibly beneficial in helping people do that. It's also been shown that kids eat more when there's been SNAP Ed benefits in the family, when people have learned more about cooking healthy food. So I don't understand any rationale for cutting this program and not restoring it in this Farm Bill, we often talk about how this Farm Bill had to be put together in a budget neutral way, but again, this is our an expression of our priorities, and our priorities should be related to making sure that everyone gets enough healthy food and that people are able to afford it. So cutting SNAP benefits and then going even further to cut this educational program that has had so much benefit around the country doesn't make any sense to me.

In my state, it was a $5 million value, which isn't a lot when you compare it to the full SNAP benefit program, it's 536 million in the United States. That is nothing compared to the 180 6 billion that was cut out of the big ugly bill, and it is nothing compared to the fact that we're giving tax benefits to some of the wealthiest people in this country, that we're starting another war in Iran that's already spent more than a trillion dollars, that we have a $3.4

trillion deficit that was added, that was added To the national deficit because of the big, ugly bill. So there is no logic to me in why we would cut a program as beneficial as this. I encourage my colleagues to support this.

It's not a lot of money, but it's an important way that we enhance people's use of SNAP and make sure that they get healthy food on the table every day. I yield back the balance of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentlelady, and she yields back. Ms. bushinski is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want to speak in support of my colleagues amendment, Mr. Chairman, our job is to make sure that the programs we create actually work for the people that we serve, and that when we make changes, we understand who will be affected by those changes. When the Republicans pass the big, ugly bill, they purposefully cut the funding to the SNAP ed program. Snap Ed is incredibly important to districts like mine, because it provides the free community based nutrition education and obesity prevention services to families who qualify for SNAP helping them stretch their grocery dollars and make healthy choices close to home at the University of Illinois, SNAP Ed has played a critical role in providing solutions for families that are struggling financially. The Illinois Extension Program hosts Illinois nutrition education programs inep, provided by SNAP Ed, their program and community outreach helps families to make healthy and practical eating choices, while also promoting physical activities solutions to transform the Healthy Communities of Illinois.

The University of Illinois, connect. Program works with individuals who qualify for SNAP, and they teach them how to utilize their benefits in the most efficient and healthy way. The program has reached over 300 communities across Illinois and over 130,000 adults and young people through their classes. Children who participate prefer healthier foods and beverages, improve their cooking skills and are more physically active, all because of SNAP Ed.

We have the reach we will need. What we need is the resources. When COVID-19 hit, inept worked to pivot their methods and expand digital education and messaging to reach their families and continue providing classes. These programs are working beyond their means to make sure that children and families are getting the nutrition that they need and making better habits for their future.

We should not and cannot be the ones to stand in the way of this progress in Illinois, approximately 36% of the population has obesity. The rate of adult obesity is projected to increase to 52% in 2030 across the nation, adult obesity rates have reached 40.3% this is about prevention. We need to be providing our districts with the resources and education to promote health from the bottom up, starting with what is on their plate. I want to extend my gratitude to Congressman tan dehar Tander for filing the amendment to restore this program.

This program has proven results and by Rep, by Reimplementing this program, we are helping children and encouraging adults to make healthier choices for a healthier life at a time when grocery prices are hitting record highs and our healthcare system is strained, we should not be pulling back on programs that educate the American public on nutrition. It just makes no sense. And so because of these reasons, I urge this committee to support this amendment. Thank you, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Julie yields back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. If not, I'll take the final word and then we will call for the vote.

I thank the gentleman for bringing up this issue two separate USDA studies, both under President Obama. I believe, if my math is right, 2012 and 2013 feel free to correct me if I'm wrong. I'm married, I'm used to it being corrected. So found no evidence that the SNAP Ed influenced long term behaviors or affected nutrition or obesity in any meaningful way.

I was shocked by that. Quite frankly, I think education is is really important when it comes to nutrition. In 2019 a GAO report found that USDA nutrition education efforts lacked clear evidence of effectiveness. Specifically, the GAO

found that US quote, USDA, is unable to assess the effectiveness of the interventions used across the country to determine whether SNAP Ed is achieving the program goals.

End quote. Moreover, there is an entire office at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with a budget of over $1 billion that has the same focus as SNAP Ed and provides identical services. Ending the SNAP ed program and H.R. 1 eliminated what appears to be ineffective, duplicative spending and save taxpayers five and a half billion dollars. So I urge a so our country is not walking away from nutrition education.

I urge a no vote on this amendment, and with that hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendments signify by saying, aye, those opposed nay, nay in the opinion the Chair, the nays have it and the amendment Mr. Chair agree to

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Mr. Chair, may I request ayes A note

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The recorded vote has been requested pursuant to rule three, committee roll, 313, I two. Further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed, and votes have votes been called. Yes, okay, I've been informed that a vote series has been called. The committee shall stand in recess until the vote series is not until the vote series is complete, because we know that the votes can stay vote right away on that last vote, we want to reconvene 15 minutes from the time that last vote is called so we can keep going here.

Thank you, everybody. [RECESS]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The committee shall come to order. I note that there is a quorum present. Before recessing, the committee had postponed further consideration of the amendment offered. Consideration of those amendments is now before the committee, and I'm pleased to recognize Ms. Hayes for understand you have an amendment at the desk,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Okay. Amendment, amendment 26 amendment number 26 offered by Mrs. Hayes of Connecticut.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. The amendment will

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection. The amendment will be considered as read and I now recognize distinguished gentlelady from Connecticut sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment. Thank you.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

The Farm Bill we are considering does not address one of the largest issues states, counties and SNAP administrators are dealing with today, the looming administrative and cost sharing provisions of H.R. 1 these costs threaten state budgets, which could reduce benefits for millions of Americans or even halt the program altogether in many states, when families work hard throughout the month but still cannot afford food, SNAP fills the gaps and ensures millions of Families have nutritious food. Unfortunately, the state and county offices that administer, administer SNAP, continue to face staffing shortages. H.R. 1 only exacerbated this problem, reducing the Federal obligation to states by decreasing the 5050 cost sharing for administrative expenses to 7525 placing a greater burden on states at the same time, states are forced to spend millions of dollars on direct SNAP benefits for the first time, a robust SNAP administrator work force is crucial to ensure that hungry families receive benefits promptly and to address potential payment errors for Anyone who doesn't know, when you apply for SNAP, you have to give lots of different information, questions like, who lives with you? What bills do you have to pay?

Do you have any savings, any cash on hand, any bank accounts, investments vehicles? Do you have any assets that are liquid, that you can that you can liquidate to buy food. All of that is information that needs to be reported as that information changes, you generally work with your agency to update the administrative process. This requires robust trained staff, because it changes at any moment and can cause errors in your benefits.

My amendment would strike the administrative cost sharing provisions in H. R. 1 and insert the language of my bill the SNAP administrator retention Act, which would cover 100% of the administrative personnel costs associated with hiring and retaining the staff who carry out the SNAP program and make sure that that information is up to date and accurate. If this committee is serious about addressing waste, fraud and abuse and SNAP, we should provide more resources, not fewer, to preserving investments and instead in staffing training and systems essential to program integrity. I encourage the members of this committee to support my amendment, and I yield back. Thank the gentlelady.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

She yields back any members seeking recognition to speak on on this amendment. Dr. Adams,

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want to support this amendment. It's good amendment. We should ensure that 100% of SNAP administrative costs are federally funded. Here's why.

First, this protects state budgets and flexibility. Right now, states cover a portion of SNAP administrative administrative costs fully funding administration at the federal level free state resources for other. Critical programs and prevent states from having to divert funds away from local priorities. Second, it ensures consistent, efficient program administration.

States shouldn't have to choose between staff, technology or outreach because they're paying the bill. Full federal funding let states focus on

delivering benefits to families rather than juggling budgets. Third, it promotes program stability. The nutrition title of H.R. 1 introduces mandates and changes will disrupt SNAP operations.

Repealing it removes uncertainty while guaranteeing states can maintain stable and reliable service. Fourth, it directly supports beneficiaries when states are forced to cover administrative costs service cuts or delays can occur. Full federal funding protects families from gaps in access and ensures that they receive benefits when they need them most, during economic downturns, natural disasters or other crises. And finally, this is fiscally responsible federally funding administration makes cost predictable efficient and avoids unnecessary complexity.

Repealing the nutrition title prevents mandates that could increase costs without improving program outcomes. In short, repealing the nutrition title and and paying 100% of administrative costs is smart. It's smart for families, smart for states and smart for taxpayers, and it protects the program. It strengthens delivery, and it ensures SNAP works as intended for those who rely on it.

It's a great amendment. I appreciate my colleague for bringing this amendment forward, and I would certainly encourage everyone to support it, and I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Jim, thank you, gentlelady. Julie yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Mrs. Hayes amendment, the Ranking Member's recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I'd simply like to add my support for the subcommittee Ranking Members amendment. And thank you so much,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady. I generally Ranking Member yells back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on the amendment? Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment?

Not I'll take the liberty of my remarks from 2021 to 2023 in response to the COVID pandemic, the federal government reimbursed 100% of the state's SNAP administrative expenses. At the same time, costs ballooned and error rates skyrocketed. It's the old adage, if you're spending your own money, you're careful. If you're spending somebody else's you can be reckless.

State Administrative expenses have not returned to pre academic pre pandemic levels, and CBO projects federal spending on SNAP administration under those trends to increase by 40% by 2035 higher than the rate of inflation. H.R. 1 took an important step to control runaway costs and encourage incentivize states to serve SNAP participants in a more efficient manner. This amendment also has significant budgetary impacts and is not offset for these reasons, I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment with all hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment offered by Ms. Hayes, all those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to, Mr. Chair, I'd like a recorded vote. Recorded vote has been requested pursuant to rule committee roll three, aye, two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. I have an A queue here. Actually, Dr. Adams would be next with an amendment.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 139,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. The, without objection Amendment by Dr. Adams will be considered as read, I now recognize distinguished, gentlelady and the sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment would close a loophole from the 2018 Farm Bill, which descend the incentivize participation in learn as you

earn. Job training programs through the SNAP ENT program, SNAP ENT office states, the. Option of providing programs with subsidized wages to participants, but the income participants earn isn't excluded from SNAP eligibility, eligibility determination, so some SNAP participants can earn enough that they are no longer eligible for SNAP and can't complete their training program, exempting SNAP ENT program income from SNAP eligibility calculations. It's just common sense.

I'm incredibly disappointed that this provision was removed from the Farm Bill. You should never have to choose between building a better life for yourself and being hungry. This amendment also includes a GAO study on SNAP EMT and the impacts of H.R. 1 and work requirements. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

It is good common sense. It's certainly something that we need to do. And I would appreciate full support on on this amendment. And I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chairman, I thank young lady. She yields back any members seeking recognition to speak on Ms. Adams amendment number 139, members seeking to speak on 139 Ranking Member's recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, this amendment would make sure that SNAP participants enrolled in employment and training programs can maintain their eligibility for food assistance. And I thank my colleague, Ms. Adams for introducing it. We should never for SNAP participants enrolled in en t programming to choose between putting food on the table and gaining skills and experience that can help them secure a job. I'm disappointed that the majority chose to remove this bipartisan bill from their 26 text and that they did not choose to work to find the funding needed to pay for this and many other critical priorities we would have liked to seen in the bill.

I urge all members of the committee to join me in supporting this common sense amendment, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back Craig.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Member yields back any other members see recognition to speak on this amendment. Any other members seek recognition? If not, I'll take the last word here, as I mentioned my opening statement during the Farm Bill negotiations. Actually, Ranking Member never mentioned this as a priority for her or her members, she did, however, suggest we cut funding from SNAP Employment and Training programs, and it's clear that this amendment was being offered today for political purposes.

Really nothing more I have I've not abandoned this policy change, but adopting this amendment today would mean the Farm Bill would not be budget neutral, threatening its survival. Encourage members across the aisle to work with me to ensure this priority among others are responsibly funded moving forward. I regrettably recommend a no vote on this amendment at this time, and certainly more than willing to work with whoever may be interested in going forward, where we might be able to find some appropriate pay for so given that no additional conversation, no further conversation, questions on the amendment, all those in favor the amendment signify offered by Dr. Adams, signify by saying aye,, those opposed saying no, independent the Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to. All right, any members see, well, you know what?

We got a cue here. Ms. Davids is back now. So Ms. Davids is recognized. I understand you have an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I have, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 72

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. David says, amendment 72 The Clerk will report the title, the of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 72 offered by Ms. Davids of Kansas,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize this single, gentlelady, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'm offering this amendment to codify tribal self determination for the Food Distribution Program on Indian reservations, also known as the dipper. This is based on I might this is based on my bipartisan bill, which I've been proud to work on alongside Representative Lucas. I'm grateful for his partnership on this important issue, and I. Am at this time planning to withdraw my amendment.

This authority was established as a demonstration program in the 2018 Farm Bill. And 16 tribal nations have successfully used this program to support their regional food systems, including traditional foods, to feed their communities and support tribal producers. Making this program permanent will provide certainty for tribes and producers participating in the pilot program, while expanding access to tribes interested in administering the program themselves, notably the version of this bill the committee, notably the version of this bill. The committee marked up in 2024 would have codified this authority.

However, this bill falls short. Not only does this bill fail to provide fedip or self-governance to more tribes, but it ends the pilot program for currently participating tribes, disrupting successful systems for no reason. I urge my colleagues to support making self-governance authority for fidiper permanent. This is important for expanding self-governance and respecting tribal sovereignty.

Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you, gentlelady shields. Back. Any members seek recognition to be able to speak on this amendment the Ranking Members recognize.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I'd simply like to offer my support to Congresswoman Davids for this amendment here She's offered. Today, the 2018 Farm Bill created a demonstration project, of course, but unfortunately, we haven't been able to make the pilot project permanent, and it's received limited funding from appropriations. Only seven to eight tribes are typically able to participate every three years. I'm disappointed that this didn't end up in the base text of the bill, and I would urge all members of the committee to join me in supporting this common sense amendment today.

And

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back, Julie yields back any additional any additional members that wish to speak on the amendment, any additional members seek to speak on the amendment, if not all, weigh in with with my thoughts, and then we'll go to a vote. I want to I want to thank the gentlelady for offering this amendment. Quite frankly, USDA has repeatedly failed tribal organization when it comes to ensuring they receive reliable and timely food deliveries for their food distribution programs. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to identify and willing to continue to work on it.

Was not able to identify a viable bipartisan offset to pay for this provision in advance of this markup, Weber, I I look forward and make a commitment to continue work with the gentlelady on a viable path forward for this legislation, so And with so I cannot support the amendment at this point in time.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Chairman, and I look forward to continuing to try to find ways to get the program made permanent. And in light of that, I'm willing to withdraw the amendment for this particular markup. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentlelady. I thank for your leadership on this issue. It is incredibly important, so let's find that bipartisan pay for we can go forward and please recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. Riley, I understand has an amendment at the desk. Thank you.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. It's amendment number 45

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Riley from New York as amendment number 45 Clerk will report the title the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 45 offered by Mr. Riley of New York,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, they're just way too many seniors on fixed incomes across upstate New York who are really, really struggling right now. It was last summer. I was at the grahamsville little World's Fair in Sullivan County, and I remember I was talking to one of the seniors there, and she she came up to me. I actually don't know if she knew that I was her Representative in Congress, she came up to me and said, Are you the guy on TV fighting the utility companies?

And I said, Yeah. And then we introduced I introduced myself. We ended up talking, and she was telling me, like, she just can't make the math work with the prescription drug costs and the utility bills. Her nice egg bill is like double what it used to be.

She's trying to afford the groceries, and the math just literally doesn't work for her. So she's cutting back on food. She's splitting pills. She's using a flashlight at night to try to save whatever pennies and nickel she can on the nice egg bill.

And. So this amendment is it's this is really just a simple thing to try to make life a little bit easier for these low income, fixed income seniors. Under the law today, if you're a senior on SNAP, you've got to do your recertification interview every year in a lot of places. You've got to do that in person that's inconvenient no matter where you are.

It's really, really tough in rural America, if you have to go in person, it's, you know, one more car ride, another tank full of gas. It's another appointment to be juggled with all the other appointments you got. In a lot of cases, it's a day off of work for a family member who's got to go be there with grandma or grandpa and so, and that's, I mean, really, literally, that's what this is about. It's about grandma's and grandpa's who are who need food.

We're not talking here about the fraudsters or the crooks trying to cheat the system. And so what my amendment would do, very straightforward, is it would change that three year certification period. Sorry, it would change. Yeah, change the one year certification period to make it three years so you only have to go back every three years instead of every one.

This is just gonna make things a little bit easier for folks who really need a break and would love to have everybody's support on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. He holds back any members seek recognition. Ms. Bush is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I just want to speak out in support of my colleague, Congressman Riley's amendment in front of us is a chance to support the communities that we serve. We are here to remove barriers to access, not just their lives, just not to make their lives more difficult. This

amendment is an opportunity to show our constituents that we understand what they need. Prices are high, money is tight, as Congressman Riley talked about with his seniors, I could tell the same story about seniors in my own district struggling on fixed incomes to make ends meet the elderly, simplified application program esap would efficiently allow those who are over the age of 60 and or have a disability to access SNAP in a more efficient and just a simple way.

This is the program that our constituents not only want, but I really, truly believe they need in central and southern Illinois, there are approximately 84,000 households depending on SNAP benefits. And in several counties I represent, disability rates are above the national average. In my district, throughout Illinois, 22% of the overall population is 60 years of age or older. In Fiscal Year 2024 there were just under 200,000 older adults who received nutrition services from various programs.

I regularly meet with seniors that have worked their entire lives, have raised families and are just struggling to stretch every dollar today. These are our neighbors. These are also veterans. These are friends.

They have done their part, and now, quite frankly, I think it's our turn to do ours, our part for this population across the country, the issue is not a lack of persistence. They want their benefits, but there's paperwork and administrative barriers. It's just unnecessary. This amendment recognizes something that we all should understand.

Seniors and disabled Americans should not have to navigate confusing layers of administrative barriers for benefits that they already qualify for. With the largest cut to SNAP in history, many were left with no guidance, wondering where their next meal may come from. Access to food has become harder than ever, and it's time that we confront this issue. Seniors and disabled Americans feel this pressure first, and they will continue to unless we act now.

This Farm Bill does not meet the difficult moment that our families are facing for many reasons, this amendment, though, would be a step in the right direction to get us there, I want to extend my gratitude again to my friend, Congressman Riley, for filing an amendment to restore this provision. What he's done, what he's doing, is common sense. We would be

protecting our seniors and preventing states from being penalized from implementing the program, seniors and disabled Americans deserve the attention of our committee, and by codifying the esap, we can ensure that they no longer have to deal with the red tape. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I'll yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentlelady. She yields back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, any other members seek recognition speak on Ms. Riley's amendment, if not. Let me take the opportunity to weigh in here.

You know, I like to thank the gentleman for bringing up this issue. Currently, half the states in our nation are currently utilizing the SNAP elderly. Simplified application demonstration project with the option available to all states to be able to do that. This provision was scored by the Congressional Budget Office, unfortunately and and it scored it $96 million it was so due to budgetary constraints, it was not possible to make this demonstration project a permanent state option in the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 and so for these reasons, I recommend no on the amendment.

However, I look forward to continue to work with the gentleman from New York one on this effort moving forward.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Mr. Chairman Kai, that's just one question Sure is, Do you Do you know the so the CBO score of $96 million what is that saying? It that if we were to simplify these applications, $96 million worth of SNAP benefits, would seniors would be unable to get access to $96 million of SNAP benefits. Or is it more

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Complicated than that? You know it basically was the amendment you put forward of simplifying and taking it from a pilot, which it could be a pilot in all all states at this point, but making it permanent for whatever reason they came up with a price tag of of $96 million okay,

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

I'll have to take a look at that. I haven't been here very long, but all this CBO scoring stuff seems really dumb. I mean, I had an amendment earlier that you is that a partisan thing? Is that a partisan thing?

I just said I don't know. Like, I don't know, man, like, we had it. We had an amendment earlier. It was gonna save half a billion dollars that criminals are stealing from poor kids, and the CBO scored that, I guess this one is just going to make sure seniors can get their SNAP benefits, and that's going to score.

So maybe Mr. Chairman, you and I can have some conversations with CBO at some point. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Be glad to do it.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

That was clearly the most popular thing I said here.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Put together that Northeastern caucus and get this done.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Yeah. Anyways, so in that case, I'll withdraw the amendment. What's that? In that case, given the CBO score issue, I'll withdraw the amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Withdrawal the minute. Okay, amendment is withdrawn. Thank you, sir. Look forward to working with you any other amendment?

Anyone, any members have debate or amendments to title for nutrition, title, I'll ask twice. Is there any further debate or amendments to title four? Hearing, none. Title four is now closed, and we're going to move on to Title Five, and find my page here.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any amendments? Anyone have amendments on top, on Title Five, okay, on five, because I'm not showing anything. Oh yeah, okay, they're just that. They're out of order on my list.

You're good. Mr. Austin Scott is recognized, has an amendment at the desk and Title Five, which is the credit title,

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

This hold on a second. The Clerk will report the name of the

The Clerk

Of the amendment, amendment number 12, offered by Mr. Austin Scott of Georgia.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The, without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize distinguished gentleman from Georgia, the sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

As you know, risk management is a big part of agriculture, and while our more experienced farmers have experience in this, many of our beginning, young and small farmers don't. And so this amendment would direct amendment would direct the US, Department of Agriculture to evaluate how

enhanced risk management practices can improve the financial stability and credit worthiness of producers participating in certain direct and guaranteed farm loan programs. It is, again a direction, it is not mandatory that people would participate in this. But the goal is to have the USDA show how these enhance risk management practices, improve the credit worthiness of borrowers participating again, in direct and guaranteed farm loan programs through the USDA, it is an it would be incentive based, cost neutral to producers, and hopefully find ways to incentivize the lenders to help our beginning, young and smaller farmers and all farmers essentially with risk management practices.

So it says within one year of enactment, the secretary of agriculture must submit a report. The House and Senate Agriculture committees evaluating the feasibility of linking certain risk management practices to the right and guaranteed farm loan approvals. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman yields back any members seek recognition to speak on the amendment offered by Mr. Austin Scott of Georgia, any members seek recognition, if not, let me weigh in real quickly. Here, I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia for introducing this amendment. I've always I'm always open to any idea that could address the serious challenges faced by our producers in securing access to reliable credit, directing USDA to evaluate how enhanced risk management practices can aid farmers and ranchers in the loan application process is a logical first step in the process, given that the language was carefully crafted to be voluntary, incentive based and cost neutral. I support this common common sense amendment, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same the the aye hearing, no further conversation.

The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed say no, and depending on the Chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to any other members under Title? Where are we? Title Five, the credit title seek recognition for introduction of an amendment.

No more. Nobody's here. Okay, I I'll ask one more time. Any other members have have an amendment under Title Five?

Seek recognition, if not hearing none, Title Five is now closed. Are there? Are there amendments to title six? Ms. McDonald Rivet is recognized.

She has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's amendment number 144,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment 124 the

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

I'm sorry, 144

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

144 The Clerk will report the title of the amendment. Amendment number

The Clerk

144 offered by Ms. McDonald Rivet of Michigan,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady that sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of our amendment.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to rep man for your work on the expanding child care in rural America Initiative. Really, really important.

The inclusion of this language ensures that Head Start is a qualified provider under this provision. AG, Head Start classrooms provide care to over 20,000 kids in rural America.

Adding this very simple clarification line into the text puts our Head Start providers in the biggest possible position to care for our farm families and their children. And with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition for the speak on Ms. McDonald Rivets amendment, Ranking Member is recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Head Start provides vital services for children across this country, and I'm grateful to my colleague for bringing this amendment up. We need all available options to make sure the best possible Child Care exists for especially folks in our rural communities. I urge a yes on this amendment, and Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Thank you for that. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Any other members see recognition to speak on this amendment.

If not, I will take the opportunity. I thank the gentlelady from Michigan for amendment raising the issue. As a senior member of the education workforce, I I see value ensuring our rural development programs work with other federal initiatives and as one of the leaders in Congress on the Community Services Block Grant, which includes head start. I love your amendment.

Amendments like this, these are important as they enhance the underlying bill, and I'm pleased to support this amendment. Encourage my colleagues to do the same so hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,.

Those opposed saying no, and the opinion of the Chair is pretty clear. The ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to other members, other individuals that have amendments under the. Morning. Mr. Mann is recognized.

Ms. Sherrill,

Rep. Tracey Mann (R-Kan.)

Have an amendment at the desk, number 16.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment number 16. Mr. Mann, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 16, offered by Mr. Mann of Kansas. Keep

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The script back here. I back here, without objection. Amendment will be considered as read, and I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Kansas, Kansas, big one, the sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their

Rep. Tracey Mann (R-Kan.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, nearly one in six Americans live in rural areas and face significant healthcare challenges compared to those that live in the urban parts of our country. Every American should have access to quality, affordable healthcare regardless of their zip code. 66 million Americans call rural America home. Are no exception.

The Community Facilities program provides funding for competitive grants for Community Facilities community facilities, including healthcare facilities, for construction, expansion, renovations and the purchase of equipment. This Farm Bill already provides a set aside for prioritization of health telehealth and distance learning equipment for substance use

disorder treatment facilities, mental and behavioral health facilities and maternal health providers, telehealth helps to improve access to healthcare and improve health outcomes. The increased utilization of telehealth in rural areas has helped to bridge the gap in rural healthcare by removing travel burdens and addressing provider shortages, resulting in greater access to quality care. This amendment would ensure that rural health facilities providing the services mentioned above are prioritized under the community facilities program, so that our rural health rural health providers can continue to meet the needs of their communities.

I urge my colleagues who support this amendment, thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. I thank the gentleman. Thank the gentleman for yielding back. Any members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, Ranking Member please.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to speak in favor of this amendment presented by Mr. Mann. Rural health facilities are literally lifelines for the communities that they serve, and as these vital facilities face increasing challenges in keeping their doors open, making sure that USDA funding flows to them is more important than ever. So in support of rural healthcare, Mr. Chair, I support this amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Man's amendment? Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Man's amendment? If not, I'll take the liberty of just adding I thank the gentleman from Kansas for his amendment, rural healthcare is a priority for me. 28 years working in rural healthcare, rural hospitals and rural communities and and this, and it's been a focus of mine on and this committee, we work hard to ensure that rural hospitals are not left behind in this bill.

This amendment improves the bill to ensure that USDA prioritizes rural health facilities that provide mental and behavioral health services for funding. And I support that amendment. Hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment.

All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, and you pin the Chair the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to any members seek recognition for with amendment, I believe that the gentlelady from Maryland is has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 81

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment I have the desk. Give me a second. Get all the required things in here. I apologize.

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 81 offered by Mrs. McClain Delaney of Maryland.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

The the amendment that I have at the desk today modifies,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Lady's recognized. Go ahead, please.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

I'm just so excited. I just can't wait to talk about this. I'm just so happy. This is my big thing I love.

So the amendment I have at the desk today modifies the Farm Bill broadband plan and broadband has been something I've worked on for the bulk of my professional and non-profit career, it provides loans to build, improve or acquire the equipment and facilities needed to deliver broadband in eligible rural areas, to require the Secretary to consider affordability when determining whether a household is unserved for purposes of awarding grants. Because you see. If a community or a household has connectivity but cannot afford it, then that access really doesn't help. By 2025 US households are expected to spend roughly 164 billion annually on cable and internet services, with an average household shelling out about $121 each month.

That represents 4% of the 4.5 5 trillion Americans collectively play in household expenses, putting cable and internet costs above staples like water and sewer gas, waste and recycling and home security. This is particularly striking given the electricity bills have climbed 13% in recent years despite this considerable cost, access to reliable service isn't universal. All of us on that, on this committee, know that before I served in Congress, I spent 15 years at a child's nonprofit really trying to bridge the digital divide and bring about kids connectivity. And also I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary the NTIA why served and saw firsthand how COVID era exposed the rural digital divide.

Millions in remote communities struggle to war, learn, work and access critical services. According to the FCC, 22.3% of rural Americans and 27.7 people living on tribal lands still lack fixed terrestrial broadband capable of 25 three megabits compared to only with 1.5% of urban residents. And clearly, what's worse is that divide is growing increasingly out of reach for rural communities as internet bills continue to skyrocket, I hear from my

constituents all across Western Maryland all the time about how high their utility bills are. Broadband access is a centerpiece also and an essential one in our increasingly digital world, but cut costs are cutting people out.

During my tenure at NTIA, it became clear that ensuring reliable high speed broadband access for all communities is vital. When rural America has the connectivity it needs, it can prosper, innovate and thrive, regardless of zip code or circumstance. Last week, I launched a cost down opportunity up agenda to lower everyday costs and create more opportunities for hard working families in Maryland's 6th District. An undeniable piece of that agenda was supporting affordable rural connectivity modeled on other USDA programs that prioritize affordability.

This amendment mirrors considerations included in the reconnect program, which already factors affordability into application scoring. My amendment ensures that we are moving towards greater consistency across USDA broadband programs, and guarantees all Americans, regardless of zip code or circumstance, they have a fair opportunity to access affordable, high speed internet, while more must be done to lower the cost of internet. This amendment is a simple one, one that puts rural America first, not last. I urge support for my amendment and yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the general age goes back to any member seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Ms. figures recognize five minutes.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair in my district, as I've mentioned several, several times here today, median income is just about $33,000 a year every month. Families are forced to choose which bills get paid, which get delayed, and which simply you have to go without. Housing costs are rising, as we know, food costs are rising, healthcare costs are rising. Everything is going up, and yet we continue to treat broadband as if it's a luxury, instead of what it has ultimately become, which is a basic utility just as important in today's world and economy as electricity, to be quite honest with you, this Amen.

This amendment acknowledges something very important, that access alone is not enough if people cannot afford the service associated with it. But I want to be clear about what affordability looks like on the ground in many rural and low income communities, broadband technically exists, but at prices that compete directly with groceries, prescription drugs and other healthcare costs, and that is not meaningful access, which is what this amendment seeks to address at a time when broadband is how families receive everything from emergency and weather alerts to how they learn how to prepare for disasters, how students complete homework, how workers apply for jobs and participate in This digital economy, we should be lowering barriers, not redefining access in a way that continues to leave people behind. We're moving more and more essential services, online, SNAP benefits, banking, healthcare portals, disaster assistance, telehealth. That modernization can be powerful and efficient, but only if people can actually connect to the internet.

If broadband costs continue to be another bill that families have to weigh against food on the table or medical care, then the system we're building will exclude the very people it's supposed to serve in rural communities with limited competition, families often pay more for slower service than their urban counterparts, and when we define serve communities without truly accounting for affordability, we risk locking those communities. Out of future investment altogether. Affordability must be more than just a box that we check. It must be a real consideration.

It must reflect real household budgets, real income levels and real trade offs families are making every single day. Otherwise, we're telling people that broadband is essential, but only if you can afford it. As we consider this amendment, I urge us to remember that access without affordability is not really access at all. If we are serious about closing the digital divide, supporting rural economies and ensuring families can fully participate in modern life, then our policies must meet people where they are, not where we wish they were.

Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman yields back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, any other seek recognition to speak, if not. Let me weigh in. I thank the gentlelady from Maryland for her amendment and, perhaps more importantly, for her expertise in broadband.

This amendment highlights an important issue, what good is access that the population in the service area can't afford it? This amendment is a great enhancement to an already robust Rural Development title, and I encourage my colleagues to support it, given

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Let's see. Hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,.

Those opposed say no. Any opinion of the Chair the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to other members under Title six. I guess we're on rural development. Have Ms. Salinas is recognized.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

34 very good. Ms. Salinas had a is offer an amendment. The Clerk will report the title the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 34 offered by Ms. Salinas of Oregon, without objection.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Of her amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we all know, affordable child care is becoming increasingly difficult to find in this country, particularly in rural communities where child care professionals and facilities are few and far between. The consistent theme I've heard in the affordability listening tour I launched in my district is that our small towns and rural communities feel left behind by the federal government.

The federal funding landscape is incredibly confusing, and identifying relevant grant opportunities can be quite a challenge. Grant applications are complex and can be filled with convoluted eligibility requirements, and if a small town ultimately does receive funding, they still have to navigate environmental reviews, planning requirements and a whole lot of red tape. That's why I introduced the bipartisan rural partnership and prosperity act with Representative valadeo. Our legislation would connect rural localities with third party technical assistance providers who can help them find, apply for and implement federal funding opportunities.

The rural partnership and prosperity Act would also allow rural localities to partner with other rural stakeholders, like universities, county governments and non-profits to address a wide variety of urgent needs in their communities, like access to child care and disaster recovery efforts. Finally, the bill expands the existing rural partners network, which uses an all of government approach to improve rural communities access to federal programs and facilitates cross agency coordination. To be frank, I am incredibly disappointed that this bipartisan legislation was excluded from the majority's proposal, despite having the support of a broad coalition of rural development oriented organizations, including the National Association of Counties and National Cooperative Business Association clusa, among many others. That is why I offered this amendment, it would address urgent needs like affordable child care, housing and job training in rural communities.

It provides technical assistance grants to help these communities navigate existing federal funding opportunities, ensure and ensure they get a share of private and federal investments. And finally, it improves supportive services offered by the federal government to rural communities. Let's be honest, rural communities are struggling with affordability, and I think, more so than some of our urban and suburban centers. Just like the rest of the

country, they deserve access to the same resources that our urban centers enjoy.

I won't stop fighting to ensure our rural communities get the resources they deserve from the federal government. That's why I want to see this legislation and this amendment passed. However, sometimes the best path forward does require strategic patience. Therefore, I do intend to withdraw my amendment.

I yield back applause.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And I'm very supportive The intention of this. We there is some I just look forward to working with you on this. There is some duplicative programs and and unfortunately, some some costs that we need to account for. Rob, you know, I hope to work with you going forward determine the gaps in existing programs that that you're trying to fill, because I think it's a worthy cause.

Thank you. All right, any other members seek recognition under Title rural development, title six. Mr. Mannion is recognized. Ms. Mannion has a amendment at the desk, and the Clerk will report the title,

The Clerk

Amendment number 129, offered by Ms. Mannion of New York.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Ms. Mannion has offered an amendment, without objection, the amendment, that amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. John Mannion (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, my amendment would increase the authorization for the rural micro entrepreneur Assistance Program to $25 million annually through Fiscal Year 2031 our map is a practical rural development tool. It

helps local community development organizations provide small loans and hands on support so rural entrepreneurs can start a business, stay open and grow in New York's 22nd district. That support can make a real difference across Central New York and the Mohawk Valley, we have people launching and expanding their small businesses from service providers to small manufacturers. These local employers who want to hire and invest in their communities are there, and we have great community colleges, community partners and innovation hubs that are launching new businesses and growing them each and every day.

In fact, I spoke with one of those groups today, but too often, the barrier isn't effort or ideas, it's access to modest capital and the basic technical assistance that helps a small business succeed in the Mohawk Valley. The Mohawk Valley Economic Development District does a tremendous job of leveraging RMap funds to support our rural entrepreneurs, holding dozens of workshops to help rural entrepreneurs strengthen financial planning and identify and secure private and public funding. Mr. Chairman, I'm offering this amendment to underscore how important this program is to my district and rural areas across the country, but given the budget constraints we're working under, today, I will be withdrawing it. I want to thank Senators Ricketts and Smith for their leadership on this issue over in the Senate, and urge them to continue to make it a priority as the Farm Bill moves forward, and with that, I will withdraw the amendment and yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Back Mr. Mannion, thank you for offering the amendment and withdrawing. I mean the intent that you have here. Well, the rural micro entrepreneur Assistance Program is a vital program ensures very small businesses in rural areas thrive today. It's authorized at $20 million your amendment would increase that to 25 million and and unfortunately, there's no discretionary offset, but I agree with you with the importance of it.

Would love to work with you going forward and see if we can find a way to to extend its reach. So the any other members seek recognition under tight Rural Development title six, Mr. Davis seeks recognition. Mr. Davis has a an amendment at the desk. Yes, thank you,Mr.

Chair.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

I have amendment number 90

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

At the desk. Mr. Davis has amendment number nine. Is offered that amendment, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 90 offered by Mr. Davis of North Carolina,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection. The amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, this amendment addresses an important barrier that prevents some of our most economically distressed rural communities from assessing the R map. R map is designed to help very small businesses with 10 or fewer employees in rural America by providing micro loans and technical assistance such as business planning, financial training and mentorship. These services are delivered by local non-profit organizations. Organizations and development groups that work directly with entrepreneurs in their communities.

However, under the law, these organizations must provide 15% match for persistent poverty communities making the match can be extremely difficult. These organizations are often operating in communities with limited resources, small tax bases. As a result, the communities that actually need the services the most are sometimes the least able to access assess the program. So I want to give a snapshot nor clients.

1st Congressional District consists of 19 counties in North Carolina, we rank in a tier structure that these counties all the counties across the state by

economically distressed counties. Tier one is the most economically distressed out of the 19 counties I currently represent 1616. Are deemed economically distress under this provision, this would then look at those that are experiencing persistent poverty, basically those who have experienced poverty for over a decade, and essentially, out of this grouping, four of the 16 would meet the persistent poverty definition. And what the amendment would do in a very, very practical solution here, it would reduce the required match from 15% in those that are persistent to 5% and I want to make clear, there's no funding change here, but what we're trying to do is going to the most economically distressed areas across the nation and give real opportunities as we understand the importance of small businesses as they are the heartbeat.

By lowering that barrier, we make it possible for more local organizations to participate in the program and deliver support to rural entrepreneurs who are trying to start a business, grow a small operation, create jobs in their communities, and I ask for your support. And thank you, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman for his amendment and for yielding back any members, any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Davis' amendment number 90, Ranking Member's recognized for five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I won't take but about 30 seconds. Thank you, Mr. Davis for bringing up this amendment. I'm glad we can be thoughtful about how best to serve the communities that need it most, and including those that may struggle to meet cost share requirements due to persistent poverty. So I'm happy to support this amendment.

We thank you for offering it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Davis's amendment? Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Davis amendment? If not, let me weigh in. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his Amendment.

The amendment enhances the base bill and the rural, micro entrepreneurial assistance program that we've talked about previously that we reauthorize in this bill. And so I appreciate this issue being raised, and I will be sorting supporting this amendment with that hearing, no further conversation questions on the amendment offered by Mr. Davis, number amendment number 90, all those in favor of the amendment will signify by saying aye, those opposed saying no. And you pen the Chair the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to. And I recognize Mr. Figures who I understand has an amendment at the desk under Title, rural development, title number six,

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Yes, sir, thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 87

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The figures has an amendment at the desk. Number eight, seven. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 87 offered by Mr. Figures of Alabama,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, the sponsor the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to provide loans and loan guarantees to rural health for rural healthcare facilities that are facing financial distress and are at risk of closing

or cutting essential services. I think, as probably many members of this committee know that when a hospital, a rural hospital, is facing closure due to financial distress, there are not many options available for them for help to keep those doors open. This would apply to a full range of providers. Rural communities rely on whether that's rural hospitals, critical access hospitals, rural emergency hospitals, rural clinics, federally qualified health centers and behavioral and mental health providers, facilities must demonstrate financial distress through objective measures, and priority may be given to sole community providers, facilities in high poverty or medically underserved areas, and hospitals delivering critical emergency and safety net services, this is not an expansion program.

It is a stabilization tool designed to reduce preventable closures. Rural Development is not just about roads, bridges, utilities or broadband. It is about whether people can live, work and raise families in rural America, and something that is necessary in order to do that is healthcare. And healthcare access is foundational to all of that.

I support this amendment because I see what happens when rural healthcare disappears in my district. I represent 13 counties across southern Alabama. You can only have a baby in two of them. In most counties, there are no not sufficient primary care providers.

We don't have pediatricians in well over half of the counties that I represent, ambulance response times can be 40 to 50 minutes on average in many of the counties that I represent, and that this is in an area that has some some of the worst healthcare outcomes and statuses in the country. Many of you have heard me speak about it before. One in five people in my district are diabetic. One in five people in my district are diabetic.

That's, you know, not including the high rates of kidney disease, obesity, cardiovascular issues and on and on. And of the 13 counties that I represent, either 10 of them, they either no longer have a hospital, or their hospital is about to close, literally, on financial life support. These are not abstract statistics, whether we're talking evergreen, Greenville, Crenshaw County, other rural places in my in my in my district, these hospital closures are real, and they're happening at happening at an alarming rate. But these are communities that are one bad month away from losing the only emergency room, the only in patient beds, or the only mental health services available

for dozens of miles when a hospital closes in a rural county, that damage goes far beyond just the healthcare access.

Jobs are lost in many of these counties, the hospital is the largest employer. Families move away. Local employers cannot recruit workers. Small businesses struggle to survive.

The local government struggles to raise revenue because the tax paying citizens are no longer there. Developers do not want to build in communities without reliable healthcare access, especially hospitals. Retirees don't want to retire back to communities that they may have grown up in when they don't have a hospital. No one here wants one of our parents to retire back to a county that doesn't have a hospital and parents, most importantly, they don't want to raise their children in communities that lack quality, affordable and accessible healthcare.

I say it all the time back home. I don't care if your name is Nick Saban, it is very near impossible to close a recruiting pitch to a business, to a developer, to a family, to a retiree to come to your community when that pitch begins with we don't have a hospital, this is something that we have to address. And so it's not just a healthcare crisis. It's an economic one as well.

For our rural communities, which have given so much to this country, historically, they grow our food, they support our work force, they sustain local economies. The Brain Drain has pulled many of, even some of us, out of rural communities to go and support what's happening in larger urban areas, but we cannot continue to ask them to do more with less, especially when it comes to basic healthcare. This amendment does not solve every challenge facing rural hospitals, but it gives them hope. It gives them an option to seek out emergency funds to keep their hospital's doors open.

It gives them something that they they that they rarely have if they are successful, and that's that's time, time to stay open, time to serve those communities, time to pursue longer term solutions without the constant threat of closure hanging over them. So regardless of your zip code or even how you voted, every American deserves access to healthcare, especially hospitals. If we are serious about rural development, then we must be serious about rural healthcare. Supporting this amendment is one of the most direct ways that we can do that.

And I urge my colleagues to support it. And I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman yielding back. Ms. Bush is recognized for five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

And I want to add my support to Congressman figures amendment. You know, I think that this amendment is an important step toward fixing what I think is going to be a really negative impact coming out of H.R. 1 on rural healthcare and rural hospitals. It's going to create more opportunities for rural hospitals to get loans to stay open and continue offering essential services, which will only become more difficult as people lose access to their insurance after the big, ugly bill passed. According to the American Hospital Association, roughly 53,000 Than 800 people in rural Illinois could lose their Medicaid coverage by 2034 without Medicaid.

Children, pregnant mothers, seniors and people with disabilities are at risk of losing reliable access to care. These are the some of our most vulnerable populations that are at risk. People don't stop getting sick when their safety net is taken away, they just delay care until a condition becomes a crisis and the emergency room becomes their only option left, this new reality will have a dis portion, disproportionate impact on our rural hospitals as of 2024, 23% of rural hospitals in Illinois were vulnerable to closures, and 30% were operating on negative margins. These hospitals will lose millions of dollars over the next decade from the cuts made out of the big, ugly bill.

Rural hospitals are already carrying enormous unpaid costs in 2021 charity care for uninsured patients. Total $22.5 billion across the country, a key piece of the Farm Bill is making sure that rural America isn't left behind. Every American deserves access to high quality healthcare regardless of the zip code in which we live. That's why I support this amendment to create a rural healthcare facility stabilization assistance program to help our rural communities keep facilities open and remain financially stable in my district, as examples, critical access hospitals such as the Community Hospital in Staunton and Carlinville area hospitals are lifelines in central and southern Illinois.

This amendment is a step in the right direction to provide stabilization so rural hospitals can provide and continue to deliver necessary care for rural America and places like my district. I urge my colleagues to support it, and I want to thank Congressman figures for introducing it. Thank you. And I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on the gentleman's amendment, gentlelady from Maryland is recognized.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I too want to add my support for this amendment, which establishes rural healthcare stabilization assistance plan, it does empower the Secretary of AG to provide low interest rates and low guarantees to rural hospitals and health centers in financial duress. The need for this program is urgent, and I see it in Western and mountain Maryland every day. Across rural America, hospitals are facing serious financial challenges that really do threaten their ability to remain operational. When H.R. 1 was signed into law last year, it is now projected to reduce Medicaid and ACA coverage for hundreds of thousands of rural Americans and cut billions in federal funding that rural hospitals rely on.

These changes put even more pressure on already fragile facilities in my district and across Maryland, forcing them to make impossible choices between keeping their doors open, maintaining staff or providing essential services to their communities. And as was noted by my colleagues, when a rural hospital closes, the effects ripple through the entire community. Emergency Response times rise. Mothers lose access to maternity care.

Seniors with chronic conditions must travel exceedingly long distances, and local businesses lose their major employer in many rural towns, the hospital is more than just a healthcare provider. It's the anchor of the local economy and the foundation of community stability. I saw this firsthand during my visit last month to UPMC, Western Maryland, in Cumberland for families in Allegheny and Garrett, it's the first and primary line of emergency care and often the only nearby source of specialized services. This amendment is targeted.

It is responsible, and it's a financial tool designed to stabilize hospitals before temporary financial strains turns into permanent closures. It gives struggling facilities time, time to adjust, time to stabilize and time to keep serving their communities. And we know what happens when that care disappears, as was referenced, when that hospital closes, it rarely reopens and the jobs are gone. The providers leave.

The community loses something that cannot be replaced, to my colleagues or colleagues with communities with no alternative providers. Stabilization today can mean survival tomorrow. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and thank my colleagues for fighting for rural communities, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Thank the gentlelady. Any other members seek recognition? Gentlelady is recognized.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you. Mr. Chair, recognized again. I would like to speak in favor of this amendment. Our.

Hospitals are in jeopardy. I used to sit on a hospital board. I know how hard it is to actually financially make it, and it is correct that most of our hospital hospitals are operating at a negative margin, and I see the rest of my time to Congressman figures. Mr. Figures recognized.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you. I think this is an issue that we all struggle with, certainly that many of us struggle with. We have an opportunity to try to do something about it. And it's not just in my district.

I mean, across the state of Alabama, we have 52 rural hospitals remaining. 26 of them are rated at being at risk of closure, and of those 2622 are rated at being at immediate risk of closure, and several of those are in my district. Just this past week, we there were the announcements of three dialysis treatment facilities in my district and the adjoining district. You know, we're

seeing healthcare access dry up in significant ways that are going to have that will have significant outcomes, you know?

And this is in a this is in a state that has the third lowest life expectancy in America, right? We can afford to continue losing access to healthcare like this, and we're third lowest, just by a mere decimal point. So we live just a few weeks or months longer than people in Mississippi and West Virginia. And so we have to address this crisis with the sincerity that it, that it deserves.

And and the largest hospital I have in Montgomery, which is a hub of providing healthcare to rural communities in Central Alabama, is in the middle of a bankruptcy. And so this, this is something that is hitting my district very, very hard, and something that I would hope that we can find a way to provide some degree of support here in this committee, throughout the Farm Bill process. And with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Actually, the time goes back to Ms. McDonald Rivet,

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

I yield the remainder of my time

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Yields the remainder Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? If not, I will weigh in here. I thank the gentleman from Alabama for his amendment.

Honestly, there's an old saying about Pennsylvania. It's like three states, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Alabama in the middle. I am proud to represent Alabama. What you described is, yeah, well, we are always like when Penn State played Alabama too.

But I have to say the similarities are huge. It's a big rural district. It's a third of land mass of Pennsylvania. You know, high degree of diabetes.

You know, there is, you know, rural hospitals that are struggling. We've lost rural hospitals, some that have gone to emergency room only. And then, you know, you know, the taking away of maternity services, and which is a kiss of death for a rural hospital, because her mom has the baby, that's where she gets her healthcare, and that's where the rest of the family goes. And so I I live that every day, having practice been in healthcare for 28 years, and and we must think the same way, because honestly, a lot of what you're asking for is already in the base bill, and I'm proud of that.

Fact, we certainly support the intention of this amendment. It partially, to a large degree, duplicates what we have in the base tax section 6417 enhances existing USDA authority to allow refinancing of a debt obligation for an eligible healthcare facility. It also codifies the rural healthcare facility technical assistance program to try to provide a lifeline. And so I'm opposed to this amendment today.

You know, if the gentleman is willing, I look forward to working together to ensure our rural hospitals not only survive but thrive. And I know that Ms. Tokuda, who's busy right now, provides great leadership on that rural health rural hospital caucus. So I'm sure she, I don't want to speak on her behalf, I'm pretty confident she'd be interested in working with us as well. So,

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Okay, I asked twice, Jim, but I'll be lenient. Go ahead, gentleman from California,

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

I'll be quick, I concur with, I think most of the sentiment here that our rural hospitals play such a critical role. And I support the efforts here, the $50 billion that was provided in the big I never called it beautiful, is estimated to be about a quarter of what we really need for rural hospitals, which is probably around $200 billion when you look at the impacts of the cuts of Medicaid and medical throughout the country. And so I appreciate the

Chairman's comments about his concern as well. And the author, and this is something that we got to work on.

No pun intended, but our rural hospitals are facing a triage in their own communities throughout the country.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

They have for many years.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Yeah, but this exacerbates it. Let me put it that way. I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no,, in the opinion the Chair the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to, and any any other member wish to be recognized under Title six rural development for an amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any members I'll ask twice, doesn't work for Jim, but it works for everybody else. Any other members wish to be recognized under Title six rural development, if not hearing none, title six is now closed, and we'll move to Title Seven. Research, are there any amendments to Title Seven to be offered From research?

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Does the gentleman from California have an amendment?

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

The gentleman state his amendment and the Clerk will

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Amendment would involve research facilities act, and it's at the desk. Clerk will read number 60. I'm sorry, Clark will thank you.

The Clerk

Amendment number 60, offered by Mr. Costa of California,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Members will suspend until the amendment's been distributed.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

I'm ready to begin. I don't know if they're distributing the amendments or not. Here they come.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Let me explain the amendments with permission of the Chair as they're being distributed and may proceed. All right. This amendment is to restore research facilities funding for them that was previously taken out last year during DOGE and whatever else that was going on with those folks. I think the muscle, part of the muscle of America post World War II is the commitment we've made toward research, and it's been, in many instances, a public, private partnership with our universities, our land grant research facilities and others throughout the country, and I think, to stay competitive with China and our other adversaries.

Let me remind you that they've increased their funding five fold since the early 2000s coupled with the USDA reorganization that I referenced last night. And who knows where that's going, we're being left behind. I'm going to remind everyone once more. I mean California's big agricultural state, $61 billion and a half at the last farm gate last year, our land grant and non-land grant benefits and universities from this funding results in research towards

a more resistant crops, enhanced conservation techniques, vital research and dedicated to new pesticide and disease management, new product development.

The list goes on and on and on, and you can, I'm sure, cite your own examples from the universities in your districts and in your states that you've worked with. For me, the California University of California agriculture and natural resources and the California State Universities Ben have benefited greatly over the decades, in addition to research extensions, our AG, extension offices and what's really frustrating, and I hope you hear my voice, we have research programs that have taken place over four years, six years, eight years, all of a sudden the federal funding just stops in the middle of I mean, you don't finance a new. Don't expect good returns on research if you just stop it in the middle of its effort. So this legislation, this amendment, would focus on trying to return the the funding for our land grant universities across the country and for the research of our state universities and the universities and our minority universities that have been engaged in such research programs, and so I think it's bipartisan nature.

I request your support, and I'd like to have a voice vote on this,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Chairman. gentleman yields back. The Chair.

Notes that, without any objection, the amendment is being considered as read. Does any other members seek to be recognized to speak on this amendment, the gentlelady is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to Representative Costa for bringing this amendment forward. I speak in support of this amendment to strengthen investment in agricultural research that supports every single sector of our farm economy, research conducted at our land grant universities, including my Alma alma mater, Michigan State University, and at Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center that's in my district delivers real, actual results on the ground for growers, for sugar beets, potatoes, dry bean soy beans, corn and much, much more. This work drives

yield improvements, disease resistance, soil health advancements and more efficient production practices. It's really important to note that strong research funding reinforces our domestic food security and keeps the United States at the forefront of innovation.

It ensures our producers have access to the latest science and technology as they compete in a global marketplace. Investing in agriculture research is investing in long term stability, competitiveness and leadership, especially as we complete compete with countries like China, Mexico and Brazil. Often when I am talking to farmers in my district, they cite the importance of this funding in research as one of their top priorities. I urge support for this amendment, and I yield back.

Gen.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentlelady yields back. Does any other member wish to be recognized to speak to this amendment? Gentlelady is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to add my support to Congressman Costa's amendment. I believe if we're serious about really strengthening American agriculture, we have to have a plan for innovation. The research facilities Act helps institutions construct, modernize, renovate and upgrade agricultural research facilities.

This funding supports the long term infrastructure that makes food and agricultural research possible. It ensures our land great universities and research institutions have the tools they need to stay competitive. For decades, American agricultural dominance has been built on research, but for more than a decade, Congress has allowed public agricultural research funding to stagnate. Meanwhile, China has increased its public agricultural research investment eight fold over the last 30 years and is now the world's largest public funder of agricultural research.

If we want to remain competitive in the 21st Century agricultural economy, if we want to lead on food security, sustainability, biotechnology, animal

health and precision agriculture, then we really must invest increasing funding for the research facilities act will help our research institution stay on the cutting edge in 2024 the University of Illinois received funding through this program to modernize its meat science laboratory. The facility had not been substantially updated since the early 1980s and required critical infrastructure improvements, including HVAC and structural upgrades. The Meat Science Lab introduces students to the production quality and marketing of meat products. It includes the equipment necessary to harvest, process, store and conduct research on cattle, sheep and swine.

Faculty and Staff also engage in significant community outreach, hosting workshops for 4h youth organizations and commercial meat processors. The lab even operates a meat and egg sales room that is open to the public, directly connecting research, education and the community. This is what agricultural innovation looks like. It supports students, producers and strengthens our workforce pipeline.

If we want our farmers to continue leading the world, we must invest in agricultural research that makes this leadership possible. I'd urge my colleagues to be a yes on this amendment, and

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I'll yield back. Gentlelady yields back. Does any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Gentleman from Nebraska.

Is recognized.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

I support research. I know it makes a huge difference. I see it being raised on a farm in Nebraska. But is there an offset for this?

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

We're working on the offset, and I would appreciate the members joining in that effort. They may listen to you a little bit better than they do me over at OMB, however, I think the thing is, the leverage on private sector funding for this most of the time it's public private partnerships on the research here, and to ignore that and to put us at risk, I think is irresponsible.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman yields back. Does any other member wish to be recognized to speak on this amendment? Seeing no other request for time. I recognize myself.

I want to thank the gentleman for his support of the nation's land grant and public universities. H.R. 1 saw the most significant investment in research facilities Act program in history, and I'm incredibly proud of the work this committee has done to deliver on that priority. While I remain deeply supportive of this program, this amendment would carry a substantial score, so I would have to recommend a no vote, and with that, I yield back the balance the seeing no other members who wish to be recognized. All those in favor signify by saying aye, All those opposed say nay.

In the opinion of the Chair, the nays have it and the amendment is not agreed to. Thank you. Are there any other amendments to Title Seven gentlemen? Stead is recognized.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have amendment number 19 at the desk.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Finstad has amendment number 19 at the desk. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 19 offered by Mr. Finstad of Minnesota.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The, without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment would clarify that the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program may support organizations and programs that provide direct budgeting, business planning and similar financial management skills that focus on the economic vitality of beginning farmers and ranchers. This is we're very blessed Minnesota have great organization like University of Minnesota's farm and financial management group, and organizations like them assist thousands of producers over 20 states with farm business management and financial education, yet they are currently limited in their ability to utilize this program, while the program should be available to help all beginning farmers and ranchers. In the past, many organizations that help the Jenner generation transition into the management of family farms and ranchers who produce the vast majority of us agriculture have been excluded this the current language also indicates that organizations are the targeted beneficiaries of this program. This amendment will clarify that the program should directly benefit beginning farmers and ranchers.

This change is additive and common sense. All beginning farmers and ranchers deserve to benefit from financial tools and business planning resources. I urge adoption of this amendment, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Jim yields back. I appreciate the gentleman. Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Fence said amendment number 19, any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Finstads amendment number 19, the Ranking Member is recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, business planning and financial management training are indeed important skills that help keep our farmers farming. Thankfully, these services are already allowed under the farming opportunities, training and outreach program and two programs under that program, BF RDP and section 2501 this amendment waters down or removes the existing prioritization within BF RDP and the 2501 program and narrows the peer review process to only include a small set of organizations that aren't currently participating in the program. With that,

Mr. Chairman, I am recommending a no vote on this amendment because I support farmers of color and believe that we can work together on productive improvements in a bipartisan manner together in the future, and would encourage. My colleagues to do the same.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentlelady. I will take the final, final word here. I want to thank the gentleman for bringing this amendment forward to address small but powerful tweaks to the administration of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program that has been flagged and championed by the University of Minnesota Center for farm financial management. These changes will ensure that this program is focused on its underlying goal, to give beginning producers the support and information they need to make decisions that will secure the long term economic viability of their operation.

I support this amendment, and encourage my colleagues to do the same with that hearing. No further conversation. The question is on the amendment, all those in favor the amendment by Ms. Finstad signify by saying aye, those those opposed by saying no, and depending the Chair the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to any other members have amendments to offer under Title Seven, which is research

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

I do. Mr. Kim, and I do as well.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. very good. Mr. Scott is recognized has an amendment. While you have an amendment at the desk, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 22 offered by Mr. David Scott of Georgia.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. Second.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read by and I now recognize a distinguished gentleman, former Chairman of this committee, the sponsor of the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. David Scott (D-Ga.)

Well, thank you, Chair. Thank you Chairman. I have this amendment, and it will increase funding for the 1890s scholarship by $5 million a year and make the scholarship program permanent. Ladies and gentlemen our nation's 1890 land grant institutions play a crucial role in providing the education, the research and extension that is needed to ensure that our nation's American agriculture remains the best in the world, these 1890 African American land grant schools have helped introduce new innovative technologies and prepare the Next and future generations of the Food and Agricultural workforce of our great nation, and for over a century, the 1890s have allowed young African American students, and Along with other American students, to pursue their degrees, including even during the era of segregation in our nation and as a proud graduate of An 1890s institution Florida, an M University in Tallahassee, Florida, I know firsthand the impact that these institutions have had and continue to have on our great nation's agriculture system.

I and many others would not be here today without them. That is why I have fought and others have fought to create the successful 1890s student scholarships in the 2018 Farm Bill, and we did that as a committee. And not only we did it, we had the gracious consent and involvement of President Trump, even when he signed. In this bill, which makes this special because it is the foremost bi racial and bipartisan bill that we have done in the history of our nation and our committee has previously voted to permanently authorize the scholarship on a strong bipartisan basis, Four years ago, with only three Republicans that voted against it.

That's how far we've come. That's what we celebrate today, because we recognize the importance of investing in the future generations of all of our talented minds, of all of our great and God inspired minds, the USDA estimates that around 58,000 highly skilled jobs are available each year in

the food and agriculture sector of our great nation. However, only 35,000 new graduates in the United States are currently available to take these jobs, permanently authorizing the 1890s scholarship program will help us shrink this gap and bring a diverse group of talented American young students to the work force. I certainly urge all my colleagues here today to join me in voting yes on this amendment.

Thank you, Chairman and

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. I thank the gentleman. Thank you gentlemen for yielding back. I remember seek recognition.

Dr. Adams is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I do want to speak in support of the amendment, and thank Mr. Scott for bringing it forward. I do believe that this program is a pipeline for the next generation of agricultural scientists, researchers and USDA professionals, students at historically black land grant universities gain the skills, the education and the hands on experience needed to tackle America's food agriculture and natural resource challenges. Every dollar invested in this program returns far more to our nation. These scholars go on to to strengthen our food security, advance agriculture research, support rural economies and keep USDA staffed with with top talent.

The Trump Administration froze the program last year, threatening scholarships and this critical pipeline, but with pressure, the USDA reopened the program. Permanent funding ensures that students can complete their studies and enter the workforce, ready to serve our country, providing enormous returns in productivity, innovation and workforce readiness. Investing in the 1890 national Scholars Program is smart, it's strategic, and it's essential for sustaining America's agriculture workforce. And I certainly encourage my colleagues to support this amendment.

I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Appreciate gentlelady. Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Scott's bill the Ranking Member's recognized for five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The 1890s scholarship is a deeply impactful program that transforms the experience of students who are pursuing careers in agriculture at historically black colleges and universities. And I want to commend my colleague, Mr. David Scott for his continued persistence at ensuring that these programs remain a high priority in the United States. Congress, this program has opened doors for students to develop skills through agriculture curriculum and prepare to be the next leaders of the AG industry in this country. It's absolutely essential that we make funding for this program permanent, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support Mr. Scott's amendment, and I yield back, generally

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yells back, Dr. Adams, is you seek recognition. Dr. Adams, okay, sorry, I'm sorry. Mr. Figures from Alabama recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I appreciate Congressman Scott for his amendment to provide permanent funding for our 1890 land grant universities. These institutions are vital not just because of their historical role in correcting past inequities in higher education and agriculture as a whole, but because today they remain on the front lines of serving communities that are too often left out of federal investment, agricultural opportunity and economic growth. And as some of you may recall, in the early days of this administration, we dealt with a still incomprehensible issue where this administration came in and they terminated the land grant Scholars Program for 1890 institutions, and they did not touch the land grant Scholars Program for the 1862 institutions, which is just still incomprehensible, said another way, they they terminated the funding for in my state schools, The two land grants that we have in Tuskegee University

and Alabama A&M University, but they didn't touch the funding for scholars at Auburn University to say that a different way. They terminated the funding to the predominantly black, historically black colleges and universities, but they did not touch that to the predominantly white institutions.

And we questioned the Secretary about that. And it happened, you know, relatively early on in the first few days that she got there. We still never quite got to the bottom of why it happened, but we know that it happened, and fortunately, it was reversed, at least in part, which leads us here today. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to go over to Tuskegee, which is in my district, home of George Washington Carver and all of the great agricultural work that that that icon did, and what I heard there was deeply concerning, especially because of these challenges that have emerged in the last year, the USDA liaisons that help administer this program are no longer stationed at the institutions themselves.

Instead, a small number of liaisons are now shared across multiple 1890 schools. Several of the liaisons have retired. No new ones have been hired due to hiring due to a hiring freeze, leaving only six to eight liaisons covering multiple campuses across the entire country. And it is important to understand what these liaisons actually do.

USDA liaisons that are assigned to these land grant institutions, they act as a critical connector between the federal government and the universities. They recruit and support the students, particularly for the 1890 national Scholars Program, and they help institutions and faculty navigate USDA programs, foster research partnerships, connect campuses to grants and technical assistance, strength and workforce diversity across the Department of Agriculture, when those liaisons are stretched thin or missing entirely, as is the case now in many places, students lose access, faculty lose opportunity, and USDA loses one of its strongest pipelines for talent and Innovation, Compounding this problem, liaisons currently do not have travel budgets. That means, if a liaison is not physically near a school, even that institution, even if that institution is assigned to them, they're often limited to Virtual Engagement only for students navigating federal careers and programs. For the first time, virtual only support is not sufficient.

Scholar support has also been significantly constrained, while institutions continue to support previously awarded scholars. Schools are now limited to only two new scholars, only two and because this liaison position falls under the Office of partnerships and public engagement, which does not currently have adequate funding, vacant positions cannot be replaced. We were also informed that, under the direction of this USDA, regardless of how large or robust an institution's agricultural program may be, schools are capped at a maximum of three scholars, even when there are many more qualified applicants. And this is, you know, this is, this is down from the six, for instance, that University of Tuskegee, or Tuskegee University has had in the past, they're only now down to two.

It's not about a lack of talent or lack of interest. It's about a lack of commitment to this program. And this is at a time where we know we are losing farmers, we are losing agricultural professionals, we are losing the scientists and the researchers that support this type of work, we should be doing everything that we can to increase and enhance those opportunities. Permanent funding for 1890 institutions, restores capacity, strengthens partnerships and ensures that these universities can continue delivering education, research and workforce development to the communities that rely on them.

If we are serious about equity and workforce diversity and the future of American agriculture, we must be serious about investing in the institutions that help make that future possible. Alabama and M and Tuskegee University are certainly those institutions that will make that future possible. But they need the funding, they need the support, they need the investment from this congress and this Farm Bill, and they need it now. Thank you, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? If not, I'll take that opportunity before we vote. I want to thank the gentleman

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, let me, let me speak first, and then I'll make sure. I'll make sure you get it recorded. You bet. I want to thank the gentleman for a steadfast commitment to supporting the 1890 scholarship program at USDA.

The scholarship plays an important role in supporting undergraduate students at 1890 land grant universities that result in a well equipped work force for students in food, agriculture and related fields. I've been proud to work with David Scott on this and support him as he's advanced this. That is why I personally made sure that within H.R. 1 we provided $60 million in mandatory funding for this program, which is now part of the law. I'm also proud that this bill real.

We reauthorized this bill for another five years. So that's taken care of. This amendment, unfortunately, would score because of the mandatory funding that it contains, but given the investments that were included in H.R. 1 for this program and the committee's intention of delivering on a cost neutral Bill, I'm not going to be able to support the gentleman's amendment. But just keep in mind what we were able to do in H.R. 1, and I do look forward to continue to work with the gentleman on supporting our students at our nation's 1890 institutions.

With that hearing, no further conversations. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, independent, the Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to. A recorded vote has been requested, pursuant to committee Rule three, aye.

Two. Further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. Do other any other members have? Mr. Harris is recognized?

Has? Mr. Harris has an amendment at the desk? Yes.

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

Mr. Chairman, amendment number 38 I have at the desk,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 38 offered by Mr. Harrison North Carolina,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize distinguished gentleman from North Carolina, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

I offer an amendment to remove language in the research title that encourages us, colleges and universities, to partner with international organizations, including the United Nations, the World Bank and other global institutions. This amendment, let me be clear, does not eliminate the program. It does not restrict competitive grants, and it does not prevent institutions from forming partnerships abroad. What this amendment does is actually simple.

It removes congressional encouragement for collaboration with these global institutions that do not always align with American interest. If federal research dollars are being awarded to strengthen us agriculture and expand our producers access to international markets, then the primary focus should be advancing American competitiveness, American innovation and American leadership, not embedding partnerships with multinational bureaucracies that often pursue agendas inconsistent with the American values us, colleges and universities are fully capable of forming partnerships that serve our national and international interest without statutory language steering them toward the United Nations or other globalist institutions, Congress should not signal that partnering with these institutions is a Preferred Pathway for success at a time when global institutions increasingly influence agricultural standards, environmental policies and trade practices in ways that can disadvantage American producers. We should be cautious

about formally encouraging deeper entanglement. This amendment would ensure that federal research investments remain centered on United States priorities accountable to US taxpayers and align with us sovereign.

County, we can promote innovation, strengthen imports and support our land grant institutions without promoting globalist partnerships that may not share our values or economic interest. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back. gentleman yields back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. Any any members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Ms. buzansky,

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I strongly oppose this amendment. We gain nothing from siloing ourselves as a nation, especially when it comes to public agricultural research. American farmers and consumers benefit when research institutions collaborate, share information and solve problems together, interdisciplinary and international, public research is not a weakness, it's one of America's greatest strengths.

Penicillin is one of the clearest examples. The discovery of penicillin and recognition of its therapeutic potential happened in England, but figuring out how to mass produce it happened right here in the United States, at a USDA lab in Peoria, Illinois, my home town, that breakthrough saved millions of lives. It happened because knowledge was shared, not hoarded. Why would we cut that model off at the knees by discouraging the sharing of critical research information.

What is happening in agriculture doesn't stop at the border. Plant diseases and animal health threats. Don't recognize state sovereignty. Climate pressures affect food systems worldwide.

If we want to protect American producers, we need access to global data, research networks and early warning systems not having USDA encourage our research institutions to collaborate with international organizations,

only isolates our researchers and weakens our own competitiveness in my district, the University of Illinois, College of Agricultural, consumer and environmental sciences. ACES is proudly committed to sharing research with the global community. Their Office of International Programs facilitates international research, education and outreach. Faculty and students are working on food security, climate resilient, agriculture, international development policy issues that directly impact American farmers.

When Illinois researchers collaborate globally, they are not giving something away. They are bringing that knowledge back home. If we want to lead in biotechnology, precision agriculture, animal health and sustainability, we cannot retreat from the global research community, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote no on this amendment, and I yield back yields to the Ranking Member Yankee,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yankee, Ranking members recognized

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Yanking something. Okay. Thank you so much Ms. Budzinski for yielding this amendment, to me, just makes no sense to strike language directing the research institutions to partner with international organizations. How can we effectively partner on international agriculture research when we are disallowing our research institutions collaboration with international research centers and organizations with access to resources that we may not have when we silo our research institutions.

American farmers are the one who lose out on important technology and environmental work pioneered in other parts of the world. I urge my colleagues to vote no on undermining collaboration with our friends and partners to the detriment of American farmers. With that yield back to Ms. Budzinski.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Budzinski retains the time, and I yield back thank you, and she yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on behalf of the amendment for Mr. Harrison. Mr. Taylor is recognized.

Rep. Dave Taylor (R-Ohio)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield my time to Mr. Harris.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Harris is recognized.

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you Mr. Taylor for yielding. Let me be clear again in the response that we've heard, we've heard about that this amendment does not prohibit institutions from partnering with international organizations, it simply removes congressional encouragement for American institutions to partner with these international organizations. In other words, we heard a moment ago about the University of Illinois, that's a great partnership.

That's a great program, but Congress should not signal a preference for multinational bureaucracies over direct bilateral or private sector relationships. And again, removing preferential language is not isolationism, and we've got to make sure we understand that it preserves flexibility while keeping the emphasis on US leadership and sovereignty true leadership. Doesn't require statutory alignment with institutions that often promote regulatory framework at odds with our American producers. I just offer this amendment as a warning, as a way, and an action that I believe would serve us well as we move forward, and with that, I'll yield my time back to Mr. Taylor.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Balance of his time.

Rep. Dave Taylor (R-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Harris. I appreciate your amendment. I do support it, and I encourage my colleagues to vote for it as well. And I yield back the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Harris's amendment. Any other members seek recognition to speak of Mr. Harris amendment, the gentlelady from Maryland is recognized.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Mr. Chairman. Thank you for recognizing me. I was not planning on speaking about this amendment, but it I really a little bit baffled, because I spent a lot of time in my career working in international partnerships.

I worked at the Department of Commerce as deputy assistant Secretary And you know, really, we do not live in silos in this world in any political or business sense, and if anything, partnering with international organizations like development banks, like research centers, is a collaborative approach to global food security that protects American interests. You know, combating shared threats, agricultural challenges such as pests and animal diseases and African swine fever. These things don't, you know, recognize borders and international collaboration and knowledge sharing allows for tackling these issues before they impact our US economy and our agricultural sector. It does not mean that we don't look carefully at what different organizations and banks and nonprofits that we're working with, and we don't put in that.

We are not looking at how they might impact us negatively. But it is an important thing to be collaborative. It also expands markets. These help us develop agricultural systems in developing countries, and they transform them from aid recipients to future commercial buyers for us privates.

It leverages resources and expertise when you're working with developmental banks, they facilitate sharing of research and technology and funding to have global productivity, which in turn strengthens our supply chains and economic stability, and they strengthen trade and safety collaborations allow for the Harmonization of international food safety standards and regulations and reduce trade barriers for us, farmers and exporters, I believe that we really have to be engaged in a leader across

multiple forums, because, you know, we have long been at the forefront of leading the rest of the world, and if we start to dial it back, then we will allow others to have that competitive edge and more collaboration is always something that is hard to cut off. So with that, I yield back, and I would voice my

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleLady shields back any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. If not, I'll weigh in here. I, you know, I want to thank the gentleman for raising this issue, and believe the amendment maintains the spirit of this program while narrowing the focus. You know, I believe that there is incredible value in strategic partnership with international organizations on a case by case basis in food and agriculture, and given the fact that this amendment encourages, does not require, does not mandate, I will support this amendment so hearing no further conversation.

The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying, aye, All those opposed say no,, the independent of the Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to Mr. Harris, seek a recorded vote. Yes, very good. The somewhere here A recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee roll three, aye, two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other member secret commission Ms. Pingree has an amendment at the desk. Do? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 49

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Number 49 The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 49 offered by Ms. Pingree, a main

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize and distinguish gentlelady, the sponsor of the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So this is a simple bipartisan amendment that I think should be not hard to support. This would add reducing food loss and waste as a priority area within afri Agriculture and Food Research Initiative at USDA, this is an issue I've worked on for a very long time with my colleague, Mr. Newhouse, and I will be sorry to see him leave this body thanks to all the good work that he has done. You know, we don't often think a lot about food waste, but we waste about 30 to 40% of our food supply and.

[IN PROGRESS]

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

In this country, all sectors of the food supply chain generate food waste, but the greatest burden really rests on United States households, costing them about $141 billion a year. So investing in food waste would help to bring down the cost of food and support American households and also recover the equivalent about 4.3 billion meals for American people. I originally filed this amendment to be the food date labeling act, but there are some jurisdictional issues. I want to describe how important that issue is, though, you know, a lot of people experience this confusion over food date labeling, and it's one of the ways we waste the most amount of food, about 4.3 million tons of food waste because of this that alone costs our households and businesses more than $22 billion and just to remind you what this means,

you pick up an item in your pantry, and I'm sure this happens in everybody's household, and you look At the date and you find it very confusing, because there are a variety of different labels.

Used fresh is done, sell by, used by, expires, done. There is no federal regulation that standard size standardizes food date labels. So there is a state patchwork of these kinds of labels. Mr. Newhouse and I have a bill called the food date labeling Act, which sets a federal standard and makes this very easy, it would either say Best If Used By to indicate optimal freshness and quality, or use by to indicate a date that you should throw it away.

It's just that simple. But as we know, in many households, there's somebody who says, oh, it's expired. You can't possibly eat that, and someone else who says, Oh no, that's just going to be fine. And the fact is, many times it is just fine.

But I sometimes call this bill the domestic harmony bill, because it would end a lot of these fights that happen in the home. It's a common sense idea. It would have zero impact on the budget. It's supported by a wide variety of groups, the zero food waste coalition.

It also has broad industry support that would like to end this patchwork of state laws, like the consumer brands Association, the American frozen food Institute, Walmart and more. So, while I understand there are jurisdictional issues that prevent us from putting this particular language in this bill, I would love to get the Chairman's commitment to working with me and Mr. Newhouse to move that bill forward to try to resolve some of these jurisdictional issues, and while we continue to work on that front, this amendment would just move the needle here a little bit today, supporting research at afri that will help us identify more ways to reduce food loss and waste. And with that, I encourage everyone's support of this, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I appreciate gentlelady. Let me weigh in here, and then we'll open it up for any other house who wants to speak. I want to thank the gentlewoman for bringing this amendment forward and for her interest in directing USDA to

provide additional research on food loss and food waste. Given the bipartisan support of this amendment, I will be voting yes on this amendment, and encourage my colleagues to do the same yield back.

I think Mr. Newhouse wanted to speak on the amendment Yes.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd love to chime in a little bit and support Ms. Pingree and her offering of this amendment. You know, I've had the pleasure of working alongside Ms. Pingree on several, several efforts. We are also Co-chairs of something called the Food Recovery caucus.

We used to call it the food waste caucus, but that didn't have a very good ring to it, but we we've done a lot of good work, and hope to do more, particularly with the food date labeling act. And as she said, this is really an unconscionable thing that we should all pay attention to. Every year, an estimated 40% of the food production in the United States goes to waste. 40% that's just a that's just a tremendous number.

It's unnecessarily high. And I think we all need to work together to make sure that the food products that our farmers work so hard to produce and that we invest in, by many of the programs that we've been talking about for the last couple of days in this markup, and certainly in this term, in this committee, we need to work hard to make sure that that those efforts don't go to waste. And so by by adding this one phrase of reducing food loss and waste, making that a priority, one of our initiatives, that we're not only acknowledging that this is a problem, but I think that we're truly committing ourselves to finding ways to be able to reduce the amount of food waste that we see every year. So I truly appreciate Ms. bingree efforts on this.

As I said, I appreciate working with her. I'm supporting this amendment. Happy to hear that the Chairman is two and a way to encourage all my colleagues to do the same. And also, just an added note, I also very happy in all.

Uh, support domestic harmony as well. So thank you for putting that in there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield Thank you gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Ms. Pingree's amendment? Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Seeing none they're hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment.

All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying, aye,. Those opposed set by saying no. Independent Chair, the ayes have it the amendment is agreed to. Dr. Adams has an amendment

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

At the desk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have amendment number 91

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Dr. Adams has amendment 91 at the that is Rick is at the desk, without objection. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 91 offered by Ms. Adams of North Carolina,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, gentlelady, Dr. Adams to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

The 1890 land grant. HBCUs are economic engines, and 19 of them nationwide. They contribute billions to local economies, and they open doors for tens of thousands of students every year. They don't just educate, they create opportunity.

I am a proud alumna of North Carolina, ANT State University, an 1890 institution in Greensboro, North Carolina, and I've seen firsthand how

transformation, how transformative these centers can be. This amendment builds on a proven model. It expands the centers of excellence that HBCUs across the country, strengthening research innovation and workforce development. It creates more hands on learning opportunities for students, and it prepares students for high demand careers in agriculture, in science and technology and beyond.

And it boosts rural economies when we invest in these institutions, we drive job creation, entrepreneurship and long term growth in the communities that they serve. And I want to mention that these centers of excellence were created in 2015 to celebrate and to recognize the 125th anniversary of 1890 institutions. I know that that was the whole point of the program, and that we should stick to that original purpose as written, this bill would open it up to other institutions doing that changes what the program was meant to do, and it takes away from the special recognition it was created to give this amendment is a smart, targeted investment in students, rural America and our nation's future. And I urge my colleagues to support it, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back Jill.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Lady yells back, I appreciate that any other members seek recognition to speak on the gentlelady's amendment, Mr. Figures is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Congresswoman Adams for your leadership, not just on this amendment, but in this space in general. I appreciate you for bringing forward this amendment and recognizing the role that Centers for Excellence play in agricultural research, education and extension. The Farm Bill already requires National Institute of Food and Agriculture to recognize centers of excellence in research, education and extension in the Food and Agricultural Sciences. It also directs the agency to give priority to these centers in competitive grant programs.

That was a very important step forward, but recognition without sufficient scale and resources limits its impact. The 1890 land grant universities have long served as engines of opportunity in both rural and urban communities.

They educate many first generation college students. They train the next generation of agricultural scientists and veterinarians, they provide extension services to farmers who may not otherwise have access to technical assistance, and they conduct applied research that directly improves crop resilience, animal health and food safety in my district, Tuskegee University exemplifies what a center of excellence can be and what it should be.

Tuskegee is advancing veterinary medicine, strengthening small and minority farmers and developing solutions that address real world challenges in agriculture and public health. The work being done there does not stay in academic journals. It actually reaches producers, farmers, families and communities. Yet, despite this proven impact, the demand for 1890 led research, education and extension far exceeds the number of.

Centers of excellence and the level of authorized funding currently available. My colleague's amendment recognizes that if we truly value innovation in food and agricultural sciences, we must invest accordingly, expanding the number of 1890 centers of excellence and increasing authorization levels is about ensuring these institutions can compete, expand and sustain the research and extension services that so many communities depend on. If we want to strengthen rural economies, close equity gaps in agricultural research and prepare for the challenges facing our food system in the future, then we should support this amendment. Our 1890 universities give so much to our communities, and they deserve the resources to continue to grow.

I thank my colleague for bringing this forward, and I urge support. Thank you, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appreciate gentlemen You yield back any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Figures on Dr. Adams amendment, amendment number 91 Ranking Members recognize

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to say thank you to my colleague, Ms. Adams, who are introducing this amendment. It certainly updates the

amount of authorization to reflect an increased number of centers, and it also increases the number of centers of excellence to better reflect essential research priorities. I urge my colleagues to vote yes, and I'd like to thank Ms. Adams for this amendment

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Dr. Adams amendment. Any other members seek to speak on this amendment, if not, let me weigh in here. I want to thank the gentlewoman for bringing forward this amendment, which addresses provisions in her 1890s advancing and building leadership and excellence Opportunity Act, the bill before us today contains language identical to that from the 2024 Farm Bill, which is based on the gentlelady's bill. It expands the number of centers of excellence at 1890 institutions and creates new focus areas.

And I was glad to include this language in today's package to address my colleagues continued support for 1890 institutions, and believe that this is yet another example of bipartisan nature of this bill, because we were unable to accommodate the increase in authorization that this amendment is requesting, I am going to be unable to support this amendment. However, the gentlelady has my commitment to work with with you and my Senate counterparts in conference to address the funding considerations to accompany this bill's increase in the number of Senators of excellence, so given hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor this amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, independent of the Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to a recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee Rule three, aye, two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed.

Any other members have amendments under Title Seven, research, Mr. Van Orden is recognized. Mr. Van Orden has an amendment at the desk,

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

I think in a an amendment at the desk, and then number 124, amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Van Orden has amendment number one, two for the Clerk shall report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 124 offered by Mr. Van Orden of Wisconsin,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment shall be considered as read. Now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin and sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment would require that 15% of funding for grants related to agriculture, conservation, education and workforce development be awarded to two year institutions. I worked very closely across al with my dear friend, Representative Elfreth, for this amendment, and she has legislation that would accomplish the same goal. A technical education is the lifeline of our agriculture industry, and it must be respected as so we live in a world where not everyone needs a four year degree, and at some point in the 1970s people started looking down at us because we wanted to work with our hands and without us, we would have nothing. These lights are not on because someone has a degree in 13th century French poetry, they're on because someone went to trade school.

We absolutely need to make sure that our two year institutions and technical colleges have access to the resources they need to educate and train our AG workforce. This builds a skilled workforce, a career and technical education. CTE prepare students with a technical and. Practical skills needed to fill essential agriculture jobs.

It closes the skills gap. CTE helps address workforce shortages by ensuring graduates are job ready for high skill, high wage careers in agriculture supports diverse AG careers. Agriculture includes fields like agribusiness, conservation science, food processing, environmental services. And it's not just about farming.

It connects education to employment. CTE combines academic learning with hands on training, preparing students for either college or direct entry into the workforce. It provides strong earning potential. Many CTE pathways lead to well paying careers, even without a bachelor's degree.

Now I know the Chairman is supportive of this, and he is supportive of increasing federal support for community colleges and universities with two year programs as the base text creates a new program specifically for community colleges now, because this amendment, sir, is duplicative with some efforts that you have in the base text, I've spoken to my friend again, Ms. Elfreth, and we would like to withdraw this amendment at this time, sir, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I appreciate the gentleman offering amendment withdrawing, and the recognition it is what he was asking for is outstanding, but it is duplicative. We were able to put that into the bill through the the Chairman's Mark. Thank you. Yeah, excellent.

Other any other members have amendments under Title Seven? Research funding generally from Maryland is recognized. What? What number?

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 84

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right. gentlelady from Maryland has amendment number 84 The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 84 offered by Mrs. McClain Delaney of Maryland, without objection.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize distinguished gentlelady, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment strengthens the grants for community college Agriculture and Natural Resource programs by explicitly prioritizing agricultural conservation and expanding work based learning opportunities tied directly to organizations that hire graduates in this field. It is something needed to train the AG community of tomorrow. We know that there's been strong bipartisan support for the farm Bill's conservation programs. Of course, we don't always agree on how we get there, but supporting our lands and those producers that work our lands is a priority across this community and across this committee, conservation investments support viable farms, healthy soils, clean water and resilient rural communities.

They are good for producers and good for the long term stewardship of our lands. But we know that funding alone does not put conservation practices on the ground. The pillar between federal conservation programs and farmers happens through well trained technical assistance providers. These are the professionals who sit at the kitchen table with our producers, who walk their fields, who identify challenges and help them navigate available programs and funding.

They're the ones who design, design conservation plans, approve practices and help oversee implementation right now, farmers conservation districts, I know Farm Bureau's in my district, and private industry are all telling us the same thing. Work forest shortages are a bottleneck. We simply do not have enough trained professionals to meet the demand, and as conservation programs scale up and farmer investment grows, much of the current workforce is nearing retirement. If we are serious about delivering conservation outcomes, we must be just as serious about building the workforce that makes those outcomes possible.

That starts with our community colleges and agricultural programs. Preparing the next generation of conservation professionals requires more than classroom instruction. It actually requires real life experience, learning

how to work directly with producers, with building trust and understanding the business realities of farming and then delivering practical solutions in the field, this amendment prioritize experiential learning, apprenticeships and work based learning opportunities. It also directly connects students with organizations that will hire them.

It strengthens recruitment, improves retention, and creates a clear pathway into good paying careers and conservation, something that is needed across rural America. Students gain hands on training and certifications while earning a paycheck. Employers gain a pipeline of qualified professionals ready to serve farmers on day one. If we want conservation programs to succeed, we must invest not only in practices, but in the people who make those practice.

As possible. This amendment does exactly that, and I urge my colleagues to support it. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentlelady, and thank her for yielding back. Any members seek to be recognized. Let me take the opportunity to recognize myself at this point, and we'll see if any others want to speak on it. I want to thank the gentlewoman for bringing this amendment forward to ensure that we support students in the food and agriculture sector who are enrolled in community colleges.

We're ensuring that those pursuing fields related to natural resources are also supported. So I'll be voting yes on this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. I yield back any other members seek recognition to speak on this. On this amendment, Ranking Members recognize

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that support, and I just like to say we take yes for an answer.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appreciate anyone else seek to speak on the amendment offered by Ms. McClain Delaney. Anybody else seeking to speak, if not hearing no further

conversation? The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,.

Those opposed by saying no, in the opinion of the Chair the ayes have it the amendment is agreed to any other members have any other amendments being offered under Title Seven? Research Any other members offering amendments under Title Seven. Well, if not, I'm I take the privilege of offering an amendment. Oh, you have one.

I thought you did. My wife. Mr. Figures, for an amendment. Ms. fingers has an amendment at the table.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

I have an amendment at the desk. Mr. Chairman, amendment number 76

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. figures has amendment number 76 he's offered the amendment. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 76 offered by Mr. Figures of Alabama,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Alabama sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment provides support for 1890 land grant institutions by explicitly including them as eligible entities and by directing the Secretary to give priority consideration to projects led by these institutions. This amendment ensures that 1890 institutions are fully recognized within this program and that their work is not treated as secondary, optional or incidental. Instead, it acknowledges their central role in agricultural research, extension and education, particularly in areas

critical to farm animal health and disease prevention. It clarifies eligibility, adds 1890 institutions to the list of covered entities and prioritizes grants that leverage their expertise.

It does not create a new program, expand scope or add a regulatory burden. It simply ensures that institutions doing essential work are not left out. Farm Animal Health is not just a veterinary issue. It is a food security issue, it is a farmer livelihood issue, and it is a national economic issue.

Disease outbreaks can wipe out herds, disrupt markets and drive up food costs for families across the country. Preventing those outcomes requires research, early detection, Workforce Training and rapid extension of best practices to producers. That is exactly the role land grant universities were created to serve. 1890 institutions play a unique and indispensable role in this they often serve rural and underserved regions where access to veterinary services is already limited.

They train veterinarians and animal health professionals who are far more likely to practice in those communities, and they conduct applied research that directly improves herd health, bio security and disease management in my district, Tuskegee University again exemplifies this mission as an 1890 land grant institution, Tuskegee has a long history of leadership in veterinary medicine and animal health research. Their work supports livestock producers by advancing disease prevention strategies, improving animal welfare and strengthening the pipeline of veterinarians prepared to serve rural America. These are practical solutions that help farmers keep their animals healthy, their operations viable, and their communities economically stable. At a time when we face shortages of large animal veterinarians, increasing disease threats and growing pressure on producers, it makes no sense to sideline institutions that are already doing this work and doing it well.

This amendment ensures that when USDA is awarding grants under this programs, projects led by 1890 institutions receive the priority they deserve that strengthens animal health outcomes, improves disease preparedness and ensures Research and Extension resources reach the farmers who need the most supporting land grant. Universities is not just an investment in education, it is an investment in disease prevention Rural. Williams and long term stability of our food system. If we are serious about supporting farmers,

protecting livestock health and safeguarding our agricultural economy, then we must be serious about supporting the institutions that make that work possible.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back Mr. Chairman, thank you,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlemen thanks gentlemen for yielding back to any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Figures amendment, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Austin Scott is recognized.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I just want to acknowledge Fort Valley State University while we're on this issue, has got one of the best ruminant programs in the world. They do it a tremendous amount of research there, and it is one of the best veterinary programs for, as I said, remnants in the world. But I certainly they should, they should absolutely be eligible for any grants. But this actually gives preferential treatment to 1890 institutions.

If I read it correct, is that right?

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

It would grant them priority? Yes, sir, yeah.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

And I certainly want them to be eligible for it. There's, there's a lot of good work that goes on there, but I do believe that the process should be competitive, and I don't think that any universities following Fort Valley State to be someone who receives the grant and should receive preferential treatment with that I yield yields.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members seek recognition? Ranking Member for five minutes?

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Well, I glad I have the opportunity to thank a rural vet today, they're incredibly important in farm country across this country, we need to make sure that we use all the tools in our toolbox to address the veterinary shortage we have across this country, and that includes 1890s universities, which are developing strong candidates for Life Long agriculture careers. This amendment would ensure that 1890s are a part of the solution to the rural veterinary shortage. And I would urge my colleagues to vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Figures amendment, any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, not all. Let me share. I want to thank the gentleman from Alabama for his interest in ensuring 1890 land grant institutions are eligible entities under the veterinary services grant program so long as these institutions have an accredited college or school of veterinary medicine. Current statute already defines them as eligible entities.

Additionally, state agriculture, agricultural experiment stations or research farms are also eligible, even if they do not have an accredited school of veterinary medicine. The recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for this program specifically calls out 1890 institutions as eligible applicants, because the amendment is is unnecessary on the current statute. I'm not going to be supporting it, but I look forward to working, continuing to work with my colleagues on this topic for all the reasons. Have been talked about, certainly Ranking Member talked about, you know, one health that starts with the soil plants, but livestock or animals and humans and and we are desperately in need of more, especially large animal veterinarians.

So hearing no further conversation, the question is on the amendment. All those in favor the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no. In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to anyone. Have any other members have amendments under Title Seven, which is research.

Any other members have amendments under Title Seven? Research I do. I got one. So Thompson amendment number the amendment number is 151, I gotta do both parts.

Okay. Mr. Thompson has has offered amendment The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 151 offered by Chairman Thompson of Pennsylvania, without objection.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment were considered as read, and I now recognize myself the sponsor the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of this memp amendment. This amendment, I think it's pretty special amendment actually. This recognizes decades of commitment and service to 1890 institutions. This.

This This amendment would rename the 1890 scholarship program as the David a Scott scholarship program for students at 1890 institutions three.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

You're welcome, and so I don't think I need to say any more on that. I'm gonna yield back my time and see if and I recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. David Scott,

Rep. David Scott (D-Ga.)

I really don't know what to say except thank you and thank this committee. And God bless the 1890s you got three members of this committee who came up through the 1890s and I know they share with me, and I share with them all that it means, and the three of us recognize this. And I accept this in the name of this committee, and certainly in the name of the three other graduates, and here Alma Adams and Michael figures from Ella, yeah. And the other thing is, Mr. Sherman, we've been up here together now a quarter of a century.

I know I've been here 24 years. And God bless you, my friend, we've traveled the world. This is special. Let's give this committee and the Chairman a hand, won't you?

Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right, I believe the gentleman yelled her back. Yes, any other members seek recognition? The Ranking Member?

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Well, I just want to say, on behalf of the minority here today that we are so honored to support naming the 1890 scholarship program after its biggest champion. Chairman, David Scott. Thank you. I hope we can all come together to submit his legacy on this committee, this country.

Your legacy, Mr. Chairman, is secure in the history of this committee and in the history of this nation, and you should be so incredibly proud of that, because we are so incredibly proud of you. And I will just say this would make it permanent. And I urge my colleagues to support the Chairman's amendment, and we are incredibly grateful to you, Mr. Scott, thank you, Chairman.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

So Chairman Thompson, I just want to congratulate my long time friend and on his work on this, and you know, Georgia has benefited from your work, not just on this, but on many issues. But this in particular, is is just a well deserved honor for your work for many, many years, for the HBCUs and on behalf of the other members of the other members of the State George, I just want to congratulate you and thank you,

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Dr. Adams,

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I too want to join in supporting my colleague as the founder and Co-Chair of the bipartisan HBCU caucus, which I Co-Chair with Representative French Hill, I want to say how proud we are of you. I am a two time graduate. I'm a twice Aggie Aggie proud and which is in 1890 as well. And on behalf of all of our schools and and the caucus, I just want to extend my congratulations to you, and I hope it is permanent.

Been working a long time on this, and thank you so much for your for your stellar support and for all the work that you've done and that you will continue to do. God bless you. Thank.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, very good hearing. No further conversation. A question is on the amendment. All those in favor the amendment signify by saying aye, that was robust.

Those opposed by saying no in the append in the Chair, the aye certainly have it, and the amendment is agreed to

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Israel there any further debate or amendments to Title Seven, the research title Seeing none, hearing none. Title Seven is now closed. Title eight, which is the forestry title, I believe. Are there any amendments to title eight?

Mr. Chairman. Dr. DesJarlais is recognized and has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

I have amendment number 145,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. Dr. DesJarlais has offered amendment, and the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 145, offered by Mr. DesJarlais of Tennessee, without objection.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment will be considered as read. I now recognize a distinguished gentleman from Tennessee to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

I thank the Chairman and applaud his kind gesture to Mr. Scott. Very, very classy move and very well deserved. My amendment is about the impending shortage of white oak. You were all kind enough to pass this last year, and I'm offering it again.

It plays a critical role in the future of American white oak, which is one of the most important tree species in the eastern United States, occupies 104 million acres in this country, and is vital for bio diversity, wildlife and our economy. American white oak is used in almost every forest product, including furniture, flooring, cabinetry and barrels for aging wine, American whiskey, Kentucky bourbon, which is the America's native spirit by definition, passed by Congress, and must be aged in new charred oak barrels. This amendment addresses this specifically by establishing the white oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to encourage the Forest Service to work alongside private and state partners at no cost to the taxpayers. Additionally, the amendment asks the Forest Service and Department of Interior to regenerate white oak through a species of pilot projects on national parks and volunteer private lands.

It allows the Forest Service to enter into memorandums of understanding with land grant institutions to conduct much needed research on white oak the amendment, based off a bipartisan piece of legislation, does not authorize any new spending or programs, but instead would work within existing programs and agencies budget to preserve our heritage and fortify industry that is crucial to our economy. And with that, Chairman, I yield back appreciate

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlemen gentlemen your Olds back. Anyone, any members seek recognition to speak on Dr. Desir LA's amendment, white oak amendment. Anybody Ranking Member's recognized,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I just want to say I love white oaks, and we are happy to support this amendment

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any and the question for Mrs. Hayes,

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Can I just ask a question? Is it the same as the legislation that you introduced last year with no changes? I'm going to say yes to it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Good. And Gentlelady from Connecticut yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on the amendment. Any other members seek recognition to spend see to speak on Dr. dejar les amendment? If not, I'll let me weigh in here.

I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for raising this issue. I look forward to the important white oak reforestation and regenerative work that this amendment will foster. And I support this amendment and recommend my colleagues do the same

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment, all those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye. Those opposed by saying no. Independent Chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to any other members have Mr. Rose, it's a Tennessee thing.

Has an amendment at the desk.

Rep. John Rose (R-Tenn.)

Mr. Chairman, have amendment at the desk. Number amendment, number 17,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good without Mr. Rose has an amendment at the desk The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 17, offered by Mr. Rose of Tennessee,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, the sponsor. Answer the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. John Rose (R-Tenn.)

With more than 87% of Tennesseans exposed to wildfire risk, we see wildfires threaten homes, businesses, forests and critical infrastructure. Year after year, when those fires break out, it is our volunteer fire departments that are first on the scene, leaving their jobs, their families and their beds in the middle of the night, in some cases, to answer the call. These brave men and women do not ask for much. They ask for basic equipment that will not fail them, training so they can return home safely and tools to protect their neighbors and their communities.

The volunteer fire assistance program has been a lifeline in helping them meet these needs. It has helped departments purchase and maintain engines, obtain personal protective equipment, acquire communications gears, gear and receive essential wild land fire training, it has enabled small communities to stand up new departments, expand existing ones, and build the local capacity that is absolutely critical in the first minutes of a fire.

However, the statute that governs this program has simply not kept pace with reality. On the ground, the eligibility requirements were written more than four decades ago when our communities looked very different yet because the statute never changed.

Departments that once depended on the volunteer fire Assistance Program are nor are now shut out of the program that was designed for them. My amendment makes three targeted common sense updates to bring the volunteer fire assistance program into the modern era while staying true to its original intent. First, it raises the qualifying population threshold threshold for a community from 10,000 to 15,000 This is not a radical change, but a modest adjustment that reflects decades of growth in many small towns and rural communities. A community that once had 9000 people in 1980 may have 13,000 today, but its fire department is still largely volunteer, still short on resources and still responsible for protecting homes at the edge of our forests and grasslands.

Second, my amendment would change the staffing requirement from 80% volunteer non-salaried fire fighting personnel to 70% reflecting the realities of modern volunteer fire departments, some departments have had to add a small number of paid staff to meet increased call volumes, handle administrative burdens or ensure daytime coverage when volunteers are at work. However, those departments are still overwhelmingly volunteer, operating on tight budgets and facing the same equipment and training gaps as fully volunteer departments. Third, my amendment provides the secretary of agriculture with discretion to waive the local match requirement in appropriate cases, providing the secretary with flexibility simply gives the USDA a tool to ensure that the departments most in need are not turned away from the program because they cannot meet an inflexible match requirement. Importantly, this amendment is cost neutral and non-partisan.

It is supported by the National Association of State Foresters and the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Volunteer Fire Council, and by those who understand firsthand what it takes to protect our communities when we talk about national security, we cannot ignore the men and women in volunteer departments who are putting their lives on the line, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this amendment. Let it let us modernize the volunteer fire Assistance Program, strengthen our local response capacity and stand with the volunteer firefighters who stand watch

over our communities every day. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on my amendment to modernize the volunteer fire Assistance Program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. He yields back. Any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Rose's amendment, any members seek recognition to speak, if not, let me weigh in. I'd like to thank the gentleman from Tennessee for offering this amendment, the volunteer fire Assistance Program offers vital financial assistance to fire departments in rural areas across the country.

Without this assistance, many volunteer fire departments and communities surrounded by sparsely populated forests, mountains and plains would go without crucial tools to help them manage the lands that they know better than anyone else. As someone who's been a volunteer firefighter for state certified firefighter for decades, these rural communities also don't have a great tax base, and I know how they struggle just to keep the lights on and keep gasoline in the engines the population. Threshold for this program was set in 1978 and those from previously eligible communities may have grown beyond the 10,000 residents in the 48 years between then and now, they are still the first line of defense against fires and surrounding rural areas. It is critical that we continue to support these departments that protect our rural communities.

With that, said, I support this amendment to raise the population cap and modernize the program in other ways, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same any other I guess I did ask twice. Okay with with that? Somebody seeking recognition? Okay.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment, all those in favor the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, in the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to any other member, any members have debate or or amendments to offer. Mr. Newhouse is recognized with an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment number four at the desk.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Newhouse is sorry. I You, sorry. Ms. Newhouse is offered amendment.

The Clerk will report the title

The Clerk

Of the amendment. Amendment number four, offered by Mr. Newhouse of Washington,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman sponsor of the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, my amendment today would reauthorize the timber production expansion program, which is set to expire at the end of this year. This is an important amendment, and I believe that it certainly warrants our attention. Washington State's timber industry, like many other states, supplies our region with good paying jobs. It helps reduce the risk of wildfires and is a critical tool in responsibly managing our forests.

Responsible forest management is something that I've always advocated for, and it's an important it is very important that we look at ways to expand our timber production in the United States. One of the ways that we can do so, and we have done so, is by supporting our timber and wood processing companies, by helping them invest in their facilities and their equipment, and, in turn, their people. The timber production expansion program is a guaranteed loan program that gives timber mills the ability to grow their operations. Not only that, it gives mills the chance to support rural communities that stand to benefit even more from a strong local timber industry.

You know, with file wildfire seasons growing increasingly worse and long year after year, it's important to support expanding our mill operations, especially those that process hazardous fields reductions. So while I greatly support this program and understand it's important issues, unfortunately outside of this committee's control, at least from what I'm told, prevent us from including this important provision in this bill, and so I will unfortunately have to withdraw my amendment, but certainly look forward to continuing to work with members of this committee and others to ensure that we get this program reauthorized by the end of this year. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Let me take an opportunity to speak on the gentleman's amendment, and I thank him for offering this amendment today. Saw mills and forest products infrastructure remains critical for supporting our domestic forest products industry, our rural communities, and quite frankly, the health of the forest without that infrastructure, we are lost. Keeping these facilities open is an important in order to support the urgent management needed on millions of acres of forest land. Unfortunately, for decades, we've seen the closure of saw mills and other forest product infrastructure facilities.

While there are some other forms of federal assistance to support this infrastructure, this program has this program has been helpful in recent years, unfortunately, given this Farm Bill as budget, new. Troll the cost of this amendment prevents us from including new funding or an authorization of the of this program. Let me just say also in my conversations with the Senate, agriculture both appropriations and authorization, because, as I see the Senate taking lead on on any additional economic assistance I have placed, you know, I've shared with them that I believe what we need, like $200 million because, you know, where trade is disrupted, the shipping of trees. You know, the forest owners are inconvenienced, but the trees do get bigger and more value, but the saw mills go away, and then there's, there's just no reason to cut them down without that infrastructure, to cut them down and replant so that we we get, also the environmental benefit of those new and juvenile trees that suck up that carbon and manufacture top soil.

So I appreciate you bringing this amendment, and I will continue to work with Senate leadership on on that issue, as well as others with special for

especially crops. And so I appreciate you bringing this amendment forward today and and commit to working with you on ways to support forest products and address this important issue. Thank you, Mr. Newhouse, any other members have amendments under Yeah, that's right. Ms. Salinas is recognized.

She has an amendment at the desk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

I have an amendment at the desk. Number 35 very good.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mrs. Salinas has amendment number 35 at the desk The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 35 offered by Ms. Salinas of Oregon,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment would consider it as read, I now recognize the distinguished, gentlelady to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Her amendment. Thank you. Mr. Chair, Oregon is home to about 30 million acres of forest land. That's about half of the land in our state, according to the Oregon Department of Forestry, our forestry sector supports over 60,000 jobs throughout the state, and that's a really conservative estimate.

These jobs include forest management, forestry support, forest products, industries, recreation and more. Furthermore, Oregon's privately owned forests generate upwards of $10 billion in sales and manufacturing every year to say that Oregon forests are foundational to our state's economy and character would be a clear understatement. As Ranking Member of the forestry subcommittee, I've worked in a bipartisan manner on the forestry

title, and I appreciate the forest that the forestry title includes pieces of my bipartisan bill the timber innovation for building Rural Communities Act. Specifically.

This title includes section 8432 which would reduce the match requirement for the wood Innovation Grant Program by half, and section 8433 which would establish a platform for measuring and tracking carbon emissions, sequestration and storage of wood products. I'm offering amendment 35 to advocate for the full bill to be included and for this committee to do more to foster the development of innovative wood product technologies like mass timber construction. My amendment would insert two provisions of the timber innovation for building Rural Communities Act in this Farm Bill that were not initially included. The first provision is the wood building education accelerator grant program.

These grants would fund programs that support the critical elements of designing and building with wood including traditional wood products, mast timber and other advanced wood products. And the second provision is the rural infrastructure and building pilot program. This program would fund pilot programs that demonstrate the use of innovative wood products in the construction and renovation of rural infrastructure and building projects like affordable housing. Right now, rural families are suffering under the weight of high prices, and too many families simply cannot afford the basic necessities to survive.

My amendment not only supports the important timber industry in my state and district, but it would also address the housing crisis. Housing is one of the single biggest cost to a family budget, and making it affordable is key to supporting our communities. I urge my colleagues on this committee to support include inclusion of this amendment in the Farm Bill and this important step toward housing affordability. I look forward to working with Chairman Thompson and our Senate counterparts to get this legislation across the finish line.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. I appreciate general a she's yield back. Do any members seek recognition? To speak with Ms. Salinas amendment.

Any members seek recognition? Sorry, Ranking Member's recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Yes, I just like to add my support to Representative Salinas amendment. Anyone who's met recently with the Forest Products folks will know that they're currently experiencing a lack of demand relative relative to the overwhelming supply of wood in this country. Housing starts are down, in the President's tariffs have thrown the hardwood sector into chaos. That's why I'm so pleased to support Ms. Salinas amendment.

Mass timber innovations have enabled taller wood buildings than ever before. In fact, the tallest mass timber building in the world, and I can't believe I'm going to say this is in Wisconsin, 25 stories I know, I know, however, to capitalize on these Tremendous Innovations, America needs more architects that have experience in training working with wood constructions. Ms. Salinas amendment would do just that, and I'm pleased to support it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members seek recognition to speak on Ms. Salinas amendment, seeing none, I'll take the opportunity. I want to thank the gentlelady from Oregon for introducing this amendment. I'm always open to ideas that would open up new markets for our timber producers, harvesters, our processors, our forest products industry needs new markets. I'm excited for the new era in forest products, marked by advancement in mass timber production, which this amendment aims to stimulate.

And while I appreciate the intent of this amendment appears to be duplicative of existing programs, particularly the Forest Services wood innovation grants program that is in place, and I appreciate generally bringing this amendment forward, innovative forest products are a priority for me, and I would like to work with work with you going forward on ways that we can address these important needs for existing programs. We need markets that's part of, you know, providing for a healthy forest and a healthy rural economy. So seeing no other amendments or hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment.

All those in favor the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no. In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it and

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee roll three, aye. Two further procedures on this amendment shall be postponed. Other members have any additional any amendments under Title eight, the forestry title Ms. Pingree is recognized, please.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you. Mr. Chair, I just want to talk briefly about a program that's been very important to my state, but is currently not funded in this bill, the forest land owner support program of the USDA plays a critical role in empowering private forest owners and enhancing forest health across our country. The program has been a cornerstone for developing technical assistance, financial support and training to both landowners and service foresters, particularly in the eastern part of the United States, where the vast majority of forest land is privately owned, like my State of Maine, The flsp enables state and county service foresters, many of whom have benefited from the extensive training to assist land owners with NRCS supported forest management plans under Programs like equip NCSP not providing the forest land owner Support Program has reduced county and state technical services providers ability to engage in broader initiatives such as collaborative projects with conservation groups like Audubon. Overall, the flsp program utilizes a lean budget to leverage significant resources and thus providing vital proving vital to maintaining a trained and accessible network of service foresters, supporting land owner engagement and advancing conservation on private forest lands which dominate the landscape in many eastern areas.

Maintaining and increasing This funding would significantly enhance these efforts, providing more support for landowners and increasing forest stewardship at a time where resilience and habitat conservation are more important than ever. Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you. gentlelady yielding back. Any other members have amendments under Title eight, the forestry title. Any other members have any amendments under Title eight, the forestry title, if not, let me take another privileged opportunity to introduce an amendment, amendment number five, and

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Oh, we didn't vote on that was an amendment. She was just making a statement. Yeah, it was a chat. There you go.

Yeah. Now I haven't, I haven't missed a vote yet this time. Don't mess me up. So Chairman has offered amendment number five, an amendment The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number five, offered by Chairman Thompson of Pennsylvania,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The, without objection amendment will be considered as read, and I now recognize myself, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of the amendment. The the this amendment is pretty straightforward, as we all know. We've during this amendment, we've we've had these beautiful flowers at the at the dais, remembering our our good friend Doug LaMalfa and this past this past December, President Trump signed into law a new three year extension of the secure Rural Schools program, and While the program has many supporters in Congress and nationwide, this last reauthorization was spearheaded by our late colleague Doug LaMalfa, given his tireless work on this program and his long time service to many rural communities impacted by it, my amendment would honor Doug by naming this important program after him, in honor of a stalwart defense of rural communities in forester areas across our country and a champion of the program, is my sincere belief that our friend Doug LaMalfa deserves this honor. This was a cause near and dear to his heart, and I believe I speak for all of us when I say that he is dearly missed.

With that, I ask my colleagues to support this amendment as we remember and honor our friend Doug LaMalfa, and this renames the secure rural schools and community self determination legislation after Doug LaMalfa and I yield Back other members seek recognition to speak on the on the amendment, any other members seek recognition, if not

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment, all those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed saying no, in the opinion the Chair the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to. All right, do any hearing? Is there any further debate or amendments to title eight?

Hearing? None. Title eight, the forestry title is now closed. Title Nine, are there any amendments to Title Nine, which I believe is the energy title, and seeing my listing,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any amendments on Title Nine,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Sorensen is recognized.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk to offer. Amendment number 149,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Ms. Lucas,

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The gentleman reserves a point of order. The sponsor of the amendment is recognized for an explanation.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, we all know, because we hear from our farmers that input costs are creeping up higher and higher, while commodity prices sink lower and lower. The President's economic policies are devastating markets for producers in my district with grain bins that sit well over capacity nationally, corn growers are facing their fourth straight year of negative profitability, including an average loss of $125 per acre for the current crop marketing year alone, allowing year round e 15 would increase domestic corn demand by More than 2 billion bushels annually, increasing access to higher blends nationwide would also provide consumers with a more affordable, low carbon fuel option at the pump, saving Americans more than $20 billion in fuel costs. But here's the thing today.

Wednesday, March the fourth. Who knows where gas prices are going to go? Because we have more than a dozen countries in the Middle East. In the beginning of a war.

Prices are going up, and people already cannot afford their bills. We keep going this route. American farmers are going to face economic conditions rivaling the 1980s farm crisis. We need certainty for farmers and for my neighbors at the pump, so that they don't go bankrupt.

We can do that work here today by opening up markets in America. It's time that we put farmers ahead of big oil that will do anything and everything to keep this from moving forward, but here and now, we can get nationwide. E 15 passed, and my amendment to this bill does just that. I urge adoption in this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

There's a gentleman. Insist on his point of order?

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Chairman, I make a point of order that the amendment contains language relating to subject matter under Rule 10 of another committee, adding such language to the bill would violate rule 10.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Chair is prepared to roll the amendment does, in fact, add subject matter within the rule.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Mr. Chairman, I asked to be heard on the point of order

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Committee, therefore the amendment is in violation and the point of order is upheld.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to be heard on the point of order.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, we're not going to debate the point of order. You're welcome to appeal. Appeal it.

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

I'd like to appeal that point of order, please. [CROSS TALK]

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Mr. Chairman, I move to lay the appeal on the table.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The motion to add is a non-debatable motion. The motion to table is not debatable. Question is, shall the committee table the gentleman's appeal? All those in favor signify by saying aye, all opposed by saying nay,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the motion to table is agreed to, the gentleman's amendment is not

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

In order. Mr. Chairman, I respectfully appeal the ruling of the Chair.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

We will,

Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

I would like to call for a recorded [CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

On the table motion

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appealing the rolling of the Chair on the Tabling of the motion. Yeah. So the challenge is on you're asking for challenging the Tabling of the motion. We will have a roll call vote.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 25 and the nays are 21

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Motion is approved. Let me just say as we go on to the next amendment, you've got my commitment to work on year round e 15, but it is clearly not in our jurisdiction, and unfortunately, Energy and Commerce has a death grip on it. It needs to get done, fully supportive that and happy to work with you on that. We just got to go in a manner where we can ultimately be successful.

I also think the time is right for I know there's been resistance in the past, and I just feel like things are lining up behind it. It's good for everybody. It's good for the petroleum industry. It adds value to their product.

Anyone else have any other members have amendments under Title? Ms. Budzinski, nine in energy. Ms. Budzinski is recognized or has a motion or an amendment at the table.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 53

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. Budzinski has an amendment at the desk, amendment 93 and the Clerk will report the title,

The Clerk

Amendment number 53 offered by Ms. bush of Illinois,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished young lady in the sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, my amendment would reverse what I believe is a misguided change in the Farm Bill that targets funding to farmers in rural communities that choose to use solar power. In my district alone, we have 12

reap grants awarded. 11 of them are solar projects. Those solar investments total $1.8 million generate approximately $291,000 in annual energy savings and produce enough electricity to power 208 homes, and yet this provision would effectively limit or prohibit any new investment that can save money, produce energy and provide real economic development in Rural America, just because Republicans don't like solar projects.

Republicans haven't shown a single piece of evidence that this restriction is necessary, and they're simultaneously calling for a study on this issue. If the facts aren't in yet, why aren't we just why are we trying to legislate as if they are at a time when farm bankruptcies are rising when input costs are high and when producers are looking for diversified revenue streams. This bill, bill pulls one more option off the table. Farmers are choosing solar, and solar accounts for only about 3% of agricultural land loss, far less than urban and residential development.

If we are serious about rural prosperity, energy independence and meeting growing demand, we must be expanding our options and not restricting them. Farmers and families should have the freedom to decide what works best for their land and their communities. This provision does the opposite, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentlelady. She yields back any members. Yes, must be recognized. Mr. Taylor is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Dave Taylor (R-Ohio)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this amendment. I'm not opposed any form of reliable energy. But under the Biden Administration, because of Democrat tax credits and Democrat taxpayer giveaways, vast swathes of farmland across the country were taken over by solar farms, and not just any farmland, but some of the best and richest land in the world.

Oftentimes, the leases range from 30 to 40 years. For these projects. The amendment in front of us would continue to allow those taxpayer giveaways

to solar farms. The section that this amendment seeks to eliminate simply says that our tax dollars should not be incentivizing the best farmland in the world being taken out of production by solar farms.

In no way prohibits farmers from choosing solar. Under the current bill, farmers can still put solar on their land if they choose to, but we would not be funding it as we should not by allowing solar farms to proliferate across our country, we are inherently limiting the ability of our next generation of farmers to get into the business. It's hard to think of a less American agriculture friendly amendment to be considering in the AG committee, the government subsidizing solar panels on hundreds and thousands of acres across prime farmland, and the 34th sunniest state in the union is the sort of thing that births conspiracy theories, and we've all seen how quickly those can turn into facts. The Farm Bill should align with the USDA policy in this area, zero subsidies for solar farms on farmland.

Mr. Chairman, I oppose this amendment. I hope my colleagues will vote no and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman and yielding back, now recognize the Ranking Member for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment, this conversation, this provision in the skinny Farm Bill to strike the solar ban, or to ban solar. It's the very definition of a poison pill included to alienate Democratic members and constituents across the country that seek to ensure the country moves forward with energy policies that foster the future prosperity and independence of rural communities. It's sort of stunning to me, my Republican colleagues are trying to control what our nation's producers do with their land on their own terms. While the language provides exceptions, these exceptions, by no means go far enough.

At best, micro and small scale farm projects are unaffected. At worst, utility scale and larger projects that benefit rural communities are off the table. My colleagues have provided no evidence that this measure is useful, needed or

wanted. The lack of evidence is underscored by their request for a study in the previous section of the bill.

Why are they imposing a ban when they have no solid information to support it? Where's the data? If my colleagues were serious, they would wait until the report from section 9011, 9000, 9011, is completed, so we could have data on which to base these decisions. Farmers and families should be able to choose what to do with their land.

You hear my Republican colleagues talk about this constantly. You've probably even heard today this very comment, and yet they've included a provision here to limit farmers options, and at a time when farmers are facing an economic crisis, it's another example among a long list of examples that my colleagues are working toward to pull the rug out from under family farmers. And for those of you who didn't understand my Lucy with the football analogy just a moment ago, because we didn't have a moment to talk about this. Think about what's happened just in the last year in Congress, language to allow the year round sale of a 15 was set to be included in the appropriations bill, but again, we decided to perform and have a study committee.

Well, that study committee was due to study and come back to us, and it has not come back to us yet. Look, folks, I don't know how much longer we're going to wait in this Congress, and I appreciate that. You know some of you don't like solar, some of you don't like renewable energy, but we need to have a conversation about the various forms of energy in this country, renewable fuel is very, very important. Mike, corn growers, if you have looked at commodity prices lately, after having many of their markets decimated by tariffs, high input costs, low corn prices.

Every single day, I walk in my office and the first thing I look at is my bean and corn prices up on the board. Folks, I don't know what we're doing here, but we have got to start expanding domestic markets in our country. We've got to start diversifying our energy sources in our country. And if my farmer wants to put a solar farm on his land at the end of the day, that is their right to do so.

Lucy with the football one more time Charlie Brown goes to kick Democrats here, I would remind everybody the only time that e 15. Year round sales

gotten through the House of Representatives. It was under a Democratic controlled Congress. It was us, and at the end of the day, Lucy with the football pulling it up one more time.

I know we're making the argument that that is within the domain of the Energy and Commerce Committee, but I'm going to be honest, I am tired of giving our power away. I think we should raise some hell here today and say, Let's pass year round, 815 let's put it in the skinny Farm Bill. Let's make it not so skinny guys. It's a cost savings.

Maybe we can put a little more money back into equip when we do that tonight, I am tired of rely on on Republican leadership to do the right thing or the administration to do the right thing. I'm tired of my Republican colleagues being afraid of upsetting the administration if they kind of get out of line on something. Folks, we are long past time for the conversations that we should be having on year round e 15 and many of these other topics, I would just say to my colleagues, God, let's do something here tonight, more than just a no cost Farm Bill where we can't have a real conversation because we didn't have a real damn Farm Bill. And with that, I yield back five seconds of my time.

Mr. Chairman,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Great. By the way, we got a great Farm Bill. I recognize Mr. Bost from Illinois.

Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.)

Thank Thank you, Mr. Chair. And it's obviously very, very clear that the people in opposition to this never read the actual language. So let me tell you. First off, I oppose Representative Bass key is amendment number 53 which would strike section 9012, also known as the solar act.

From the 2026, Farm Bill, my bill, the solar Act establishes guidelines for the USDA funding for solar panel projects. Over the last decade, we've seen time and again, solar panel companies coming to rural areas to purchase or lease prime farmland, offering farmers money, and I and they can't refuse and and

taking this land out of production. Now I won't tell you. I don't blame the farmer.

I don't for take, taking the money, and I'll be the last person to tell, let me be clear on this, anyone what to do with their land. But the federal government should not be using taxpayer dollars to incentivize or subsidize taking our best land out of production, and that's what this bill deals with and if we keep this up without any regulations or input from our local communities, we're going to see major impacts on AG supply chain, our food security and our rural economies. To give future perspective on this issue, since 2012 solar panels on farmland nationwide have increased by nearly 50% with the Department of Energy estimating that we will need more than 10 million acres to scale up Solar energy by 2050 Additionally, the American Farmland Trust conduct, conducted a study and established roughly 83% of these new solar projects will be installed on farm land and ranch lands, with almost 50% placed on the most productive farmlands. The solar Act establishes guidelines for solar panel projects, providing flexibility for farmers, for on farm energy use, and ensuring that local communities have a say in the larger project.

There are no restrictions for putting solar panels on your barns, on your grain bins, or if a farmer wants to keep the land in production, like with with the AG radix, which is the way we can actually use specialty crops and use those solar panels to actually grow those specialty crops. I believe the language will keep will help establish much needed guard rails for solar panels on prime farmland and provide peace of mind to rural communities. Ladies and gentlemen all you have to do is go around my district and yours and yours. I'm not telling a person that they can't do it with their do what their property, what they want, but I do not believe we should be subsidizing them if they choose to do it, if they want to.

So you know this in this bill if, if you choose to go ahead and use all of the provide it for your own farm, you can actually use up to 50 acres, 50 acres, you can use five Besides that, the. Rules we laid out were studied. We talked with the Farm Bureau, we talked with their concerns. We have been arguing and discussing this, because you can't drive across this nation and say we are going to still provide the food and fiber for this nation and take out the land that we can do it with.

It is bad. And these companies come in and then with my state, with another problem, my state, which a majority of the legislators come out of Chicago and don't live around farmland, they took away local control for citing these for the first time ever in our state. Took away local control, folks, this is going to come back to hit us in the face and hit us hard, unless we put some kind of sensible guidelines in place like this, so that we can continue to feed this world with that. I yield back, gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yields back. Mr. Vindman is recognized for five minutes. Okay. Not for this.

Okay. Any other members seek recognition? Ms. Davids,

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you. Chairman, I seeking recognition to support Ms. Budzinski 's amendment to strike, strike section 9012 from the bill. This section would broadly limit USDA financing for solar energy production in our rural communities. This prohibition comes at a time when Americans nationwide are grappling with high utility bills and farmers are facing one of the worst farm economies in decades.

In fact, the Energy Information Administration estimates that residential energy costs have grown 36% since 2020 and 33% for all sectors, protecting prime farmland is vitally important. We cannot pick and choose affordable energy types at a time when rural Americans are continuing to tighten their wallets. Kansas farmers feed the world and solar energy production is booming in our state. We can and should do both limiting USDA financing for solar projects, ignores farmers choices, blocks critical income opportunities for rural economies and makes us more reliant on global energy sources, volatile supply chains and foreign adversaries.

This committee should work together to protect prime farmland and improve the energy security of our rural communities, not enact broadbands that do little to boost farm income. Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time to rep bushinski,

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Thank you recognized. Thank you to Congressman bass. As you know, I'm not from Chicago. I don't represent a district in Chicago, and I would respectfully say to you, I do think you are telling farmers what they can and can't put on their land.

You're putting restrictions on it. I think in the Farm Bill, there's a study. And what I was trying to say in my opening remarks is, why wouldn't we do this study to see what this looks like before we actually legislate? That just seems like good, common sense.

I do want to go back to a couple of statistics, one of them that I had in my remarks, which is that solar accounts for only 3% of agricultural land loss. The United States also dramatically expanded solar generation to supply. And if it did this, if it did this, if the United States dramatically expanded solar generation to supply nearly half of our electricity grid, the Department of Energy estimates it would require only about point 6% of existing farmland. So I just think that there is a lot of, quite frankly, fear mongering going on, and a lack of information about what this will really look like.

And at the same time, we don't have this information, we are tying the hands of our farmers and our growers that want these options. And this includes our co-ops. This includes community solar. You know, I visited some of these farms where farmers chose to put this on their land, and they've made their farm 100% energy efficient by doing that, that saves their money in their pocketbook, which is something that we definitely need to be doing right now with this farm economy.

And so I just think that you know, because there is a study in the Farm Bill alone, could we allow that study to play itself out so we have the data to make a more informed decision? I don't think the statistics that I have really bear itself out. That we should be freaking out that solar is going to take all of the most productive farmland in this country, because they just don't think that's the real accurate picture, but we should get the data to bear that out, so I'll yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Back recognize the gentlelady from Hawaii, I believe, was seeking recognition. No, okay. Gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Bacon.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I'm all the above energy mining. Set natural gas is our backbone right now. I think nuclear will be down the road.

I do think solar, wind, geothermal, the augment that all the above is good. And if this was more about putting or incentivizing putting solar on homes and businesses, I would be supportive. But I'm a little reluctant as well, to use this to incentivize good farmland being taken away. But with that, I yield my balance my time to thank you gentlemen

Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.)

For yielding. So here's the thing you said that that it was actually telling people what to do with the land. No, it's not, no, it's not. What it tells them is you're not going to get an incentive to do it if you're going to take this farmland out of production.

When you brought up that, somebody can make their crop, their farm, fully efficient, and they don't have to pay electric bill, they can charge it on their own. That's in there, 50 acres. That's what they can do. They can do 50 acres to do that with even on prime farmland.

Now, I don't know why they would want to do that when they can use their barns and for the argument, and that's sad thing here. Republicans are not anti-solar and not anti-renewable energy and and matter of fact, I have a great set of solar panels on my roof so, and I was one of the early ones to do that. But if you continue down the path of taking, taking gas, coal, other production, out without coming up with the sign to replace it, and at the speed, and why is it that we don't want I don't think we have time for the study, because we only do a formula bill every four years, unless it gets messed up. And then sometimes it takes six years.

But the problem is the amount of farmland that's being taken out right now. I would invite any one of you to my district to see how fast prime farmland is being taken out of production, and it isn't enough to replace the solar, the coal and gas burning fire plant, power plants that are being taken off line. We've got to do something. Taking our prime farmland out of production is not a good thing, but it is up to the landowner.

But we don't have to pay the landowner to do it, and that's what this bill does. I yield back.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can be brief here, but I just want to support my colleague. Ms. Budzinski. Ms. oh, my god, now I can say Budzinski, this amendment here, and just express some concerns.

And I wholeheartedly understand the gentleman's concerns that we don't want to be using too much of our prime farmland to turn it over to solar in my State of Maine, there have been studies on this and commissions on this, because this is an issue people have raised, but there have also been huge opportunities, given the fact of an issue that I will bring up in Section 12 on P fast and P fast contamination and the opportunities to use what might have once been prime farmland, or considered prime farmland under these overly broad generalizations in the way the Farm Bill is written now, and not be able to use it for that. And I just want to reinforce one of the other things that people have said farmers are struggling right now with energy costs, and they're also struggling with trying to keep their farms operating in a way to make it as we meet. And I want to make sure that we continue to give those opportunities, both for renewable energy and renew in rural communities, but also for farmers to reduce their own energy costs, also for agrivoltaics, which is a growing opportunity where people combine solar panels with agriculture on the land, and that's another opportunity for you to use. I'm worried that your language around restricting any federal money would impact reap grants and things that have been currently used.

I'm worried about the overly broad definition here, and I whole heartedly support this idea that a big study and some real information would give us all more confidence going forward on this and I will counter one thing to say that Republicans aren't anti-solar is not exactly accurate when you're talking about this administration who has rolled back all of the provisions that made it possible for many of us to put solar panels on our roof and expanded the opportunities to use more solar and renewable energy. If we are truly about to be in a long term war in Iran and energy costs are going to continue to rise as they already are, we have to make sure that we have more homegrown renewable energy that comes just from this country. And I oppose any kind of language that restricts that, and that has been something that's come out

of this administration in many, many ways. So this is a anti-Renewable Energy Administration, and I worry that this language that's currently in the Farm Bill, unless this amendment is passed, will look that way too.

I yield back the rest of my time, unless you want the time. I yield back my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yields back. Recognize Mr. Austin Scott from. Georgia.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'm opposed the amendment, and I would just point out to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, even Bill Gates has said that both wind and solar subsidies are not a good use of taxpayer dollars if it's about the environment, that we should be focusing on new technologies. And so if you go down aisle 75 in my district, you'll see where 1000 plus acres of some fine timberland has been cut down and turned into a solar wasteland. And you know, I don't think enough gets said about what it does to the Wildlife Habitat when you cut down the forest and put up these solar panels. It's horrible for the environment if you count wildlife habitat as part of the environment, and it is.

And so I hope the amendment fails. I hope that we don't see any more big solar systems, or whatever we want to call, those wastelands on prime farmland, and I sure as hell hope we don't see any more forest land cut down to make way for these panels that come from China.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields. Any other members seek recognition to speak on the amendment before us? Any others? If no,, let me.

Let me weigh in here. You know, you know, I thank the gentlelady from Illinois for amendment the language in the base text seeks to prohibit federal funding for solar ground mounted systems. It doesn't prevent private property rights and farmers making decisions. It's federal funding, and this is USDA funding.

This is rural development funding, and I think we hopefully will all agree that the best rural development investment is in our soils, and that's why this what is in the base bill deals with prime farmland. Every farm probably has acres that are not prime by definition. They the characteristics that are there that it does. You know, the definition we use gives the secretary some discretion, but it's also very specific of in terms of production, it and and this is the food farm and National Security Act, and that's why this is important issue.

I gotta tell you that over 150 listening sessions, 43 states, one territory, it was rare that this didn't come up in a listening session people expressing concerns about the attrition, the loss of prime farmland because of solar I know you never Call them solar farms, solar fields, the and so the base tax to prohibit federal funding for solar ground mounted systems. They can build it without it. Obviously, they're working with vendors that that hopefully, you know, they can, they can fund them, you know, versus taking advantage of monies are there to promote agriculture, to promote raising crops, raising livestock, although there answers some great models of agro I can never pronounce it, agropholics, right, where you know you're raising sheep underneath. So there is some creative innovations that are coming along to allow that to occur, but this was carefully crap crafted to prevent the use of USDA funds to develop utility utility scale solar projects on prime farmland, using federal dollars, while still allowing the producers the flexibility to produce energy on farm that we want to support, and we will, according to this text.

Now we're going to allow federal funding for solar projects through the inclusion of the two exceptions. You've heard them, but I think in this debate it's worth repeating. The first exception covers projects that result in the conversion of less than five acres of covered farmland, and that can be prime period. Second exception deals with projects that result in the conversion of less than 50 acres of covered farmland, with the majority of the energy produced being for on farm use.

So bringing down the cost of operations, making our farmers more profitable, because there's now a revenue line, hopefully coming in from whatever, whatever they use their Tony to negotiate with the solar

companies, and that's a really important part, as opposed to be taken advantage of. It does also the exception. Deal is it needs approval from each county and municipality in which the project is. Cited.

You know, it's local zoning. Basically, by allowing these two exceptions, we give farmers an opportunity to help with one of their input costs that has significantly increased in recent years, electricity costs. So based on that, I oppose this amendment. Encourage my colleagues to to do the same.

Any other members, seat recognition,

Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-Ill.)

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to actually go ahead and withdraw the amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady's, withdraw the amendment, and I appreciate that. And any other amendments,

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Johnson, I'd like to move amendment number one.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Johnson has amendment to desk. Amendment number one, the Clerk will report the title

The Clerk

Of the amendment. Amendment number one offered by Mr. Johnson of South Dakota.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Johnson, South Dakota has offered an amendment, without objection. The amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

So the Rural Energy for America program, the whole purpose of it is to reduce the energy use and the energy cost at small farms, ranches, as well as small rural businesses. And right now, small cooperatives qualify for use of that program. They're not in any way prohibited. This amendment would simply clarify that small cooperatives are indeed eligible, and we're not talking about CHS, we're not talking about Land O Lakes, we're talking about cooperatives with 2500 employees or fewer.

These are most often farmer owned cooperatives. This is going to give them an opportunity to again reduce energy use and energy cost. I think so much of the debate we just had could this is a good opportunity for us to come together in a unified way on some of those energy issues. I would submit myself to questions Mr. Chairman, but with that, I would yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The gentleman yields his time. Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Johnson's amendment number one, any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? If not, I will take the liberty of speaking on it. I thank the gentleman from South Dakota for his amendment, and I appreciate him bringing it up for consideration.

Agriculture cooperatives are vital to rural America's prosperity. They help farmers become stronger together by pulling resources through economies of scale, our farmers can lower their input costs, which is especially helpful in the wake of the historic inflation they experienced a few years ago. This amendment would make agriculture cooperatives with under 2500 employees eligible for the Rural Electric for America program referred to as reap. Reap bolsters rural America by reducing energy costs, lowering operational expenses, improving energy resilience and creating jobs.

We need to support agriculture cooperatives, and we need to do and we need to do what we can to counter rising energy costs. And I support this amendment. So given that

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Yeah, I rise briefly to support this I don't rise, but I would like to speak briefly to support this amendment. Number of cooperatives in my area I work with closely, and I want to concur with the comments the Chairman just made, and they like your amendment, Mr. Johnson, and so

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I think it's a good one, and we ought to support it. I yield back. I think Chairman from California yields back any other members seek to speak on Mr. Johnson's amendment hearing. No further concert conversation.

The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, any pen in the Chair the ayes have it any amendment is agreed to any other Mr. Chairman amendment at the desk. Mr. Vindman has amendment to desk, amendment number 100. Okay, so Mr. Vindman has offered the amendment, and the Clerk will report the title of the amendment,

The Clerk

Amendment number 100 offered by Mr. Vindman of Virginia,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment number 100 will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I also have an amendment that modernizes the reprogram common sense bipartisan amendment, and I think we can all agree that farmers shouldn't have to do stacks of paperwork to get just a little bit of support, especially if that support is to lower their energy bills, which I'm sure we all agree is important, particularly when life is more expensive in farm country. In that spirit, I have an amendment at the desk to incorporate the bipartisan Remodernization Act into the bill. Farmers and rural small businesses across the country are trying to lower their energy costs. They are investing in renewable energy systems, improving efficiency

and looking for ways to make their operations more resilient, but too often, that process for accessing these programs is complicated, slow and difficult to navigate.

My amendment improves reap in three important ways. First, it directs USDA to develop a streamlined application process, including the ability to submit bundled applications for projects that qualify under multiple components of the program. Farmers shouldn't have to hire consultants just to apply for assistance. This bill makes it easier to get a foot in the door with reap.

Second, it strengthens our outreach technical technical assistance and education under the program that includes ensuring applicants receive technical assistance when applying, and helping recipients integrate renewable energy products alongside crop or livestock operations. If we're going to fund these projects, we should make sure farmers have the tools to do them right. Third is. [IN PROGRESS]

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

The amendment establishes a modest reserve fund to support projects using underutilized renewable energy technologies. This reserve ensures innovation isn't crowded out for rural producers facing tight margins, we need to be cutting red tape and making grant access easier, not harder. That's why I introduced this bill with my colleague, Representative Val Dao of California, we worked across the aisle to do this in a bipartisan way, and I hope all my colleagues can support this amendment on a bipartisan basis as well. Thank you and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. I appreciate that. Let me take an opportunity to be able to speak on your amendment. I really thank you for for your amendment to enhance the base bill, reap bolsters rural America by reducing energy costs, lowering operational expenses, improving energy resilience and creating jobs, streamlining the application process, adding technical assistance and education activities to reaps outreach component and adding a reserve fund for underutilized renewable energy technologies are all great ideas.

I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment. Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Vindman's amendment number 100 Mr. Figures, you're recognized.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you. Mr. Chair, I appreciate Congressman Vindman for a number of things, in particular for this amendment that improves the effectiveness of the Rural Energy for America program by streamlining the application process, allowing for bundled applications and expanding outreach, technical assistance and education. Those changes may sound just procedural, but they have real consequences. That can be the difference between who participates in a program like this and who is left out across rural America, producers want to adopt new technologies improve efficiency and diversify their operations, but for many small beginning and family farmers, the biggest hurdle is not the project itself.

It's navigating the red tape and the process complex applications, unclear requirements and limited guidance can discourage participation before a proposal is ever even submitted. Technical Assistance is what translates federal policy into boots on the ground. Results, outreach, insurers, producers know these opportunities exist in the first place, and education helps them understand how to integrate new projects, including renewable energy, in ways that complement crops and livestock rather than disrupt operations. And continued support after an award has been given, helps ensure that projects are completed successfully and deliver the intended benefits.

This amendment also recognizes that accessibility is about more than just eligibility. As USDA modernizes and moves more interactions online, we must ensure that producers are not excluded simply because systems are difficult to navigate or assistance is hard to reach, streamlined applications and hands on support help level that playing field, which is something that is very much so necessary, especially in rural America, by creating clear pathways to apply, reducing the administrative burden and strengthening technical support throughout the life of a project, this amendment makes the program work better for a broader range of producers, not just those with existing capacity. This amendment improves participation, strengthens accountability, and increases the likelihood that federal investments deliver

the real value that we seek to our rural communities. With that, I urge the committee to support this amendment, and I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chair. Thank the gentleman and for also for yielding back any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Vindman's amendment number 100 any members seek recognition, hearing, no conversation, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment.

All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,, those opposed by saying no any pan the Chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to any member, any members seek recognition for Mr. Riley has an amendment at the desk. Thank you.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Number 42 Mr. Riley has amendment number 42 at the desk, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 42 offered by Mr. Riley of New York,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from New York to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this is another straightforward, common sense, bipartisan amendment to lower farmers utility bills. We've got about 600,000 pumping systems for irrigation on agricultural land in America. A lot of them are very, very inefficient, and some. Upgrades using plastic

piping would save our farmers over 20 billion kilo watt hours of energy each year, and that means money back in farmers pockets.

It's an annual savings of about $1.8 billion on their utility bills every year. And this bill, which supports those efforts, it's also going to be great for manufacturing in the Triple Cities too. Growing up, there was this massive Endicott Johnson factory plant across the street from the west Endicott Park, which all the kids know, across from stews and Kelly's, which all the adults know. My grandma actually stitched boots in that plant back in the day when the place was just humming with hundreds of really good blue collar manufacturing jobs, but as my generation was coming up, that plant closed down, a whole lot of people were out of work, and the site became abandoned and dilapidated.

It was really kind of an eyesore in the community. So what we did was the whole community pulled together to do something about it. Lots of credit to Jason Garner, the county executive, folks in the Broome County government, the trades, they took that building down and prepped the site for the next generation of manufacturing to come in and today, now come visit me. It's the site of a beautiful state of the art campus for national pipe and plastic, which has some of the most talented and skilled folks making cutting edge plastic pipes for irrigation systems.

It's really this is the sort of thing that makes me really so proud of my roots in the Triple Cities, we make stuff, and it's not just stuff, it's really important stuff that makes the world better and helps people. And in this case, we're making the pipes that are going to put money back in farmers pockets and protect the planet. So the folks who are doing this work, they're not asking for much. My amendment is very simple, straightforward.

It's just going to have USDA publish information that's going to make it easier for farmers to calculate their cost savings from these plastic pipe upgrades, and it's going to connect them to the manufacturers and suppliers who can get the job done. I'd encourage everybody to support this common sense bipartisan amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Generally you hold back. Let me weigh in here. I thank the gentleman from New York for his amendment. Raising the awareness of efficient water pumping systems is important for our farmers, and I appreciate knowing that this is a priority for a few members on this committee, and I'll be supporting this amendment.

So I yield back any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Riley's amendment number 42 Any other members seek recognition to speak, hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify we're saying aye,. Those opposed by saying no any pen, the Chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to.

Any other members have amendments for Title Nine energy, any other members have any amendments under Title Nine. Energy, hearing non-Title Nine is now closed. And are there amendments to title 10? Horticulture, Mr. Reed from

Rep. Tony Wied (R-Wis.)

Mr. Chair, an amendment

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Is recognized.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Reed has a amendment at the desk, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 123, offered by Mr. Weed of Wisconsin

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Tony Wied (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, the organic industry is one of the brightest spots in American agriculture, a sector that has grown consistently created jobs and generated economic opportunity in rural communities across our great country, we should be doing everything we can to help it thrive right now, USDA applies the same uniform oversight requirements to every certified operation, regardless of Whether that operation poses any real risk to organic integrity, large scale international importers and small family farms get treated the same. That's not regulation, that's red tape, and it's having consequences. Since 2020 certified organic operations in the United States have declined by more than 10% for crop certifications and. Or 6% for livestock when compliance costs are equally burdensome for every operation, regardless of risk level, it's American farmers who pay the price while foreign producers pick up an unfair advantage.

The amendment I'm introducing today, the risk based oversight for Integrity Act, takes a common sense approach, focus enforcement resources where the risk is highest, and reduce unnecessary burdens on low risk domestic operations that have demonstrated compliance. Here's what it does. It directs USDA to modernize inspection requirements for US based operations, allowing flexible inspection schedules based on risk assessment, with on site inspections at least once every three years and annual virtual inspections for lower risk operations, international operations, would still require annual on site inspections. It establishes a clear definition of risk to organic integrity, so that oversight decisions are grounded in evidence.

It also requires USDA to conduct a 12 month study examining the feasibility and implications of risk based oversight reforms with input from farmers certifiers, the National Organic Standards Board and other stakeholders. This will not weaken organic standards by concentrating oversight resources where fraud and integrity risks our greatest we will do a better job protecting what the organic seat means. Seal means to customers. Instead, I have visited several organic dairy farms in my district, who have all expressed their frustration with the new level of organic scrutiny and oversight that is so overwhelming as they are managing small farms with just their families,

they have closed herds, produce their own feed and only allow outflow organic milk, yet they are treated like huge international operations, which should not be the case.

This Farm Bill is an opportunity to support American organic farmers and build a more resilient domestic supply chain. This amendment moves us in that direction and helps these farmers in my district and across our great country. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. Does any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Weed's amendment? Amendment number 123, Mr. Riley is recognized.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just very briefly, I support this amendment, and happy to work with Tony on the stand alone bill on this. This is really common sense. Again, one size fits all.

Regulations really don't make a lot of sense in the organic industry in upstate New York, we've got a whole bunch of very small organic farms, but they've got to deal with a lot of the same certification requirements and regulations as major corporations, and it's really stifling our organic form farmers, and it's putting them at a huge disadvantage. So I appreciate that this is a common sense, bipartisan amendment to fix it. As Tony said, this is just going to have USDA prioritize enforcement of the highest risk entities, and it's going to let USDA conduct oversight of the smaller farms in a way that makes sense for them and not the big corporation. So this amendment is for the hundreds of organic farms across upstate New York who've told me how much they're struggling, who are feeding our community and really just want a level playing field.

So I'll be happy to support this amendment,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlemen you'll yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Weed's amendment number 123, any other members seek recognition? If not? Let me just share some thoughts here, and then we'll go

for a vote. I want to thank the gentleman for bringing this amendment forward and appreciate the work that's going into this effort from members on both sides of the committee.

This amendment stems from feedback from stakeholders in the organic industry who wish to see pragmatic flexibilities built into the inspection process based on actual risks to the integrity of the organic claim. Additionally, the study that USDA will conduct will provide meaningful insight into any future actions that could be taken to improve oversight protocols. I'm going to be supporting this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Do hearing no further conversation.

The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, any pain the Chair, the ayes have it the amendment is agreed to any other members have under a quarter call? Culture. Title 10, the Ranking Member is recognized, and I'll let her explain what she's doing.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 15,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Ranking Member as amendment at the desk amendment number 15, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 15, offered by Mr. Baird of Indiana,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady who working with our sponsor, Dr. Baird, the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment. Thank you so much,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Chairman, while this process isn't customary in light of the unfortunate passing of Representative Baird's wife, I plan to offer and withdraw this amendment, but I sincerely hope that we can have a robust discussion on this issue that is critical and very, very, very important to Minnesota, to Indiana and to Representative Baird, who I have worked on with this issue. He has been a leader on hemp, and would be offering this amendment here tonight, if he were here with us. My condolences to Mr. Baird and his family during this very difficult time.

This amendment seeks to delay the last minute changing of definitions around hemp that was inserted into a recent appropriations bill, which has caused market uncertainty and widespread economic anxiety among farmers, processors, retailers and consumers back home in Minnesota and, of course, in his home state as well. I recognize that there are issues that need to be addressed and addressed in the law as it exists today and in the changes on the horizon for the hemp supply chain, if the rules of the road are changed, as they are currently set to do. As a former member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I know all too well the challenges the Food and Drug Administration has when it comes to regulating food, beverages, drugs and dietary supplements. An opinion piece I wrote for min post late last year explains the complex production, processing, marketing and sales value chain for hemp products, which runs the gamut from non-alcoholic beverages made by local Minnesota breweries to plant based fiber that is woven into text and textiles and Ro the hemp industry supports jobs At 132 licensed growers, 96 licensed processor processors and over 2000 retailers in Minnesota.

It generates around $200 million a year in revenue which supports payroll and taxes across the state. Minnesota has set the standard for safely regulating hemp production and products and the way my Republican colleagues have gone about this in the appropriations process is just plain wrong. Literally planning decisions are being made right now by hemp farmers. That's why I've called for a comprehensive regulatory framework for the safe production and marketing of hemp derived products, a framework that puts in place clear rules of the road for growers and retailers, includes protections for children and safeguards for consumers, and brings the relevant federal agencies, whether it's FDA, USDA or other related agencies, into the process at the appropriate point for the appropriate product.

I stand ready to work with my colleagues, both in this committee and in other committees on both sides of the aisle to come together and move forward, not backward, on this issue. This is an industry with tremendous room for innovation and growth, as the business owners involved in hemp back home will tell you. And if you want to hear about some of these products. Talk to a hockey mom back in Minnesota who has replaced a nightly glass of wine with something that they feel is what they would like to have a choice to consume.

This is an industry that we shouldn't be demonizing and fearing, but it should be brought into the light and smartly regulated to protect the safety and well being of our communities, while giving entrepreneurs, farmers, small businesses, opportunities, develop new markets, create new products and meet the needs of consumers. By the way, more than a few Minnesotans have reached out to me about this issue, concerned that big whiskey distillers in Kentucky are trying to restrict consumer choice in Minnesota. That doesn't sit well with me at all, and it certainly doesn't sit well with my hockey moms. I think our nation would be better for having a comprehensive regulatory framework in this.

Space, and we in Congress need to come together to figure this out. I accept that we need more time and more discussion needs to be had on this, which is why I support this amendment, and I will withdraw it, and I look forward to continuing that discussion with colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman, for allowing me to introduce this on behalf of Representative Baird and myself. And with that, I yield back and I withdraw the amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I appreciate the gentlelady withdrawing. I want to thank the gentlelady for offering this amendment for Dr. Baird. I know he would be here if he could with his wife suddenly passing just a few days ago. So this but offering this committee so this amendment, so this committee can address questions brought forward by stakeholders in the hemp industry, whether those be from industrial hemp producers or those who are engaged in the hemp

derived cabinoid market, the AG appropriations bill that passed last fall brought clarity to the industry on what is or is not allowable under the definitions of hemp.

Importantly, to many in this room today, that language address the issue of final form products that have been the source of many public health concerns since the 2018 Farm Bill because they lacked a federal regulatory structure, a comprehensive regulatory framework for these products, falls outside the jurisdiction of this committee. And said it falls within the jurisdiction of our colleagues, as the Ranking Member had noted, in energy and commerce, commerce, I do want to say within this base bill, we do support our hemp farmers in a couple of different ways. We you will find within that text, or you've probably read and seen how we direct USDA to expand more access more laboratories for our hemp farmers to be able to have their commodity tested, that's and having greater access to those laboratories, also we have provide the states more flexibility in this space. So I appreciate the gentlelady for offering Mr. Baird's amendment and allows us to discuss a variety of views on this matter.

And so with that, the the technically, we're done with it, you want to stretch out the evening. I'll recognize you.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Well, that's trying to get your attention from I just had a question, if that's okay for me to ask a question. Was it Mr. Baird's intent to withdraw the amendment that's correct, okay? Because that's important information, because I would hate for him to miss the opportunity to so I thought that was a really important question for me. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Dr. Baird's intent and wishes. Thanks for clarifying.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Comment,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Go ahead.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you. I just want to say that I've heard a lot from producers and small businesses and people who make packaging materials for hemp. North Carolina, farmers and small businesses have built operations under the existing hemp framework, and a sudden federal rollback would create confusion, disrupt interstate commerce and destabilize emerging markets, markets across the state, so the extension maintains stability while giving Congress time to establish clear regulatory pathways, instead of triggering a disruptive rollback before a workable federal framework is in place, and that's all I want to say, Mr. Chairman, thank you. No,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I agree with the gentlelady, Energy and Commerce and the Food and Drug Administration need to engage promptly on this issue. Seeing no other conversations. We'll move on here. Any, any members have additional amendments under Title 10 horticulture.

Ms. Pingree is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 51

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good the Ms. Pingree has amendment number 51 that she's offered as amendment. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 51 offered by Ms. Pingree of Maine,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished, gentlelady from Maine, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So this amendment would strike some harmful pesticide language that I believe is a handout to the chemical companies. This language preempts states rights to regulate pesticide usage or labeling and. Provides a liability shield for pesticide manufacturers.

This language, in my opinion, was basically written to benefit chemical manufacturers. It provides immunity from lawsuits against chemical manufacturers who may cause human harm. Now this has mostly been focused on glyphosate, but I want you to know that this language is particularly harmful because it covers all pesticides. Glyphosate alone has had 200,000 roundup related claims against it, so there are clear health risks, and the company recently announced a $7.2 billion settlement.

This eliminates the opportunities for states like mine. Main is one of seven states that regulate pesticide usage. In our state, and in my state, there's over 30 state and local regulations. So this means if your community wanted to say that roundup could not be used for weed control in a certain area, they would not be allowed to do that, and it allows for an immunity from those manufacturers, a shield that protects them from being sued if someone is health is disrupted.

It says that the labeling on the package could only reflect the most recent, the most recent EPA review, which is mandated every 15 years. But I just want to be clear that the last risk assessment of glyphosate was in 1993 and as the Ranking Member on the interior environment subcommittee that regulates the budget of the EPA, I can say that they have been downsizing and limiting their ability to do these kinds of reviews. So I think if we're talking about limiting this kind of language, limiting this opportunity for all pesticides, in a time when we may have less opportunities out there, it will be more and more difficult for the consumer to know what is in the product. Now a product like glyphosate, which is widely used as a weed killer, goes

beyond that today, increasingly, wheat, barley and other greens and some vegetable crops are sprayed very late in the crop season to accelerate crop death, drying and harvest operation.

So that means that the average residue in grains, oil, seeds and other crops are much higher than they were a decade ago. Even states like Florida have decided to now publish the risk of glyphosate being in our bread and other grain. So there, there are huge concerns being raised about the increased use of this coupled with the lack of regulation. I know people will start to say, Oh, how will farmers operate without this?

And we couldn't possibly do that as a certified organic farmer for years. I'm not going to say that everybody in this country will form, will start to farm organically, but we could limit the use of chemicals by increasing more regenerative organic agriculture and organic agriculture, and this administration has loudly proclaimed that they're going to do that. When this administration came in, they said they were going to eliminate glyphosate. The Health and Human Secretary himself said it caused cancer, and he was going to get it out of the food supply, although they have acted very differently and now back tracked on much of that, they are investing some at the USDA on more regenerative agriculture, and we could continue to do more of that.

I just have deep concerns about language being placed in the Farm Bill that would preempt states' rights in the way this does, and also give such a liability shield to the chemical companies that have acknowledged, through their settlements and in the fact that there have been over 200,000 claims against just one chemical alone, that's round up that there are serious health risks to this, and broadening it to all pesticides, and making this kind of exemption or This kind of immunity in the bill is just extremely dangerous to human health. There have been huge settlements in the last year. The largest one on record is $2.1 billion in a health claim against glyphosate. So we know that there are health risks out there, that health risks have been decided by the courts, that the company should be held responsible, and to take away that kind of liability is incredibly irresponsible and just completely disrespects our responsibility to take care of human health and make sure that people have appropriate information, that states have rights to make up their own laws and that we protect human health.

So with that, I yield back, and I encourage everyone to support my amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman, ladies, you're holding back. Members seek recognition to speak. Mr. Rose is. Recognized for five minutes.

Rep. John Rose (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman in Tennessee, agriculture contributes over 100 billion to the state's economy, accounting for 11% of all economic activity in Tennessee. This would not be possible without modern agricultural inputs like pesticides, fungicides and herbicides, these products keep yields high, crops healthy and families fed. Without them, our producers simply could not meet the demands of a growing population around this country and around the world. Bringing a new pesticide to market is not a casual or rushed process, it typically takes 10 to 12 years plus and hundreds of millions of dollars in research development and testing to ensure that a product is both safe and effective.

These products are not only rigorously reviewed before approval, they are reevaluated and reregistered every 10 years to reflect the latest science and regulatory standards. The science is there, and we should trust it. Pesticide labeling uniformity is not a liability shield. It is about making sure these products remain on the shelves for farmers who rely on them.

This provision does not weaken enforcement. In fact, it helps target bad actors more effectively. Additionally, this language does not undermine food safety. It simply maintains a clear, science based national standard for pesticide labeling, so that farmers, regulators and consumers are all working from the same rule book without these vital crop inputs yield losses could be as high as 85% that is not just an economic issue.

That is a food security issue. The producers who grow our food cannot afford regulatory chaos driven by pseudo science and conspiracy theories. We do not need more litigation based on problems that do not exist. We need sound policy based on facts.

For those reasons, I strongly oppose this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to vote no

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back other members seeking recognition. Mr. McGovern, recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to I strongly, strongly support this amendment, and I want to thank my good friend, Representative Pingree, for her leadership on this issue. This is a matter that I hear a lot about from my local farmers and from concerned citizens, and I think that most sensible people in this country, you know, if we're confronted with this issue, would agree with what Ms. Pingree is trying to do. And you know, I wish my Republican friends had even a sliver of empathy for hungry families or struggling farmers, as they clearly do for corporate polluters. And that's what we're that's what we're talking about here today.

You know, when SNAP benefits don't go as far because food prices are rising. You know, what do we hear from my friends the other side of the aisle? Deal with it. Oh, you're exaggerating.

You know the issue when, when nobody answers the phone at the local USDA office because Trump purged our public servants, we hear you're on your own, and when a multi-billion dollar foreign own corporation has to pay jury awards to the people they've hurt and lied to Republicans, answer is, here's a liability shield. Here's a ban on state and local laws to protect people from you. Here's a free pass to dump poisons in our rivers. I mean, do you hear yourselves?

Look, I care about pesticide safety because I do not want any more farmers getting hurt or getting sick. I don't want children exposed to chemicals that other countries banned decades ago because they pose such a clear and present danger. I've met with farmers and farm workers who have developed Parkinson's for pesticides that they were told were safe, and I've been to

communities who bear the heavy burden of toxic exposure. It's never the polluting companies who suffer and they're really the ones who clean up the messes that they've made.

So I don't want a Silent Spring. And for God's sake, I thought we could all agree on at least that. But here we are. Here we are.

You know, Republicans have made it crystal clear that they are on the side of corporate polluters here. And I, again, I'm just kind of stunned the party of states rights now no longer believes in states rights. And again, you know, we're talking about protecting our farmers and protecting our communities. I mean, there was you talk about the science.

There's this, there's piles and piles and piles of science to tell you that some of these Chem. Chemicals are dangerous and harmful, so I urge everybody to support the Pingree, protect their health amendment and reject this Republican chemical giveaway. I mean, this is the right thing to do. We this should be a unanimous vote, quite frankly, and it's really disappointing that it isn't.

And I thank the gentlelady and

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back my time, back other members. Chairman, speak. Dr. Adams,

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak on this amendment and support support it, and I thank the gentlelady for bringing it forward, removing the pesticide preemption in this bill puts power back where it belongs with local communities. If a town wants stronger protections for its water schools or families, it shouldn't be blocked. Also, this bill exempts pesticides from the Clean Water Act or the Clean Air Act, which guts basic safeguards.

These laws protect our air, they protect our drinking water. Pesticides drift and run off without oversight, pollution and health risks increase. This is about accountability, clean air, clean water and the right of communities to protect themselves. Support the amendment.

It's a good amendment, and I yield back,

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

Thank you. I want to thank also. I want to thank Congresswoman Pingree for this amendment. Pesticide preemption has received an extraordinary amount of attention in the past year, as is appropriate when the federal government considers overriding states rights.

Litigation on this topic will be waived by the Supreme Court in less than two months, a dominant pesticide manufacturer just announced a possible settlement settlement of $7.25 billion and President Trump invoked national security powers to mandate the production of say it for me, glyphosate. There is opposition to federal preemption of the state liability laws on both sides of the aisle, yet the Chairman has insisted on including these provisions in what should be a bipartisan Farm Bill that delivers for farmers and families. He even called the MAHA coalition that supported President Trump extremists because of their opposition to these sections of the Farm Bill. But this amendment is not extreme.

It would not ban pesticides or require any additional regulatory burden on their manufacturers. Quite literally, it would preserve the status quo and allow the Supreme Court to examine this issue and the complicated legal issues at its core. For my part, I simply do not see a path forward for this bill. It provisions shielding these companies from liability and preempting state law remains.

This question of federal preemption also sits next to a truly poisonous provision that would waive all other laws for registered pesticides, including the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act registrations under EPA pesticide process provides instructions for use, but does not include any requirements to guard against contamination of our water supplies. So let's be clear, the Clean Water Act already includes a broad exemption for agricultural storm water runoff because Congress knew that some pesticide runoff was an inevitable however, the EPA is obligated to separately permit intentional uses of pesticides that enter our waterways, as the Sixth Circuit Court decided In 2009 it's astonishing to me that my Republican colleagues want to abolish that protection for rural communities, water supplies. Thankfully, Senator Boozman seems to be a little more rational on this issue, and has

acknowledged that a Farm Bill with these provisions cannot pass. I hope my colleagues see the wisdom in his words,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition. Mr. Vindman is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, so it was a couple months ago where I was walking out of my office and I ran into a farmer, and not sure if he was from my district or where he was, but we did talk about what he did and why he was on the Hill. And the reason why he was on the Hill is because he is suffering from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, that's blood cancer from exposure to pesticides. And so that is the real world consequence for.

Uh, the exposure to these types of chemicals. And what we're discussing here is Ms. Pingree's amendment is not what's changing the status quo. It is what is in the text of the bills that's changing the status quo, a point that my colleague Ms. Brown just made. Ms. Pingree's amendment just reestablishes the status quo, which would allow our farmers continue to operate the way they operate now.

And so the risk to changing the status quo is not coming from the amendment, as Mr. Rosa had indicated. So I just want to make that point clear I'm in strong support of Representative Pingree amendment to strip this harmful pesticide pesticide provision from the bill, these policies will preempt local authority and create new liability protections for a billion dollar pesticide companies in Virginia. Local governments make decisions about pesticide use on school grounds, in parks near sensitive waterways, those decisions reflect local conditions, including our responsibility to protect Chesapeake Bay and concerns about spraying harmful pesticides near schools, playgrounds and parks under this bill, all of those local rules are wiped away. So let's think about that for a second.

A national mandate over local control seems odd that my colleagues on the Republican side would be manage would be advocating for a national mandate over local control. But you know, many things have turned out to

be odd over my course of my 13 months or 14 months here on the hill, decisions about how pesticides are used in communities should not be dictated entirely from Washington. These These shields disadvantage disproportionately rural and AG communities, so the communities that we're supposed to be advocating for here on the AG Committee, this bill also makes it significantly harder, more difficult for farmers or farm workers who get sick after pesticide exposure to find justice through the courts. As a lawyer, myself, recovering lawyer, I strongly believe that every American deserves their day in court if they've been armed, we're not sent to Congress to protect the largest corporations in the world from being held accountable.

Some of my colleagues today might argue that this doesn't matter, because the EPA says that these pesticides are safe. But how can that be when section 10, 204, of the bill delays the EPA review of hundreds of pesticides for their health risks until 2031 we can promote regulatory clarity without stripping local governments of a say or closing courthouse doors to families who believe they have been harmed, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and protect the rights of states, local communities and the courts to safeguard public health and their environment. Thank you, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any other members seek recognition. Mr. Tokuda is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I rise in support of Ms. Pingree's amendment and in strong opposition to the reckless provisions buried in this bill. I understand that our farmers and agriculture producers need access to effective tools for pest management. Farmers deserve certainty, workable regulations and science based policy. But this bill is not the way to provide that certainty.

Stripping states and communities of their authority and weakening bedrock environmental protections is not balance. It's overreach. Furthermore, one size fits all. Approach to pesticide labeling cannot fully account for the realities.

In my home state of Hawaii, we have year round growing seasons endangered species found nowhere else on earth, unique geology and topography, communities living and going to school right next to agriculture fields and watersheds where everything flows directly into the ocean, from the mountain to the ocean, mauka to makai, and watersheds where everything flows, as I've said, directly into the ocean, our circumstances and our experiences are unique, and our policies must have the ability to reflect that. Mr. Chair share a story I think you could appreciate, in terms of the uniqueness, but also the experiences that we've had. You know, in 1982 I remember as an elementary school student drinking chocolate and milk every day at school, during lunch, and I thought it was great, but the darker story behind it was that we had to import chocolate milk in because we had to dispose of 36 million pounds of milk because it was found to be contaminated with the pesticide heptacher The cows were fed the tops of pineapples that had been sprayed with a now banned insecticide that's linked to higher rates of Parkinson's. And so when we talk about the impacts of pesticides, Hawaii literally has a history of this, going back generations, hiding or preempting action on dangerous information about pest.

Size does not make our communities safer, and we've seen that it endangers everyone, and especially workers, pregnant women, our Keith, our kupuna, vulnerable communities are often on the front lines of exposure. We can support farmers while respecting state and local authority to make decisions in the best interest of their people and upholding bed rock environmental protections, those goals are not mutually exclusive. We do not have to choose between agriculture productivity and public health. I strongly urge my colleagues to stand with our communities and our farmers and our futures and support this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yields back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, I do. Sorry. Mr. Riley, recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So a lot of conversation about, you know, preemption and legal terms and everything, I think, I think this is what's going on here. You got a bunch of multinational, multi-billion dollar companies. They used a bunch of chemicals in their products that gave farmers cancer.

Farmers said, at a bare minimum, just at least, we should have been warned about the risks here. You should have warned us about the risks, so they went to court to make their case. tens of thousands of these cases for tens of thousands of farmers across the country looking to hold the chemical companies accountable, stand up to these powerful chemical companies and keep other farmers safe so that this doesn't happen again, just trying to pursue a little bit of justice. So then what happens these big chemical companies roll in here, millions of dollars in corporate PAC checks army is a lobbyist, and next thing you know, we're looking at a bill that gives them the best legal immunity that money can buy.

It's wrong. This issue should be decided by the courts in the States, by the scientists and not by a bunch of politicians who are doing the bidding the chemical corporations. This provision has to come out. This amendment, I strongly support it, and whether we do it here in the committee or at some point in this process, this immunity that the chemical corporations bought for themselves at the expense of a bunch of farmers across the country.

This has to come out of this bill. As far as I'm concerned. Thank you, and I'll yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman. He yelled back, now recognize the Ranking Member for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you so much. I'll take a lot less time than that. I just want to associate myself with the comments of Mr. Riley here this evening, as we can all see, and I know there's been a lot of silence on the part of my Republican colleagues, but I also know many of them and their stakeholders, particularly with the Make America healthy again movement also agree that

this provision in the Farm Bill is one that is going to make it very, very difficult to get a Farm Bill with widespread bipartisan support across the finish line, and I appreciate Ms. Pingree amendment here. You know it's it's actually astonishing to me, because at the very beginning of the skinny Farm Bill discussions, minority staff said this is an area that will make it incredibly difficult for the majority of Democrats to support the skinny Farm Bill.

We started this conversation wanting to get to yes, but instead of the approach that it appears Senate Chair Boozman is taking for the Farm Bill in the Senate, where hopefully and the discussions publicly have been that they are not intending to insert a bunch of poison pills that would take away from strong bipartisan support, that they are going to try to put together a clean, skinny Farm Bill. And I do hope that that happens in the Senate, but what we have here today, and what every single one of us is being asked to vote on, is a bill that contains this provision. That's what we're being asked to vote on here now it is my sincere hope that there is a another product that we all get another buy. At this apple, no matter where we end up on this bill, but right now tonight, it's important that everyone here understands that this is one of those issues we said from the start would be very problematic if it was included in the Farm Bill, and the majority staff said we don't care.

We're moving forward anyway. And I do hope that my colleagues can see the wisdom of our words, that this is the wrong approach, the wrong path, and tonight, we have an opportunity to stop where this is going. And Ms. Pingree, I appreciate your amendment. I intend to support it.

Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Any other members seek recognition? If not, I'll do some closing comments, and then we will vote. I appreciate the gentlewoman bringing forward this amendment that addresses that, what the Ranking Member despite supporting much broader language in the 118th Congress as a co-sponsor of the agricultural living uniformity act, what we're talking about, she was a co-sponsor, And now is she so enlightened as referred to as referred to as a poison pill in the Farm Bill, the sections, well, let me just say the language from then is updated from 2024 and does not create any prohibitions from

the EPA taking action that differs from their health assessment, if deemed appropriate.

The sections that this amendment seeks to strike deliver common sense regulatory reforms that are critical for securing access to a well regulated pesticide tools for a variety of crop production and public health needs. Language also reflects thoughtful changes to address stakeholder concerns. If you read the bill, the bill in front of us today reaffirms existing statute that the EPA is the authoritative voice for making safety findings related to pesticides community communicated through the legally binding label while retaining states authority for the sale, use and distribution of crop protection tools, let me say that again, it retains states authority for the sale, use and distribution of these crop protection tools. This includes protecting a state's ability to not register a product at all within their jurisdiction, regulatory certainty and making sure that there is clear science based regulatory system that is rooted in scientific review from the EPA and not courtroom or social media, science that overrides federal findings in what producers need this package also provides states who have a formal relationship with the EPA as Co-regulators on pesticide products with clarity that the authority to conduct those regulatory activities falls with the states, not political subdivisions.

Localities are still welcome to make whatever pesticide application choices they deem appropriate on public lands, but they cannot prevent private applicators from using state registered products in accordance with their label. And so I do not support this amendment. I think this raises questions about food affordability. Also think it creates confusion.

You get 50 different labels on that you put. You can laugh. But if, if I think the EPA is the place to go, they have an army of scientists, and they know how to do this and do it right, and you get 50 different states with different labels, the cost of compliance with that number one, it's going to raise cost of food and but also, I think it puts it, I think to put it, it puts at risk that the health of the farmer, because of the confusion that can be created, you know, with 50 different labels and instructions In terms of how to, how to apply and store, store and apply and clean up these, these agrochemical tools. And so with that hearing, no further conversation.

Questions on your amendment all those turn

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

I wasn't going to speak, but I have a question of the yes sir Chair, because I think I'm hearing two things, and I'm not so now I'm confused. You said that states in part of your statement, retain the ability to determine which herbicides and pesticides are used within their states, right?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

They have the right to

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

But then you talk to register you,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Right? And they're not register, right?

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Well, yeah, and I'm going to give you an example, and then you follow it up by saying that 50 different requirements for registration.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, 50 50 different labels, if the labeling is not done under the direction of the EPA with all the appropriate warnings, and then it will be subject to labeling by In theory, it could be by 50 different states.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Well, I'll tell you a real life experience. It's not a theory. In California, for decades, we've had a separate process for registration of both herbicides and pesticides. So these major companies that you speak of get approval nationally through EPA.

That doesn't mean that they can use it in California. That's correct, the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

States return, because in

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

California, we require our own separate process for registration for both herbicides and pesticides,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And that right is retained,

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

And that in Yes, so, so we do have multiple labeling processes. Well, it's not labeling.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

It's just rather to register that

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Product or not well. I mean, use good, bad or indifferent. And I hear all of the above from my agricultural producers. There are products that are allowed to be used in other states in the country, but not in California.

And then we, we work through that, obviously, because, and we try, and depending who you speak to, to harmonize the registration process that we are engaged in versus what the what is occurring in other parts of the country. And to some degree that happens, and some degree it doesn't, but you're basically saying that states like California that have their own separate registration process for herbicides and pesticides, regardless of whether or not this language is adopted, what the construct that's in the current bill would allow that to continue? That's my question.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yeah, states have the authority for a special local needs label under FIFRA section 20 4c which, which, this protects, all right. Thank you. Ms. language protects, very good. Go ahead, ma'am.

You recognize five minutes.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I will be brief. I intend to support this amendment. I think it's incredibly important that we are not getting ahead of the Supreme Court ruling. And with that, I yield the rest of my time to the Ranking Member.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right. Member's recognized.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you. Ms. McDonald, thank you. Ms. McDonald Rivet, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I I just have two observations based on the conversation that I've listened to here in the last several minutes.

One is the Chairman, referenced an army of scientist at EPA. And I'm just wondering, are you sure they haven't fired all of them? You know, as we, as we, as we think about what's happened under this administration with EPA? I think we should go check the DOE records to see what happened there.

And then finally, Mr. Chairman, you are correct. You called me out. I let out a little bit of chuckle as you were making your point a few minutes ago about the cost of groceries and how this could make food costs go up in our country. And I just continue to be astounded at the lack of acknowledgement on the role of tariffs in our country, not only to raise grocery costs in our nation, but also to drive away trade to drive away markets for our family farmers, and then the lack of acknowledgement of wanting to expand domestic markets are actually getting it done.

So again, I apologize for my little chuckle, but now we want to talk about costs, and with that, I'd like to yield the remainder to Ms. Pingree,

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)

Thank you. Thank you for yielding the time. Just to clarify here about state and local government, so just This means your state could not put a health warning on there, and when you talk about this idea that the EPA has covered all of this, the last risk assessment of glyphosate was in 1993 even though those are mandated every 15 years. And as I mentioned earlier, as the Ranking Member of the interior environment subcommittee, I can guarantee you that the EPA has slashed their scientific capacity, their regulatory.

Capacity, the legions of scientists that you say were there aren't there, and to prevent states from having the opportunity to talk about recent health concerns that may have been raised more recently than waiting for the EPA to go ahead and do that, seems like very cruel and unfair to human health. And I just want to thank everybody who's spoken up about this and and mentioned that it's an important affirmation that people have said, this is getting us back to the existing legal situation in which we are currently in. The Farm Bill changes that and takes away the power that states and local municipalities have had and takes away the ability for farmers or others who are harmed by this chemical or other chemicals, from their right to sue and hold the chemical companies responsible without that opportunity. I don't know how we can guarantee going into the future that we will ensure that safe chemicals are used in our farming process and that those who apply them and those who eat the products will continue to be safe.

So with that, I yield back my time, and I thank you, or I yield back my time to whoever gave it to me, Angie or

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

And I yield back to Ms. McDonald Rivet.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

I yield the remainder of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you very much. So thank you hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment? All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying, aye, All those opposed by saying no.

Independent Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to. A recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee Rule three, aye, two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. Any other amendments. Mr. Vasquez is recognized for an amendment under Title 10, horticulture.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 147

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right. Mr. Vasquez has an amendment at the desk. Number 147 The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 147 offered by Mr. Vasquez of New Mexico, without objection.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment will be considered as read. I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from New Mexico to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Specialty crops make up the lion share of agricultural output, not just in my district, but across the state of New Mexico, from our world famous hatch chili to our beautiful onions, pistachios and pecans. These crops sustain our economy and our way of life. These are the farmers that we all talk about and want to support in this committee, the legacy family farms passed down for generations that are the heartbeat of local rural communities.

Two weeks ago, I convened a meeting with my Agricultural Advisory Committee, which includes specialty crop producers from across my district, they told me that three years without a Farm Bill, extended drought, tariffs

that are taking a toll on their equipment, the lack of accessible labor and other rising input costs are pushing them to make hard decisions about the future of their business and the future of their families. I don't care what side of the aisle that you're on, if your district has a lot of specialty crops like mine, I'm sure you've heard many of the same concerns from folks back in your district. They tell you constantly that they're the last ones to receive assistance, that they feel like an afterthought in this committee, and that they often feel brushed aside by USDA programs designed for MAGA farms and for corporate producers, my amendment would allow the farming families in my district and across the country to continue to work the land that they love, providing all specialty crop producers with up to $900,000 and hard earned support at a time when our Farmers need it most, capped at $5 billion if Washington keeps picking winners and losers in agriculture and favors farmers for political posturing in certain regions of the country, rather than providing equitable support to our family farms, specialty crop producers will lose more than profits. They will lose generations of investment and family legacies.

This amendment should be a common sense, bipartisan solution that would meet the needs of specialty crop farmers across the country and what folks in my district asked me to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back appreciate

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

You, gentlemen He yields back any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Vasquez, amendment number 147, any members. Seek recognition? Ms. Brown,

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

You are recognized for five minutes. I want to thank you. Rep Basque Vasquez for introducing this amendment to provide additional funding for specialty crop economic assistance, as we all know, the less than $1 billion allocated. For the entire specialty crop industry was not enough to keep farmers afloat during the crisis we constantly hear about in farm country, President Trump's ill conceived tariffs have deeply affected the folks who produce the food we eat, and this additional assistance is enough to make a real impact in easing the pain resulting from his backward trade and economic policy.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to show up and provide the much needed assistance for specialty crop producers. And with that, I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Julie's back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. I'll do it one more time so we can make it permanent. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment?

Seeing none, let me add in I thank the gentleman for his amendment and agree that our specialty crop growers are in urgent need of assistance. However, the Farm Bill is not the appropriate vehicle for an ad hoc aid package. I know that because I helped lead the ad hoc aid about a year or so ago, the first round that we did, I've been very ad hoc aid package that is better suited to a disaster supplemental. My opposition's Amendment should not be mistaken for a lack of support.

I've been very vocal on this, especially with our specialty crops that I've long advocated for additional aid for our specialty crop growers. I'll be honest with you, I've asked for $10 billion is where I believe that we an additional $10 billion into the one that's being distributed now, and I remain committed to delivering meaningful, timely relief. To that end, I've been working with colleagues across the Capitol on a legislative package specifically designed to provide adequate assistance, especially crops. This process is open.

It's collaborative, and I, I welcome participation, participation from anyone wishing to help producers, our special crop growers are resilient, and a bill before us today is focused on providing the long term framework needed to revitalize the industry. And while I cannot support this amendment, I recognize that additional work remains. I'm committed to doing that. I look forward to working with the gentleman to advance meaningful assistance through a more appropriate legislative vehicle outside of the Farm Bill.

Now, we just are not in a position to do ad hoc assistance in the in the Farm Bill.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

So Mr. Chairman, yes, sir, I appreciate that, and I look forward to working with you in earnest on the future of specialty crop assistance. Thank you for your support, and with that, I'll withdraw my amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appreciate the gentleman withdrawing the amendment, and you have my commitment. Looking forward to working with you as I've enjoyed working across the capital as well. Any other amendments that a member might have under Title 10 of horticulture, any other Okay, Ms. than R has an amendment under Title 10 the horticulture, the number of your amendment? Mr. Thanedar, uh, number one ready?

Okay. The gentleman from Michigan has a has offered amendment. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 120 offered by Mr. Tandar Michigan,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment 120 will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman and the sponsor of the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Thank you. Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Craig, the Farm Bill is a crucial opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to come together and confront the pervasive issues challenging American agriculture, the recent COVID-19 pandemic, foreign conflicts and The president's tariff and nutrition policies have heavily impacted the global food distribution system and widen food insecurity, hunger, disparity and accessibility to nutrition in the United States. As someone who grew up in Southern India, often without knowledge of where my next meal would come from. The issues facing American agriculture, especially food insecurity, are deeply personal to me.

The USDA. Office of Urban agriculture and innovative production is vital in the fight to finally end food insecurity, and we must work to grant the office a consistent source of funding. The discretionary funding it relies on is not stable enough to guarantee the many programs it runs continue to help Americans across the country. It's why I am offering an amendment to provide a mandatory 50 million a year in funding for this life saving agency, the Office of Urban agriculture and innovative production assist urban, small scale and innovative producers with growing, processing and selling food, they not only provide financial assistance, such as grants to community farms, indoor producers and those working on cutting edge technologies like hydro, aero and aquaponics, but also offer a wealth of technical assistance for people exploring urban agriculture for the first time, from job training to filling, Assistant filing assistant the Office of Urban agriculture and innovative production partners work with stakeholders directly to encourage economic development and better their community, both environmentally and economically.

In my district, which includes the great city of Detroit, the Office of Urban agriculture and innovative production has had an incredible impact. Keep growing. Detroit, one of the flagship people's gardens, distributed more than 300,000 plant transplants in 2024 In addition, keep growing. Detroit trains, medicine growers, bee keepers and partners with child care centers throughout Metro Detroit to champion education, ensuring that urban agriculture continues to thrive.

Our People's Garden has even supported the creation of Detroit's first zero West mobile grocery an incredible, innovative solution that both addresses food insecurity and elevates the climate crisis. We can't let this momentum become another victim to the current instability and chaos in the federal government. Congress must guarantee the Office of Urban agriculture and innovative production the stability it deserves with mandatory federal funding. Mr. Chairman, while I am planning to withdraw this amendment, I'm asking you and Ranking Member to consider this amendment if we reach a conference committee to give urban agriculture the consistent federal funding it deserves.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Back the gentleman with draws, I will say urban agriculture and innovation are important parts of the Food and Agriculture supply chain. I'm proud that this bill that we're marking up contains provisions championed by our colleague on this committee, Dr. Adams, from her supporting urban and innovative farming act of 2023 to expand the capabilities of this office to best serve producers. I thank the general will say the increase in mandatory funding was a problem without an offset so, but I appreciate the gentleman offering and withdrawing this amendment gentlelady from Ohio is recognized. Thank you.

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

I just want to speak on this because we know that in the 2018 Farm Bill, it recognized the need for an office at USDA dedicated to supporting urban and innovative producers. And since then, we've seen the profound impact of the Office of Urban agriculture and innovative production has had a variety of growing operations through its grants, technical assistance, dedicated Advisory Committee and partnerships. If there was a genuine negotiating process for this Farm Bill, I believe we could have been able to work across the aisle and identify areas where we can continue to invest in our community, farms, vertical farms and hydroponic facilities that are driving change and transforming agriculture. As we know it, producers who are pioneering innovative growing practices hoping to feed more people with fewer resources are undergoing significant financial risk and have limited options for technical assistance.

Mandatory funding for all for the office would give these producers more certainty and improve resources to start and expand their operation. So I just want to thank you, Shreve for bringing up Congressman Thanedar for bringing up this amendment. Really appreciate it. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Back, gentlelady yields back any of the other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, any other members seeking recognition, if not, let me weigh in here, I swear I just had real hard

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

So thank you. I'll find it now, yeah, I want to thank the gentleman for his amendment urban agriculture. Well, actually, I've already made my remarks on this, but And so with that hearing, no further conversation.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I you, yeah, and he's withdrawn. Thank you. Thank you so much. All right, any other any Amen, any member have an additional amendment under Title 10, horticulture, any member have an additional tight amendment under Title 10 horticulture, seeing none.

Title 10 is now closed, and we will move on to title 11, which is crop insurance. Any member have? Mr. Kelly is recognized. He has a amendment at the desk, yes.

Rep. Trent Kelly (R-Miss.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number seven should be if it can be distributed,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Kelly as amendment number seven offer an amendment. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number seven offered by Mr. Kelly of Mississippi,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read I now recognize as a distinguished gentleman, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Trent Kelly (R-Miss.)

Mr. Chairman, I offer this amendment to address the real challenge facing soy bean farmers. In recent years, producers have experienced significant

revenue losses due to quality related discounts on soy beans losses that are often not adequately covered under current crop insurance policies. This amendment simply directs the federal Crop Insurance Corporation to study and evaluate options for improving coverage under revenue protection policies so farmers are better protected when their soy beans are discounted due to quality factors.

Specifically, it asks FCIC to examine the feasibility of creating a state or regional endorsement that would cover soy bean revenue losses caused by quality discounts, or to consider alternatives to assigning a zero market value when a salvage market actually exist. This is a practical, research focused step that will help ensure our crop insurance programs reflect real market conditions and provide fair protection for producers. Our soy bean farmers work hard to manage risk, and our policy should work just as hard for them. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back my time.

Mr. Chairman, appreciate

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

You gentlemen gentleman yields back any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Kelly's amendment? Any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Kelly's amendment, if not, let me just weigh in. I thank the gentleman for offering this amendment. Extremely supportive providing adequate risk management tools to producers and creating new opportunities to do what we can.

And I support this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment, all those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,. Those opposed by saying no, and you pin the Chair the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

And Ms. McDonald Rivet has an amendment at the desk

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

I do, amendment 57 the.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. McDonald has an amendment at the desk The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 57 offered by Ms. McDonald Rivet of Michigan,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection the amendment would consider it as read, I know now recognize the distinguished gentlelady that sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, now I get to talk about my favorite subject, and that is sugar beets. I've got allies. Well, I do plan to withdraw this amendment. I want to speak briefly about the importance of getting meaningful risk management tools in place for our sugar beet farmers.

For too long, sugar beet producers, including Michigan, sugar farmers, have operated without access to the same kind of revenue based protection that many other commodities do. They face volatile markets, rising input costs and real uncertainty year to year, when prices drop or payments from cooperatives fall short, they deserve a safety net that reflects that risk. Recently, Representative Finstad, the Ranking Member and I, wrote a bipartisan letter to the Risk Management Agency urging the development of a revenue insurance product for sugar beets. I am excited to say that on Monday, we got a response from the USDA to our letter.

I was encouraged to see progress on the development of a revenue insurance product. It's a step in the right direction. Our sugar beet farmers are struggling, and we need to make sure they have fair, modern tools to manage risk, just like other producers, I'm going to continue to fight for this important equity and opportunity, and I appreciate the bipartisan commitment from members of this body on getting much needed reforms across the finish line. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Generally Goes back. Mr. Finstad is recognized for five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

I think gentlewoman from Michigan for offering this amendment. I echo my support for the sugar beet revenue crop insurance program, ensuring growers have access to the risk management tools they need to continue producing high quality, affordable sugar made in the USA. I was honored to help lead the letter that was referenced to the USDA on this issue last year, and I've worked closely with the southern min Co-Op, the cooperative that has spearheaded this issue and is located in my state on this proposal, and we've been working on this for several years. The sugar industry is working through the 508 H process with the private developer to deliver a revenue product that better meets the growers needs.

And RMA has provided valuable input with a developed proposal now submitted for approval. The department also noted in their response that advancing this product and making it available as soon as possible is a top priority. So that is very welcome news. It's on track to go before the FCIC board as early as May of this year, and if approved, will be available as soon as August 2026 for the 2027 crop year.

So let me be clear, Congress should not have to legislate this issue. It's precisely why the RMA 508 H process was created to allow the private sector to develop new insurance products and seek approval from the SEC board. Again. Thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for her leadership in the bipartisan nature of this.

And with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yields back anyone else seek recognition to speak. Speak Ranking Member's recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, I just want to thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for her support for the sugar beet, sugar beet industry and for offering this amendment. Of course, sugar beets are facing intense economic headwinds, and these revenue policies and crop insurance may provide many different kinds of crops the certainty they need for the future of their operations. Sugar beet growers only want to access the same tool enjoyed by other commodities, and so I hope RMA will move quickly to approve this policy.

And again, just want to offer my sincere support. Thank you, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right, thank the gentlelady. Any any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? [CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, I thank the gentlelady for your attention to this matter, as well as your willingness to work in a bipartisan manner to create additional risk management tools for America's sugar beet farmers. Most of the sugar that's on our tables come from those sugar beets. And I know your state delivers a bunch of my my first ride in a sugar beet harvester in your great state. You.

There you go. And it included in the farm food and National Security Act. 2026 is a provision to require RMA to complete research and development of the creation on the creation of a sugar beet revenue policy. Additionally, a privately developed product is now in the final stages of approval at the Risk Management Agency, mandating the creation of a revenue policy at this stage would would be unnecessary thanks to the efforts of this committee and, quite frankly, individual efforts of both both the members who spoke here, and I appreciate the work that both Mr. Finstad and Ms. McDonald Rivet on this issue.

And I'm pleased to say it looks like we will finally be able to get a solution across the finish line. So thanks for your leadership. Any other members seek recognition? Ms. Hayes is recognized as an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Yes, I have amendment number 27 at the desk.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. Hayes has amendment number 27 at the desk The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 27 offered by Mrs. Hayes of Connecticut,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of our amendment.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you. Federal crop insurance is a critical piece of the Agricultural Safety Net. However, it only covers some farms in the country of the 1.9 million farms in the United States in 2022 just 19% were enrolled in crop insurance. This disproportionately affects small farms, which often cannot access insurance.

A recent survey of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture revealed that Connecticut farmers have lost over $50 million due to weather related events in 2023 and 2024 Additionally, according to the 2022 US Department of Agriculture report, only 5% of Connecticut farms are enrolled in crop insurance, compared to 19% nationwide. Extreme weather and other disasters compounds losses for farmers lacking crop insurance, forcing them to depend on limited Disaster Assistance Program or hope for improvised relief from Congress. This is particularly problematic in New England, where many small to medium size farms operations do not meet the crop insurance requirements or lack support for specialty crop producers. My amendment, based on my legislation, the save our small farms Act would address the lack of a safety net for vulnerable farmers who are unfairly shut out of traditional crop insurance.

Specifically, the amendment would help farmers who rely on the non-insurance Disaster Assistance Program by lowering the cost of purchasing coverage, reducing paperwork burdens and increasing payouts. The amendment incentivizes and assists farmers in moving to an insurance policy under the whole farm Revenue Protection Program and streamlines the process for farmers to sign up for WFRP. Further, the amendment increases the coverage offered by the program and provides additional incentive opportunities to insurance companies and agents as well as WFRP policies, the amendment also directs USDA to develop an index based insurance policy that is more responsive to crops and income losses resulting from extreme weather as climate disasters continue to rise, farmers must have the resources they need to stay afloat as we consider our moves in this next Farm Bill, I really would strongly urge the committee to think about how these really small family farms are affected and make sure that we are considering relief for them in any legislation that we have going forward, and crop insurance is a place where we can work together to do this. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Thank her. Does any members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Members seek recognition to speak on the Amen, if not.

Let me weigh in here before we call for the vote. And while I commend the gentlelady from Connecticut for offering this amendment, I'm support and I am supportive of certain portions of this approach, such as providing clarity to farmers and agents, I would be remiss not to mention some of the potential negative impacts. Expanding participation and lowering premiums are beneficial in the short run, but this Amen amendment as written could have a significant impact on the program's cost, and although I support expanding risk management tools for producers, changes to crop insurance. Risk profiles require careful consideration to avoid unintended consequences that could actually result in less coverage for producers or higher rates.

For that reason, I will be voting no on this amendment, seeing no other additional conversation. The question is, on the amendment. All those in favor the amendment signify by saying, aye,

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

I wanted to speak in support, and I wanted to support the amendment. I'm going to yield my time to Ms. Hayes, thank you.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

You didn't look up. I was just going to say or anything either when I asked twice, but you are welcome. Well, I I appreciate the just any conversation about how we address crop insurance for these small family farmers. So I would absolutely, I mean, this legislation has been introduced, and this is something that I thought we were getting closer to in the last negotiations of the Farm Bill, but there really was no opportunity here.

So even if it is not the legislation as it is drafted or the amendment as it is drafted, I I can't stress enough that we have to do something to support crop insurance for these small farmers, and especially in a state like mine, where, I mean, people don't have a backup crop, they don't have hundreds of acres. It's a land lock state, and you know, a lot of these specialty crops just don't qualify. And with the winters and the storms and the unexpected damage that we're having, our farmers can't survive. So even if the legislation is not accepted, I guess, I guess I'm encouraged by even you saying that there are some parts of it and just willing to work towards something, but that opportunity was not available going into the Farm Bill with that I yield the rest of the time to Ms. Brown

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-Ohio)

From Ohio. Thank you. I'd also like to add that specialty crops are extremely important and often overlooked in farm policy. Despite the amount of food we eat provided by these farmers, we need to support more American grown food, and that starts with ensuring they have a reliable safety net too often, small, diversified farms don't have access to safety net programs to protect the future security of their operations.

I believe this amendment will make much needed improvements in the nap and whole farm, whole farm programs. Every improvement, even the little one makes these programs stronger and better able to serve the specialty crop community. So I want to thank you, Congresswoman Hayes for

bringing up this amendment. We need to get serious about updating the farm safety net to ensure that it works for everyone.

And I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I appreciate. Mr. Costa,

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I want to speak on on the efforts to modify crop insurance. I may be one of the few people here that has bought in crop insurance for over 20 years, and I've had years where I've lost money I've never collected. I think the efforts by my colleagues to focus on specialty crops needs to be done. I think the bill attempts to do it, but I think we still have a ways to go, and I don't know that the amendment actually speaks to that, but this has got to be a part of a conversation as the legislation progresses and with our Senate for too long, I think the crop insurance has worked better for program crops in the Midwest, I think.

And that's fine, I don't have anything against that, but it, frankly, I concur, has not worked well for specialty crops. And in California, obviously, that's the large amount of agriculture production that we're engaged in. So I commend the efforts to make changes. I think it's in the right direction.

I don't think we're quite there yet. I think it's a work in progress, and I think we need to continue with that, regardless of what happens with this amendment. Is as the legislation continues to move, assuming that it does, and with the Senate and what they do, what their work product is on crop insurance, because it's a very important issue for the country, and farming is risky enough, and crop insurance should be addressed so that specialty crops can can utilize it in the same fashion that other program crops are able to successfully use it when they have significant losses, and that's the point I want to make.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yes. Encourage all those of us who support specialty crops, check out the provisions within H.R. 1 the agriculture. Title. There are significant investments in in specialty crops there.

That's this whole this, this bill, with the completion of this will be the best, especially crop Farm Bill that we've that we've ever done. So just encourage folks to

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

I will, and let's continue to work on it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yeah, very good gentleman yield and I yield back to Jim. Jim, yes, time is yours, so I yield back. Okay, anyone else seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Mr. Gray, nope, yeah, you and I are going to talk here the like.

Anyone else seek recognition? We want to do this as a part of this.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. Salinas, you want to speak on this? Okay, all right, so where are we here? Hearing no further conversation.

The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed saying no, any opinion of the Chair, the noes have it, and the amendment is not agreed to, a recorded vote is requested, and pursuant to committee Rule three, aye, two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. For what purpose does Mr. Gray seek recognition?

Rep. Adam Gray (D-Calif.)

Mr. Chairman, I do not have an amendment at the desk, but while we're on the topic of protecting specialty crop growers, I'd like to engage in a colloquy with you on specialty crop relief funding.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The gentleman is recognized well.

Rep. Adam Gray (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, as we discussed this bill today, does some good for specialty crop industry, and I certainly appreciate your partnership and others in adding additional wins here today, but the fact remains that row crop commodities have received the lion's share of investments, and I want to point out and thank Ranking Member and Mr. Vasquez and others who have talked about this and drawn attention to this throughout the afternoon. But you know, last year, when the USDA announced the farm bridge Assistance Program, which was meant to deliver support to farmers and offset portions of their projected losses from 2025 a hard year. You know for the trade certainty, this package total $12 billion and nearly 92% of that went to row crop farmers. So that remaining 8% was left to be split up between the entire specialty crop industry and the sugar beet industry.

That means that less than 1 billion was left for the growers who contribute over $520 billion to the US economy. Mr. Chairman, you've made clear, and others on your side of the aisle have repeated throughout the day that the goal of your caucus was to keep this bill cost neutral. And while I respect that, if we're unable to move forward with a meaningful fix in this bill, Mr. Chairman, can you commit to finding a path forward to support specialty crops and deliver, you know, the $5 billion in economic assistance that's missing from this bill today and is is really desperately needed, you know, by the growers.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I put that amount closer to 10 billion with all this, all the specialty crop, and I want to thank you for your interest and work on this important topic. It's an issue that is very near and dear to me. I've spent a lot of time on this. I want to assure you that I'm committed to working with you for additional assistance for our especially crop producers, in terms of the ad for the basically bridge payment that we need to have here, given the economy and and what our farmers have been experiencing, our special crop farmers experiencing, as well, securing meaningful support, will require a collaborative effort.

I've been working with Secretary Rollins to ensure she is aware of the need in farm country. In addition to this, I've also talked with my colleagues in the Senate to find a viable legislative pathway forward. And I'm glad you have the support of I'm glad to have support of folks like yourself who can help make this successful endeavor, and while we work to secure additional bridge funds economic assistance, really, it's ad hoc disaster, I'd be remiss not to mention what changes are in our control here and now. The farm food and s. Security Act, it's at everybody's seat, makes real strides to support our specialty crop growers.

It sets a solid foundation for creating long term, long term, successful risk management tools for specialty crops in a way that has never been done before. This includes changes such as directing USDA to establish a framework for delivering future assistance, especially crops, and bolstering the tree assistance program. We also redouble our efforts to enhance effective risk management tools like crop insurance by establishing a specialty crop Advisory Committee directing USDA to study improvements and review limitations on the whole farm revenue program and extends crop insurance coverage of revenue losses.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The bill also directs RMA to undergo research and development for a number of specialty crop policies, including the creation of a pricing library for specialty crops to help provide more data to jump start the creation of more actuarially sound policies, while I believe that additional assistance beyond what has already been announced is necessary that will need to happen outside the Farm Bill, and is better suited to supplemental funding package that has a faster track to the to the President's desk. So in order to be successful, we need to identify the needs and build a coalition of support around it. And I don't see no reason why we can't work together to move both efforts across the finish line to provide relief for our specialty crop producers. These efforts have been successful in the past, but only when we're able to approach it in a and I would say a trip partisan manner, that's Republicans working with Democrats working with the farm community.

That's how we got, over a year ago, that first historic relief for economic harm for our farmers by bringing everybody to the table without making automating automatons or extraneous demands. Again, I want to thank you

for your commitment to these issues, and I look forward to working with you on this matter.

Rep. Adam Gray (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you and most importantly, the commitment to work together. Thank you to the Ranking Member and yourself for your commitment to this issue.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And I yield back. I thank the gentleman. gentleman yields back any? Are there any other, any other amendments under crop insurance?

Mr. Finstad is recognized for the introduction of an amendment.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment number 20 at the desk.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Finstad has amendment as offered. Amendment number 20, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 20 offered by Mr. Finstad of Minnesota,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection. The amendment will be considered as read and I now recognize the distinguished gentleman to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this amendment would simply require the federal Crop Insurance Corporation to study and report on the feasibility of a policy to ensure pig farmers to ensure pig farmers against catastrophic disease

losses. I'm honored to represent Minnesota's 1st Congressional District where we have many counties that have more pigs than people. It's the second largest pork producing district in the nation. As pig farmers confront serious economic and animal health threats, it's critical that we ensure they have access to risk management tools necessary to protect their operations and pass their farms down to the next generation.

This is critically important for our small and mid sized farms. We're always one potential PERS outbreak away of really disrupting that generational farm operation. So I think it would be wise for us to look into providing more tools, more risk management tools. And I would urge adoption of this amendment.

With that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Thank you for that. Any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Fence as amendment number 20 Ranking Member is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Representative from Minnesota, Mr. Finstad, for introducing this amendment. I'm supportive of this amendment. Risk management tools are a critical part of our safety net system for swine producers. And finding ways to expand insurance options that can work with existing USDA indemnity programs is something that I fully support, and I would encourage my colleagues to support as well.

And I yield back thanks the gentle

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Lady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, seeing none, I just say you. I'd like to thank the gentleman for offering the amendment. It's critically important that we take a holistic approach when it comes to identifying indemnifying losses for our livestock

producers. This amendment encourages RMA to review previous efforts to ensure catastrophic swine losses and determine what changes could be made in order to create a product that works best for swine producers.

For these reasons, I'll be voting yes on this amendment. Encourage my colleagues to do the same. Hearing. No further conversation.

The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,. Those opposed by saying no. Independent Chair, the ayes have it any amendment is agreed to any other members have amendments under Title 11, crop insurance, Ms. Salinas is recognized for the introduction of an amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

I have an amendment at the desk. Amendment at the desk, amendment number 3343

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

33 Thank you. Ms. Salinas is offered amendment number 33 Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 33 offered by Ms. Salinas of Oregon,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment would be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished, gentlelady for the sponsor, who is the sponsor of the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the conversations we've been having this evening on specialty crops. Crop insurance is becoming increasingly

important in the wake of intensifying severity and frequency of natural disasters in the United States and certainly in Oregon. Producers across the nation face significant threats born from flooding, drought, hurricanes, severe storms, wildfires, ICE storms, heat waves, everything. In Oregon, we're experiencing devastating ICE storms in one season and wildfires and drought in the next.

These dangerous events, destroy crops, damage existing infrastructure, threaten long term food security and pose serious risks to producers and their ability to put food on our tables. And as has been mentioned, this is the actual food that people eat, vegetables, fruits. As Ranking Member of the horticulture subcommittee, it is my duty to support specialty crop producers in my district, state and across the nation. That's why I'm offering this amendment to remove the statutory cap on whole farm revenue protection.

Whole Farm Revenue Protection provides a risk management safety net for all commodities on a farm under a single insurance policy. It's available in all counties nationwide. However, for producers using the safety net, there is a statutory cap on adding more acres to their operations, which results in new acreage operating without insurance. If producers want to expand their farms, they must do so without reliable coverage and on all those new acres, which just means that's a huge financial risk.

My amendment would remove that statutory cap to ensure that when specialty crop producers expand their operations, all of the added acreage will also be covered under the whole farm revenue protection. I constantly hear from specialty crop growers about the head winds they're facing and the need for better access to a safety net that works for them. Producers in my district grow hazelnuts, Christmas trees, Marion berry specialty seed crops, blueberries, strawberries and so much more. They grow these valuable crops on farms as small as 25 acres, but into the thousands, and regardless of the size or crop all these producers utilize whole farm revenue protection.

My amendment would allow for that much needed flexibility in adding coverage for whole farm revenue protection as these producers expand their very important operations. When these producers don't have insurance, they either take the loss or are at the mercy of Congress to retroactively provide them with emergency funding. As a result, Oregon specialty crop growers are too often unable to access meaningful coverage that they so desperately

need. This common sense amendment would remove one barrier for these producers to sustain their livelihoods and actually put food on our tables.

This committee needs to ensure that specialty crop producers have the risk management tools they need when they need them, and right now, we are ignoring the needs of our producers. I sincerely hope and invite my Republican colleagues to address these fixes, and I hope that people really understand what we have done here with H.R. 1 we gave huge corporate tax breaks to the likes of Jeff Bezos and an Elon Musk and Larry Ellison when we really needed to put our farm operations first. None of those guys have ever set foot on a farm to actually work the land, and we have. People all across this country, as exemplified in this beautiful committee hearing today, and we're not meeting growers where they are.

However, I know that is not realistic to actually meet this need right now, so I would like to withdraw my amendment, but would love to continue this conversation. I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Well, as always, I appreciate the gentlelady from Oregon and offering your amendment with drawing I support ensuring whole farm revenue protection works effectively for producers. The underlying bill already directs USDA to conduct an annual review or the current limitations under the whole farm revenue protection. 2014 was kind of the first bill we ever really in my opinion, some may disagree where we really dealt with specialty crops in a meaningful way. 2018 was a great bill for specialty crops and and this bill in 2026 is is going to be the best we you know, you gotta walk before you run.

And we really are laying a great foundation. And I, I do look forward to working with you as we continue. You know, we have the especially crop Council, USDA. I mean, I'm very excited about the future, especially crops.

So thank you for your leadership in that area. I know that was important when we up, did the listening session with you, so the appreciate the gentlelady with drawing that amendment is any other any members seek recognition for additional amendments under Title 11 crop insurance. Mr. Jackson from Texas recognized

Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-Texas)

Mr. Chairman, I have amendment number eight at the desk.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Jackson has amendment number eight. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number eight offered by Mr. Jackson of Texas

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Texas to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-Texas)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my amendment to direct the USDA to conduct a study evaluating the feasibility of a risk management insurance policy specifically tailored to the domestic lamb industry. Sheep producers in Texas and across the country face significant financial uncertainty due to market volatility, rising input cost and unpredictable domestic and international pressures. Unlike many other livestock sectors, sheep producers currently lack access to a dedicated federal insurance or risk management tool designed to meet their unique needs. This amendment takes a responsible, measured step forward by directing the USDA to evaluate potential insurance options for America's sheep producers and provide Congress with the information needed to develop effective risk management tools for this important livestock sector.

Importantly, this is a no cost amendment that simply lays the groundwork for future policy solutions while ensuring taxpayer resources are responsibly used. This amendment supports sheep producers, strengthens rural economies and ensures the long term viability of the American lamb production. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Recognize any other, any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Jackson's amendment. Any members want to speak on this amendment, it won't be so bad.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

It's late. I can't help but

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Mr. Chairman, all I can say is bacon like slam.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All right, hey, well, I'll take the opportunity to do that, I want to thank the gentleman for offering this amendment, as well as his commitment to providing adequate risk management for land production, this amendment would create a potential pathway for new opportunities to successfully manage risk, and therefore I'm going to support it, and I urge my colleagues to do the same If there is no other hearing, no other further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor signify by saying aye,. Those opposed saying no, in the opinion of the Chair the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to.

Any other amendment, any other any members seek recognition for the introduction of an amendment. Additional amendment into title 11. Mr. Jackson recognized.

Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-Texas)

Mr. Chairman, I have one more amendment. I have amendment number 14 at the desk.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Jackson has amendment number 14 at the desk. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number four. 14 offered by Mr. Jackson of Texas,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Texas to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment. Thank you,

Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-Texas)

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of my amendment, which will direct the USDA to evaluate additional flexibilities for cattle producers utilizing the livestock risk production program, who are forced to sell their livestock early due to adverse adverse weather events like wildfires. The Livestock risk production program is a critical risk management tool that allows producers to protect themselves against unexpected market price declines. However, under current rules, producers must sell within 60 days of their contract, of their contract, end date to maintain coverage when adverse weather events happen, such as the devastating wildfires that burn 1.2 million acres in my district in 2024 cattle producers are often left without the fence, the feed or the infrastructure needed to maintain their herds.

Unfortunately, during these times, cattle producer, a cattle producer with LRP policy, would be forced to either rapidly find the resources necessary to sustain their herd or sell their livestock and forfeit all financial protection while still being required to pay their policies premium cost. This amendment would potentially evaluate an adverse weather exemption for LRP and allow producers impacted by wildfires to sell outside the standard window while maintaining their price protection. This would ensure producers are not penalized simply for making the best judgment decision for their operation during emergencies that are fully beyond their control. This is a practical solution that will strengthen, will strengthen the livestock risk production program and support cattle producers during times of disaster.

I urge adoption of this amendment, and Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Thank you for that. As any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Jackson's amendment number 14. Any members seek recognition to speak on that amendment, if not, let me make a few comments, and then we'll go for a vote.

I thank the gentleman from Texas for his continued commitment to America's producers. It's extremely important to create as much flexibility as possible for our ranchers as they make their risk management decisions. This feasibility study is a step in the right direction to make sure that we're able to provide additional flexibility while maintaining the integrity of crop insurance. And I thank the gentleman for offering this amendment.

Encourage my colleagues to vote yes, so hearing no further conversation, the question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed saying no, any opinion of the Chair. The ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to. Does any member have any additional any additional amendments under Title 11 crop insurance, any member have additional amendments under Title 11 crop insurance, I go three times this time getting to the end.

Any member have additional amendments under Title 11, crop insurance, that being the case, hearing none. Title 11 is now closed and and we are will now open the bill. Let me back up here to where I'm supposed to be. Technically.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Have an amendment, Mr. Chairman

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

12, yeah, let me get the script. Though we're done well, I don't want to mess up right yet at the end. So, so the question is, we're opening the miscellaneous title, title 12. Are there any amendments to title 12?

Yes, Mr. Costa is recognized with an amendment at the desk that Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 59 offered by Mr. Costa of California,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from California, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, flattery will get you everywhere this. This is another non-controversial amendment. Knott, obviously, I think many of us are familiar with the proposition 12 initiative that passed California by the voters back in 2018 it was litigated for five years and. I want to be clear, I did not endorse proposition 12 when it was on the ballot, but the voters of California passed it, and our agricultural community generally opposed it, but now, after five years of litigation, have implemented it, and it deals with animal confinement on a host of industries that involve poultry, dairy cattle and etc.

The fact is, is that our farmers have made investments. The industry has settled and the language that's included in here would obviously invalidate all of that. So my language would be to invalidate strike the language that's in the bill as it relates to prop 12. So I know that other states in the country and your producers have concerns with it has created, interestingly enough, a niche market for the industries in California, and they have been able to succeed With the construct of proposition 12.

We can talk about markets, we can talk about the challenges and competition. But clearly, this language that's in the bill would invalidate what the voters of California passed, and for those reasons, and a host of other reasons that involve economics, I think that my amendment would provide a continued level playing field and allow for competition that clearly exists throughout our 50 states as it relates to the animal confinement issues that this amendment addresses. So I would ask for my support on my amendment, and I'll yield back the and I'll pass at this time yield to my colleague, Mr. McGovern. Well, thank you.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

And I strongly support our governor's record. I strongly support Representative Costa's amendment, and I want to thank him for his partnership as we have fought back against this issue for years, Mr. Chairman, I can't believe we're talking about Proposition 12 again. And quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, I find it hard to believe that you think killing states rights on animal welfare will work this time. We have served on this committee for a long time together, and if you think that this won't end in bipartisan opposition once again, then you're the most optimistic person in America.

The issue is settled. The issue is settled. Americans expect farm animals to be treated with basic humane standards, and I'm talking about pigs being able to turn around. Farmers support Proposition 12.

We've had hearings on this. You didn't invite them, so I entered almost 200 letters into the record with their testimony. I don't know if you read any of them, but there are plenty from Pennsylvania, and I'd be happy to send them to you again. If you talk to these farmers, you'll understand why state laws like proposition 12 are so popular, hog farmers who have made the switch are thriving.

There were new markets available to them that weren't there before proposition 12 passed, but the hill the Republicans seem to want to die on is to take that away. So let me underscore that small, independent farmers have found a way to adapt and thrive, and Republicans want to pull the rug out, and that's a cartoon version of get big or get out. I would just conclude by saying that I don't believe that there is a consensus, either in the house or in the Senate to take away probably proposition 12. This is this is settled.

It's working. And for this committee to go in with a heavy hand like this and try to undo all of this, I think, is is wrong. And again, I support Representative Costa. This is the right thing to do.

And I would urge my colleagues to again, support this amendment. I yield back.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

So let me close at the end of the day, do we really want to eliminate another access market for our producers? I don't want to create a situation where it's unfair, but this language in the construct of this bill is unfair, seems to me a more sensible way to deal with this is to have the USDA doing a study, create a federal standard and power and make our producers more competitive. So at this point, unless there's further discussion, I also will respectfully withdraw the amendment,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlemen withdraws.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

I continue to work with the committee and the senate because I don't. Think we're going to get very far with it ultimately pass the bill.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appreciate withdrawing the amendment. Just my view, I want to thank the gentleman from California from raising this issue. You know, Secretary Vilsack, who I work, we all worked with for eight years, said it best when he said that without a solution, prop 12 could cause chaos in the marketplace. Since it's enactment, we have seen retail pork prices rise in California by almost 20% and premium cuts increase by up to 40% it's hit low income households especially hard with recent data showing that they've reduced their pork purchases by 22% prop 12 is similarly burden producers, as they now face costs upward of $4,500 per Sal to simply become compliant with arbitrary standards.

Now everyone in this room knows that prop 12 is an unreasonable mandate that is increasing cost for producers and consumers. No one's winning. And in fact, the piglets aren't winning, because with the size of gestation pens, many of those piglets do not survive as the sows roll over and smother them. And so I I pretty specifically as we consider how to ensure critical research that is occurring across USDA facilities is maintained.

I'm glad to see USDA held a public comment period last year and made public summary and the analysis. And I do look forward to working with the

gentlelady in in the future on this topic. All right, I think Mr. Jackson has an amendment under Title 12. Ms. Jackson of Texas is as an amendment at the table, and the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 13, offered by Mr. Jackson of Texas

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Area, without objection, the amendment will be considered as read and I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Texas to sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-Texas)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my amendment to ensure federal funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory network and the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program is being to make sure that is being used more efficiently in reaching the entities performing the essential animal disease surveillance, prevention and diagnostic work that keep America's livestock producers and their livestock safe. I was proud to leave legislation and the Republicans One Big Beautiful Bill to make critical investments into these two programs and the vaccine bank, these animal disease prevention and management programs serve as the USDA frontline defense against foreign animal disease that threaten our livestock industry, our food supply and our national security. However, there are serious concerns that excessive administrative overhead, reportedly as high as 60% in some cases, have reduced the amount of funding reaching the laboratories and organizations doing the actual work to identify and mitigate animal diseases like the New World, screw worm, high path, avian influenza, African swine fever and Foot and Mouth Disease. This amendment establishes a reasonable 15% cap on administrative cost, ensuring that at least 85% of the federal funds go directly to supporting more diagnostic capacity bio security efforts and response planning.

This common sense reform will improve accountability, strengthens animal health infrastructure and ensures taxpayer dollars are used effectively to protect American agriculture. This is a practical step to strengthen our

nation's animal disease preparedness and safeguard our livestock producers. And I urge adoption of the amendment with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman. He yields back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Jackson's amendment, I'll say something. Recognize the Ranking Member for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I just want to say I'm supportive of this amendment, and I wish the policy had been part of the base text of the bill, but I'd rather see it than not see it. So thank you, sir. Thank you, ma'am.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on the gentleman's amendment, not let me just weigh in. I thank the gentleman for Texas offering amendment. Amendment builds off the incredible work this committee accomplished in H.R. 1, where we were able to fund the three legged stole of Animal Health at over $2 billion investments made in H.R. 1 ensure that USDA states and the livestock and poultry ended.

Trees are fully equipped with the tools they need to prevent control and eradicate foreign animal diseases in the United States, this amendment builds off those investments, ensuring that the majority of funds for the National Animal Health Laboratory network and the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program go directly to critical research and testing capabilities, while a small but effective amount is retained for administrative expenses. I thank the gentleman for offering this amendment. Encourage my colleagues to vote yes. So if no further conversation, hearing no further conversation, the questions on the amendment, all those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed for saying no, and the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to, they now recognize the Ranking Member for The purpose of introducing an amendment that is at the at the desk,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Chairman, I have amendment number 146 at the desk.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. The Ranking Member has amendment 141 The Clerk will report the

The Clerk

Title of the amendment. Amendment number 146 offer offered by Ranking Member Craig the Craig,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady and the sponsor of the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my opening statement, I made my concerns with the overall bill clear, particularly its shortcomings around the most urgent challenges facing families, farm families and working people in America right now, my amendment, the farm and family Relief Act, helps fill those gaps in the underlying text of this bill by providing billions, both in economic assistance for American producers and to stave off some of the damage done to food assistance programs by shifting an unfunded mandate to the states and counties in the One Big Beautiful Bill, farmers across the country are hurting, and while the Supreme Court has blocked the President's tariffs, it only took the White House a few hours to announce a New rash of across the board tariffs using a different authority, the tariffs are not only putting farmers out of business, but they've also taking export markets that took decades and billions of dollars to develop and handed them to our AG competitors like Argentina and Brazil. Farmers are under water, and they are taking on more and more debt to help keep themselves

afloat. Talk to the Farm Bureau or any of the commodity groups, and they'll tell you, farmers need more help than Republicans and the administration so far have provided working people off the farm need help too.

The president's tariffs have called caused food prices to surge. According to a recent report from the Joint Economic Committee, the average household in America paid more than 1600 in higher costs last year due to Trump's trade wars, over $300 worth of those higher costs went to food groceries are up over 4% last week, both the New York Fed and the Congressional Budget Office issued separate reports confirming what every American knows and what this administration and Republicans won't admit, the economic costs and tax burden of Trump's tariffs are falling on the American consumer, no matter how much The President and my colleagues deny it. We are facing an affordability crisis in our country right now, farmers are paying more for inputs while making less and working people are paying more for everyday essentials like food, housing and utilities. There is a widening gap between what people have to spend and how much things cost, and my amendment does something about that.

My amendment provides relief for hurting farmers and hungry families. It provides economic assistance to farmers to help them continue feeding our communities and helps ensure vulnerable American seniors, children, veterans and people with disabilities can afford food, and the looming SNAP crisis is a bipartisan concern. The National Governor's Governor's Association, which represents red and blue states alike, has called for the help this amendment grants in order to give them time to head off the disaster heading their way from the cuts to food assistance. Now I know we're going to have probably some discussion about cost neutrality.

I know we're going to talk about we just can't spend any more money after we spent all the money we spent in the Big Beautiful Bill that provided most of the benefits to the ultra wealthy in this country. And I know folks are going to say. Say we just can't spend money, Angie, but it was okay when we spent and added $3.4 trillion to our deficits to give tax breaks to the rich again, 4.1 trillion over a period of time for tax breaks to the rich. So my family farmers, they need more help.

Specialty Crop growers in our nation, they need more help. And I know that this committee is committed to helping family farmers, and I hope this

committee can also be committed to helping hungry families across this country. And with that,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chair, I yield back gentlelady yields back any member seek recognition to speak on the gentlelady's amendment. Dr. Adams is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I do want to speak in support of this amendment. This amendment is is about keeping both farmers and families afloat during tough times, farmers, especially family farms, are struggling with higher costs for seeds and fertilizer and equipment, plus lost markets from Tariffs and Trade disruptions. This amendment provides targeted financial relief so they can keep producing, stay in business and support their communities. It also protects families who rely on food assistance programs like SNAP, ensuring that they don't suddenly lose access to the nutrition they need to feed their children and households.

This helps families stay healthy, reduces financial stress and keeps communities stable. The amendment strengthens rural economies too. Farmers who get support can continue hiring workers, buying supplies locally and keeping markets alive. In short, it protects farmers, it supports families, and it keeps our food system strong and resilient.

I support the amendment. I thank the Lady for bringing it forward, and I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Back any other members seek recognition to speak on the Ranking Members amendment. Mr. Scott is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Mr. Chairman, I know it's your amendment, so I assume you have a cost estimate for him. Just wondering what that total cost estimate

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Is, the total cost estimate, I don't have it on the top of my tip of my tongue here right now, but it would add an additional somewhere around $18 billion in assistance to family farmers that the Trump Administration left out. And we're also seeking a multi-year delay in the cost shift to states and

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

And how many billion would that be?

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I'll have to go pull that number out for you, Mr. Scott, but I'd be happy to do that.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Well, thank you. I mean, you're the Ranking Member. It's your amendment. You've had this for a while.

It's not like, it's not like you just came up with it today, right?

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

No, sir, we introduced it even before the Republicans announced the $12 billion in economic assistance because we knew it was not going to be enough for the losses that have been occurred under this administration.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

So but you've had months then it was introduced months ago. Then is that correct?

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I just don't want to misquote the number. It's a four year delay in the cost shift. Is what the number is. And then it's again, makes our family farmers whole.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Actually, if you read the language, it doesn't make them whole, but if you read your language, it doesn't make them whole, no, sir.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

But it makes them a hell of a lot more whole than they are under the Trump Administration today.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I disagree with you on that, but it doesn't make them whole. You should read the language. It's actually got a factor in there. But I want to say this, Mr. Chairman, I don't want to debate this whole thing with the Ranking Member forever tonight, but they've had a lot to say about what they call a billionaire bailout bill, or whatever nickname y'all have for it, on any given day, I want you to know this, one the best things we did in that bill for the American farmer is to give them a $15 million estate tax exemption so that the Democrats don't get to seize the assets of the American farmer when they die.

Now I want you to hear what I said. It was 15 million, not billion. It was 15 million. It protects every small and mid size farm in this current.

Country from the federal government, if the Democrats are in control, seizing the assets of the farm family when the mother or the father dies 15 million, not billion. It's one of the best things we did in H.R. 1. I'm glad we did it. I'm glad the Democrats didn't get the tax bill that they wanted so that they could seize your family farm when your mother or your father passed away.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back other members seek recognition to speak on. We'll go this side say is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

I just have a question for the Ranking Member. Thank you so much for introducing this legislation. I think it's really good legislation to provide relief to American farmers. Do you know off the top of your head how much economic relief this President and this administration gave to farmers in Argentina?

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Well, I mean, the $40 billion number comes to mind. I understand we're going to get, you know, currency swaps this, and currency swaps that. But not only did they get $40 billion in relief, but they've now asked us to prioritize Argentinian beef and Mr. Scott, the number was $18 billion as I said in farm relief, four year delay is $28 billion to our states so that they can fully prepare for this cost shift you've given them.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

I have no further question. I yield you the rest of my time. Represent Ranking Member if

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

You need it. Thank you so much. And if you're referring to cost up, stepped up basis and those sorts of things. Many members of this committee, even under President Biden, fought the change in stepped up basis on behalf of our family farmers.

I was, happened to be one of those members who did that. Many of the members on this committee did so as well. The bottom line is this, you know, you can sort of throw, well, the One Big Beautiful Bill and the ultra wealthy, and I get kind of throwing that back at us, but at the end of the day, when the majority of the debt, the majority of the deficits that are going to be incurred, not just by this generation, but by the next generation, in the One Big Beautiful Bill that the benefit actually goes to the top 2% of Americans. I started a conversation yesterday about the wealth disparity in this country.

And I can promise you that the majority of the benefits in the One Big Beautiful Bill did not go to family farmers in this country. It went to incredibly wealthy billionaires in this nation. And if you go back to the One

Big Beautiful Bill, if we were doing this in regular order than the $68 billion that we put you put in the One Big Beautiful Bill most of the Democrats on this Dais would be supporting, but we also would be talking about Title four in a very different way than we spent most of the day today talking about it, because we would not have sat here and allowed Republicans to decimate title for in order to pay for tax breaks for the rich. So there's no way that Republicans can get out of the facts on who the benefit mostly went to in the One Big Beautiful Bill.

And with that, I would yield any remaining time that Ms. Hayes has to Mr. McGovern or Ms. Brown if they want to speak, I yield Beth

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Lee yields back, now recognize Mrs. Mr. Lucas from Oklahoma. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

And I now yield time to my colleague from Georgia, Mr. Scott, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I'm be very brief about this. Every competent member of this committee knows exactly what happened with regard to Argentina and the $20 billion line of credit for a currency swap, of which the maximum draw down was $2.5 billion which has been repaid to the American taxpayers with interest. We actually made money. If we're going to do foreign aid, it's exactly the way we should do foreign aid, loan money, not give money.

So everybody up here that's competent knows exactly what it is, and yet they continue to act like someone just gave Argentina $20 billion and that that's just not true. $2.5 billion line of credit repaid with interest the US taxpayers made money with that. I yield activity. Lucas.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

I yield to the gentleman from Iowa, Mr. Feenstra,

Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-Iowa)

Thank you, Congressman, Lucas. I just want to just briefly talk about the truth. We good. Thank you.

I just want to briefly talk about what the working families tax cut bill really did. All right, let's get this on the record. All right, I think you guys are being very disingenuous Democrats. So let me just explain what it does to farmers in the farming community.

Okay, so what we did is we strengthen crop insurance. Remember that we increased reference prices, remember that we doubled map and FMD. Remember that we actually did the $15 million on death tax. We created the acre act so farmers could get loans to their banks.

We moved Food for Peace. We doubled 179 depreciation. So if you buy, I don't care what piece of equipment is, small farm, big farm, whatever you can depreciate it. We created immediate expensing.

We doubled the standard deduction. And it goes on and on for the farmer. You ask any farmer, any farmer that's doing their taxes today, they will say it's immeasurable. The things that were in that bill that truly made a difference for them to be profitable, 20% business, small business deduction.

So what I'm telling you is this, I see this amendment, all right, this is obviously partisan, political show, I get it. It's unreasonable. But here's the thing, farmers and ranchers, they want our help. They want this bill.

They need it because it's the next step. It's the next part. I would have loved to have loved to have done it in 2024 we had bipartisan support in 2024 but didn't happen. Then we tried it in 2025 now it's 2026 are we going to get together and get this done or not?

Are we going to play partisan politics? We've done so much in this meeting in the last day and a half of giving, give and take. How many amendments did we take from one another? It's great.

Bottom line is, let's do it for our farmers and our producers, please. They're the ones that are hurting. They're the ones that need this. Thank you.

I yield back

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

Gentleman yields back to me, Mr. Chairman, before I yield back to you, I would simply note that we've been going at this now for what, almost 20 hours. Over the course of two days, we've covered a huge amount of material. We've had some of the sincerest debates and discussions and points of views from all sides. I don't know how many amendments we have remaining, but the closer we get to the midnight hour, probably the less productive this process will be.

So let's finish up.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

You back? Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Ms. Davids is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I am. My plan is to speak in support of the amendment. I don't disagree with Mr. Lucas that the later it gets, the maybe less productive this is going to be. I also just feel like maybe everybody needs to take a breath and a drink of water.

Questioning people's competency, though, is not a good way for us to move forward, regardless of whether we disagree or not, I it is probably time for us to like take a breath. I am happy to co-sponsor and support the Ranking Members farm and family Relief Act, tariffs have increased costs for American families, have driven up input costs and have eroded export markets for Kansas producers. Last year, the average American household paid over $1,600 higher in higher costs due to a self inflicted trade war by this administration. This amendment would provide relief for farmers, ranchers and families who are being squeezed by high costs.

Additionally, this would postpone the damaging changes made to SNAP in the partisan budget reconciliation bill. This would give states like Kansas time to stabilize their operations and prepare for drastic changes to these to these programs. This delay is supported by the bipartisan National

Governors Association. I would urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, any others seek recognition to speak. And I'll take my time, ladies and gentlemen this amendment is just political messaging. I get it. You know, the amendment is almost identical to the legislation a Ranking Member introduced in January, legislation I found out about via a press release.

Had it been a serious effort? That would have expected some outreach from the Ranking Member before the reporters, cameras and microphones showed up. Similarly, Had this been a serious effort at legislating, one would have expected to be it to be raised as a priority during the negotiations, or filed in a timely manner, rather than hours after the deadline passed, and while they may call it family relief, the irony is, there is no relief for families in this amendment. Instead, their number one priority is the continuation of mismanagement at the expense of families that claim they want to support the amendment chooses the status quo over $10 billion in erroneous SNAP payments per year bureaucratic state mismanagement and fraud, blank checks for bloated state administrative expenses.

And let's be clear about the status quo. Who it really hurts? It's a single mom on SNAP working two jobs to get back on her feet, who asked to repay hundreds of dollars in SNAP payments that the state overpaid her through no fault of her own, or a grandmother raising her grandchildren, who, unbeknownst to her, has been underpaid in her SNAP benefits for months due to calculation errors by the state. I'm going to remind everyone that if states decrease these errors, they don't need to pay for any portion of the SNAP benefit.

It is imperative that these reforms go into effect when intended a delay would be a disservice to taxpayers and our neighbors in need. As for supporting producers, I agree more can be done and more should be done, and I'll be happy to work with any member who is serious about filling the gap that lie between USDA announced farmer bridge Assistance Program and the upcoming deliver delivery of almost $16 billion in support through

title one. Keep in mind that $16 billion that Ro crop farmers will see in October was only made possible by historic investments that were contained in H.R. 1, legislation that every single Democrat voted against, certainly for specialty crops, as we have discussed, USDA, missed the mark on both the amount of assistance as well as the delivery mechanism, and that is why the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 contains the specialty Crop framework to address those shortcomings in the future, but in Congress, we are bound by budget rules, and adding this amendment with tens of billions in offset spending to a Farm Bill will only bring this legislation to a standstill and, quite frankly, will serve no one. Instead, if you're serious about supporting our farmers, then let's turn the page on the game gamesmanship.

Let's work together to identify the critical needs in the countryside. Now let's work to find together to find a viable legislative vehicle to address those concerns. As much as I want to support our producers, I can't, in good conscience, swallow another four years of turning a blind eye to the mismanagement of tax dollars to the detriment of the families in need. If members are serious about assisting families in rural America, we should work to address mismanagement of the SNAP program, work in good faith to support the farm food and National Security Act, and with that, I yield my time back any other members seek to speak on the amendment?

No members seeking to speak, hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no,, independent, the Chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is, I'm sorry, the noes have it, almost, almost got it, almost. Thank God I speak slowly.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I was about to take the win,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And I know the amendment is not agreed to, Mr. Chairman, I'd like a recorded vote. A recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee rule 312, further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. I believe Mr. Harris has an amendment. 10, title 12,

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

Yes, sir. Mr. Chairman, I do have an amendment at the desk. Amendment number 36

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk. The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 36 offered by Mr. Harris of North Carolina,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection. Amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina that sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Mark Harris (R-N.C.)

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I offer an amendment to strike the creation of a new office of ombudsman within the USDA. Let me be very clear at the outset, every American farmer, rancher and producer, deserves equal price.

Protection under the law. Civil rights complaints must be taken seriously and they must be handled fairly. But the question before us is not whether civil rights matter. We all would agree absolutely they do.

The question is whether creating yet another federal office authorizing $1 million in taxpayer dollars per year is the right way to address those concerns. The USDA has established avenues for filing and resolving civil rights complaints. The department maintains an entire Civil Rights Division. Its website provides detailed guidance on how producers and customers can file claims their formal administrative process is already in place, and ultimately, access to the courts remains available to any American who believe their rights have been violated.

So why are we creating a new office? The proposal expands the size and scope of the federal bureaucracy at a time, frankly, when the American people are demanding that we reign in Washington, not grow it and expand it. Every new Office requires staff, requires funding, requires overhead and requires long term commitments that rarely shrink once they're established, if there are problems with the existing Civil Rights Review Process, then I challenge us to let us reform that process directly, let us improve transparency, streamline timelines and hold existing offices accountable for results that would be responsible governance, but creating a duplicative office of the Ombudsman, risk confusion over jurisdiction, duplication of effort and additional cost to taxpayers, all without clear evidence that current remedies are insufficient for these reasons. I urge my colleagues to support striking this provision and refocus this Farm Bill on what it is meant to do, support our farmers, strengthen rural America and steward taxpayer dollars wisely.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you, gentlemen gentleman yields back to any members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. I Ms. Miller from Illinois is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Mary Miller (R-Ill.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I speak in support of this amendment. This amendment echoes the committee's efforts to reduce burdensome bureaucracy on our farmers. I want to be clear civil rights protections for our farmers and producers remain fully intact. USDA already has a civil rights division.

We don't need another bureaucrat making life harder for our farmers. I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlelady yields back. Thanks, gentlelady, any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, and the Ranking Member is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, the law, specifically the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and USDA policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual harassment, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, disability, limited English proficiency, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from a public assistance program, If a farmer, rancher, customer or employee of the department, feels they have been mistreated, they can file a complaint to rectify the situation. Sometimes these cases can be resolved quickly, but often the process can be confusing, frustrating and drawn out. While the USDA civil rights complaints process should provide recourse for employees and program participants who face discrimination in hiring, employment and program delivery. Serious issues have plagued civil rights complaint processing for more than 50 years, and while these problems are not new.

In 2021 the Office of the Inspector General evaluated USDA oversight of the civil rights complaints reviewing complaints process between October 2016 and June 2019 and found that under the previous Trump Administration, more than 85% of civil rights complaints took longer than 180 days to process in Fiscal Year 2019 it took 799 days on average, or more than two years And two months, to process complaints with 33% of staff at the Office of Civil Rights having been forced out since the beginning of 2025 farmers, ranchers, customers and employees will need more help than ever navigating the complaint process the ombudsman office this amendment tries to eliminate. Would you do just that? Help? Them navigate the Civil Rights Complaint review process, ensure they're aware of their Hearings and Appeals rights, and make recommendations for improvements to the Secretary For these reasons, I strongly oppose this amendment and support support the underlying provision, an office of the Ombudsman alone will not solve the long standing issues civil rights complaint processing issues at USDA, but it would help.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentlelady for yielding back any any member, any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Harris's amendment. Mr. Figures, you're recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I mean, I probably come from the state with the just looking around here the longest, deepest civil rights history of any member here. My father started his legal career. My for those of you that who don't know my my father integrated University of Alabama's law school, first black man educated to be a lawyer in the state of Alabama, and when he finished, he and two other finished in the same class.

But when he finished, he went back home and he started his legal career, in part, defending property rights of black farmers and and so I think we all know the history of USDA as it relates to discrimination. It is probably the most well documented agency in the federal government with its acts of discriminatory practices against minority farmers in this country, it led, in large part, to black farm owners nearly being wiped out in its entirety from a percentage standpoint over the last century. This is not conjecture. This is not talking points.

This is not politics. This is documented realities. And so to just trust that the agency that has seen a third of its staff cut in the Civil Rights section that they will just do what's necessary to protect the rights of minority farmers or in other civil rights I can't do that. I do think there's some additional oversight that's necessary, given the history of this agency.

And so with that, I will, I will have to oppose this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you, gentlemen Chairman yields back. Any other members seek recognition to address Mr. Harris's amendment, seeing none on their way in here, I want to thank the gentleman for bringing this issue forward for consideration by this committee. Understand my colleagues concerns with

creating additional offices at USDA that were previously sunset, as well as the fiscal and administrative concerns that may have been flagged after further engagement with us. Ca, I believe more work can be done to enhance the service delivery provided by the assistant secretary of civil rights.

And for these reasons, I am supportive of my colleagues efforts to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy of creating a separate office, and look forward to conducting rigorous oversight to ensure USDA is fairly serving all of its customers. The having hearing, no further conversation. The question is, on the amendment, Mr. Chairman, who seeks recognition,

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Just take a few seconds to speak in opposition to this amendment. I mean, given the impassioned remarks by the speakers against this amendment, including Mr. Figures that described you know, his family's efforts against well documented discrimination. I mean, we're talking about a million dollars in a massive budget. I mean, this is not even budget dust.

I think it's well worth the efforts of this new office to support and right wrongs at the cost of a million dollars. And so, I mean, I don't understand why we're even arguing about this. I speak against the amendment, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank the gentleman. gentleman yields back, hearing no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,, those opposed by saying no, and the

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Chairman. You. Let me, let you.

Call it first.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

In the opinion of the Chair, I'd have to say that the noes have it, does the

[CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you. A recorded vote is when requested pursuant to committee Rule three, I two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. Now recognize Mr. Vasquez.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you. Ms. thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number 32

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Vasquez has amendment number 32 at the desk, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 32 offered by Mr. Vasquez of New Mexico.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman from South Dakota, reserves a point of order, without objection. Amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize distinguished gentleman from New Mexico, the sponsor of the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I understand that you may feel this amendment is not germane to the Farm Bill, but I plan to offer and withdraw this amendment. But before I do hope we can have a discussion on this issue, my amendment is simple. It would require that bets on sports to be treated as sports betting under existing laws. The CFTC does not allow gambling contracts.

However, it is choosing to turn a blind eye and allow companies to get around state and tribal gambling rules by calling bets on sports event

contracts or prediction markets. We all know this is BS, a prediction on the volume of wheat produced has value to the agriculture industry. A prediction on whether the 40 Niners beat the Raiders on Monday Night Football is a bet. Let's be clear, what prediction market companies are doing is a direct violation of tribal sovereignty shreds the integrity of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 and is stealing revenue from tribes in states like New Mexico, in my state, tribal gaming sustains Native American communities.

Revenue from gaming goes directly to jobs, education, housing, infrastructure and so much more. It's the foundation of how gaming tribes support themselves, and it's a huge boon to surrounding rural communities. When it comes to sports betting in New Mexico, the rules are simple. It only happens at tribal casinos under tribal federal and state regulation with strong safeguards in place to ensure tax revenue supports state and tribal priorities, prevents under age betting and protects those who struggle with gambling addiction.

And in other states around the country, sports betting companies have had to go through the rigorous approval processes themselves. Prediction markets, on the other hand, have opened in all 50 states and openly advertise that their services are available where sports books are not. These markets advertise themselves as being an important tool for understanding world events, but a recent report showed that over 90% of contracts on Kal she were on sports with 40% of their volume on the NFL alone, whether you call it a bet or a prediction, we all know what it is the tribes in my district have abided by all state and federal regulations to operate their businesses, and it's not right that a new unregulated market can appear overnight with no oversight that the tribal casinos and legal sports books are subject to. Being unregulated is so attractive that even traditional sports betting companies have now switched to a prediction model so that they can avoid regulation in states that they weren't previously allowed to operate.

The CFTC originated out of a desire to regulate grain markets, not oversee a billion dollar sports betting industry members on both side of this room agree the CFTC should get back to being focused on agricultural commodities, and everyone should have to play by the same rules. Now I know that there are many of my Republican colleagues with tribes in their district, and in fact, there have been numerous Republican states in which your attorneys general have signed on to amicus briefs against Cal she and

41 states in total. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this amendment, and will plan to with withdraw the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The gentleman withdraws. For what purpose does the gentleman seek recognition?

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [IN PROGRESS]

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Uh, Mr. Chairman, in lieu of an amendment, I would like to engage in a colloquy with you on the appropriate on the appropriate time to discuss my concerns about sports related event contracts,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentlemen is recognized.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that there are folks on the other side of the dais who also care deeply about the tribes in their districts and how prediction markets impact their revenue stream, and so I asked this question for you tonight. Will you commit to working with me to close this loophole at the CFTC stand up for tribal sovereignty and ensure that bets on sports are treated like sports betting, Mr. Chairman, would you commit to helping me lead that process?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yes, prediction markets are not novel, but they are growing quickly in size and attention, and they present important issues for the committee to examine, following our successful work on the Farm Bill, it is my intention that the committee turn the CFTC reauthorization and consideration of how event contracts, which is What you're talking about, event contract markets fit into the CFTC remit will be germane to that work. The discussion around

event contracts is an important one, but is also a complex one, with many interested stakeholders and different perspectives. Landscape is also moving quickly. Just this week, Chairman Selig announced work on a rule making related to event contracts.

So I believe that member education is essential to our success as a committee, especially for an issue as complex as event contracts. And I look forward to providing members the opportunity to hear from a cross section of stakeholders, as well as the CFTC Chairman sealing as we work towards a bipartisan reauthorization package, and certainly look forward to working with you. Ms. Vasquez, I appreciate you raising this issue.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back and withdraws other members that have seeking. Recognition for an amendment in title 12, any other members seeking recognition for title 12, any members seeking recognition for title 12, I will This is new script. If Hearing none title 12 is now closed, we will now open the bill for any remaining amendments that have not been offered. Mr. Chairman.

Does any member have such an amendment? Mr. Johnson recognized

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

Mr. Chairman. I have amendment 152 at the desk

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. Johnson has amendment 152 The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 152 offered by Mr. Johnson of South Dakota.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The, without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

Ms. Sherman, this has been a productive and cooperative effort between Mr. Vasquez and myself. We are both passionate about tribal colleges and universities, these TCUs are rapidly expanding their work in the research and development space. This amendment deals with a Title Seven in research.

The funding. This amendment would take a funding source that they have, and it would allow them to use those fund. It doesn't give them any more money. It doesn't divert funds from anywhere else.

It just gives them the flexibility to use those research funds to be able to acquire, maintain, repair, operate, key pieces of equipment. If they're going to continue to expand their capacity, it's critically important that an Indian country, we expand capacity, and this will allow them to better handle these research projects. And with that, I want to make thank Mr. Vasquez for his leadership on this as well. And with that, I would reserve

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yield back. gentleman yields back. Mr. Vasquez is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you so much, Chairman, thank you to the gentleman from South Dakota for offering this amendment and joining me in this effort. I do represent seven tribes in my district, including Zuni, Akamai, sleta, Laguna pueblos and Mescalero, Fort, sill and Navajo Nation. Now my commitment and duty in representing my district is to advance tribal sovereignty, but just as importantly, to improve education in our tribal communities and ensuring that 1994 land grant tribal colleges and universities have full and equitable

access to USDA Rural Development Programs, just like any other university, is incredibly important so. Think it's past time we take this common step to level the playing field by expanding tribal institutions ability to acquire land, modernize facility facilities, and invest in equipment that supports AG research in Indian country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back I claim my time. Speaking on this bill, I want to thank both the gentlemen for bringing this amendment forward to ensure that we continue to support the research capabilities at 1990 for institutions. Given this amendment's bipartisan support, I'll be voting yes on this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to do the same, and I yield back any other members seek recognition. Mr. Davids Sykes is recognized for five minutes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

I would like to speak in support of this amendment. Tribal colleges and universities, including Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas, offer unique educational opportunities for native and non-native students. These institutions provide a strong education grounded in cultural traditions and values. Tribal colleges and universities or TCUs contribute $3.8 billion to the national economy and support more than 40,000 jobs across the United States.

This amendment would provide authorities for TCUs to use existing federal funding to address research and facilities costs, update equipment and support Native students. TCUs are not only centers of learning culture and community, they are also engines of economic growth and opportunity for both Indian country and the nation as a whole. I thank you. I thank my colleagues for offering this amendment.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting yes for all the reasons stated above, and so that the federal government can fulfill its trust and treaty obligations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Back now. I recognize Ms. Hayes for five minutes.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you. I am speaking. Thank you. I'm speaking in support of my amendment, amendment number 142, currently, Puerto Rico operates under the new Oh, I thought we were moving on to new amendments.

I'm sorry. I'll be back. I that I support Mr. Vasquez's amendment. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Tokuda, you had indicated, would you were you going to speak on this amendment? No, okay. Ms. figures, are you going to speak on this amendment?

Mr. Figures is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, and thank you, Mr. Johnson for submitting this amendment as a enormous supporter of 1890 land grant institutions and the original land grant institutions, 1862 institutions, which we have in my state, like I support all things we can do to support land grant institutions. And the it is the irony is not lost on me that the tribal land grants originated over 100 years, 130 years after the original land grants. And as we know, Native Americans were were here first and ended up with the last land grant institution. So they are starting with about 130 year starting behind the curve about 130 years and so we need to do everything that we can to support them and get them the resources that they need to continue to be able to sustain and compete.

So I support this and urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you, gentlemen gentleman yields back. Does any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Seeing none the hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment.

All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye,, those opposed by saying no. And in the opinion of the Chair the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to. Now we'll go back to Mrs. Mrs. Hayes. Ms. Hayes.

Have an amendment to desk. I do 142 Ms. Hayes, and then the 142 to desk, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 142 offered by Mrs. Hayes of Connecticut.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you. Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize distinguished gentlelady sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Currently, Puerto Rico operates under the nutrition assistance program nap a block grant that provides substantially lower benefits for US citizens in Puerto Rico. As a result, residents of Puerto Rico face hunger, lack of nutrition and food insecurity every day. Unlike SNAP, nap is a fixed block grant for US territories with cap. Benefits SNAP is a mandate that can expand based on need and eligibility.

My amendment, based on the Puerto Rico nutrition assistance Fairness Act, would set out a process to enable Puerto Rico to participate in SNAP. The amendment requires Puerto Rico to submit to the Department of Agriculture a plan of operation to transition away from the consolidated block grant to SNAP. This legislation would end this long standing disparity and dramatically improve food security for low income families, children, senior citizens and veterans. This amendment is a long standing bipartisan effort that could ensure that the approximately 1.3 American citizens in Puerto

Rico who use nap get full benefits Puerto Ricans have the right to urgent and equitable food access and should not be subject to fewer benefits solely based on residency.

I want to make sure that I highlight this issue so that this committee can work to address what's happening in Puerto Rico. I am withdrawing the amendment, but I wanted to make sure that this is on record and that we can work on this at a later date. I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I appreciate the lady offering and withdrawing this amendment. I am a strong supporter of Puerto Rico's eventual transition to SNAP. I've been working closely with Governor Gonzalez cologne on this issue. Due to budgetary constraints, it was not possible to authorize USDA to approve SNAP for Puerto Rico in the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 the CBO score that came back, even though this is was a delay like almost 10 years, up to 10 year implementation, CBO scored it in the billions, given the fact that their rationale with USDA would would have to gear up and you know, to be able to engage to help address the unemployment rate and everything that would need to be put in place.

Very frustrating, actually. Nonetheless, this Farm Bill will encourage, via report language, that both USDA and Puerto Rico continue to formulate a financially and operationally viable pathway towards a transition from Block Grant or from nap to SNAP. Look forward to continue to work with the gentlelady Puerto Rico and USDA on this effort.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)

Thank you for withdrawing. Can I speak on it? Sure I do want thank the gentlelady for offering this amendment. I do support it, and even though Puerto Rico is part of America.

Puerto Ricans face are forced to settle for less when it comes to putting food on the table. Today, families in Puerto Rico receive hundreds, hundreds of dollars less per month has been said in nutrition assistance than other Americans, and so that gap affects what families can buy, and much of that food and beverage comes from our states supporting American farmers,

manufacturers and retailers. The amendment is really about equal access to basic nutrition support while helping support American jobs. I support it and thank you for introducing

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you. Dr. Adams Ms. Vasquez who want to speak on this amendment? Yes, you recognize five minutes.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to express my strong support and want to thank Congresswoman Hayes for introducing this bill. I was just recently speaking with leadership in Puerto Rico, and this is among their top political issues on the island. It is so incredibly important.

To the folks in Puerto Rico, who I hope we all now are reminded from from the Super Bowl, that Puerto Ricans are Americans, and I think that they deserve equity in what they research, what they receive via food benefits. That currently is a fixed annual grant versus versus SNAP, which is the program, of course, that we have here. There's so many issues with nap that need to be fixed. This needs to be addressed.

I don't see a situation in which in the future, we don't have to deal with the cost of transitioning from nap to SNAP. And so I hope that in the future we figure out how to budget this with plenty of adequate time and negotiation to finally get this done for the people of Puerto Rico. Thank you, Chairman, I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appreciate you gentlemen gentleman yields back any other members seek give people a chance to speak on on this withdrawn amendment. All right, if not, we'll open up for additional amendments. I have Mrs. Tokuda on the list for an amendment to desk.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you. Mr. Chair, seek recognition to call up amendment number 108,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Cooter is has amend. 108 the Clerk shall report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 108 offered by Ms. Tokuda of Hawaii,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the gentlelady from Hawaii, the sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, last year, the big, ugly Bill made a $500 billion cut to Medicare and a trillion dollar cut to Medicaid. Medicare and Medicaid are lifelines for rural America. In rural communities, these programs represent, on average, 50% of a hospital's pay or mix, and nearly half of all rural hospitals are already operating on negative margins. These are cuts rural hospitals across the country simply cannot absorb.

200 rural hospitals have closed over the last 20 years. 400 rural hospitals are at risk of closure service reduction or conversion because of the big ugly Bill's cuts that includes six hospitals in Hawaii, in my district alone, some of these are the only hospitals on their island. Some are the only hospital within a 50 mile radius for rural communities in Hawaii and across this country. Closure would not be an inconvenience.

It will be a death sentence. The big, ugly bill is projected to cause a 21% decline in Medicaid reimbursements for rural hospitals. You cannot cut a fifth of a rural hospital's Medicaid revenue and expect business as usual. Medicaid covers nearly one in five rural adults and 40% of rural children.

When you cut Medicaid, you cut coverage for a significant share of a rural hospital's patient base, changes to provider taxes and state directed payments further reduce funding flows to our rural facilities. New Work reporting requirements and frequent eligibility checks will push eligible

rural patients off coverage because of paperwork barriers, and especially in areas with limited broadband access, people just can't apply. Fewer covered patients mean lower patient volume, higher acuity rates, more uncompensated care and immediate revenue losses and when revenue drops, staffing costs still remain fixed, as we know, which means hospitals are forced to choose, do they cut the work force, or they cut services, and these services and staffing reductions are not hypothetical situations. They are literally happening right now in our communities.

Now I've heard a lot of hype surrounding the $50 billion Rural Health Transformation fund, but this money falls far short of the projected Medicaid losses that rural hospitals will face this transformation funding should have been additive, helping rural systems innovate and modernize. Instead, rural hospitals are being forced to figure out how to backfill massive revenue cuts while fighting for such scraps time and again, all rural providers have ever asked if Congress is simply helping them to keep the lights on, help keep doctors and nurses on shift, help keep emergency rooms open. And while I'd like to say we should cancel all these cuts, I agree that would not be germane to this bill, but that is why I'm offering the amendment that I am today. My amendment would authorize funding within the USDA community facilities program to reimburse rural hospitals for revenue losses caused by temporary reduction in patient volume or service delivery.

It also allows funds to support staffing costs necessary to maintain essential services, recruitment, retention and work for stability. My amendment ensures providers have actual bridge funding when coverage losses and reimbursement cuts triggered by H.R. 1 create sudden revenue shocks by opening up targeted, responsible financing tools within the USDA to stabilize these facilities that are in immediate danger of closing. And this amendment dedicates funding without taking away from existing community facilities priorities. This is practical, this is responsive.

This is what rural providers are asking for right now, not transformation grants, not theoretical redesigns, not shiny new pilot programs, stability support, just some breathing room. If Congress is going to slash rural hospital revenue, then we also have a responsibility to help them stay open.

That should be the actual baseline for transforming rural healthcare. My amendment is a step in that direction, because once a rural hospital closes, we know it rarely reopens.

And for communities that rely on a single facility for emergency care, maternal care and basic in patient services, time is of the essence. Waiting is simply not an option, I strongly urge my colleagues to join me on both sides of the aisle to support this amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you, gentlelady. gentlelady yields back any members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Ms. Salinas recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have been seeing rural healthcare hit. Hard in Oregon for a while. In southeast Oregon, a very rural part of the state, 53% of Oregonians are covered by Medicaid.

If they lose coverage, the facilities that serve this area are at risk of closing their doors. And in my district, several hospitals are at immediate risk of closure from H.R. 1. And across the state, we have seen labor and delivery units close, which is often that canary in the coal mine. Nearly 1/3 of rural hospitals across the US are at risk of closure due to financial instability, and I really appreciate Ms. Tokuda's efforts on the Rural Healthcare caucus, along with Congresswoman Harshbarger, according to the Center for Healthcare Quality and payment reform, more than 300 rural hospitals are at immediate risk of closure because they have suffered multi-year financial losses or have very low financial reserves.

The Rural Healthcare Transformation fund is not nearly enough money to cover these costs. The Agriculture Committee has an opportunity to mitigate the harm to our rural healthcare facilities by providing critical resources and funding for rural facilities. I urge an aye vote on the amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back. Jill Lee yields back. It's appreciated. Any other members seek recognition.

Mr. Riley, recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Jill, thanks for your leadership on these issues and running the bipartisan rural health caucus, which I'm really proud to be a part of in rural upstate New York, we've got a third of our folks are on Medicaid, 40% of the kids, half the babies, 70% of the seniors in assisted living. And I've visited all of our rural hospitals over the last year. Held a town hall at SUNY Sullivan focused on rural health, and whether you're talking to folks at Bass it in Otsego County or Garnet in Sullivan County, or Ellenville regional in Ulster County, Columbia Memorial in Columbia County, UHS or Guthrie in Broome, Cayuga and Tompkins, all of them, they're saying the same thing these cuts. You know, it's been described a whole bunch of ways, but at the end of the day, it's a trillion dollars being taken out of the public health system.

And these hospitals just there, they were already hanging by a thread. And this is just an absolute gut punch to them. And one thing that I just think is really important that we remember when we're talking about this, it's not just the Medicaid cuts. It's not just the third of the folks that I represent who are on Medicaid.

When you start taking that money out of the hospital system, they got to find it somewhere. And this is eventually, sooner than later, it's going to start crushing the middle class too, because these hospitals are going to end up, you know, with a lot of care that they're providing that they're not getting reimbursed for. And so on top of that, on top of the middle class impacts and the impacts for the working class Medicaid, you've also got SEIU workers. You've got the nurses just organized at CWA.

So we're talking about this cascade effect across rural America. It's the thing that keeps folks up at night probably the most as I'm going around my district talking to people. So I would really urge everybody to support this amendment and really, really appreciate you offering it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back, gentleman yields back any other members seek recognition to speak on Ms. Tokuda's amendment, 108, Ms. figures recognized.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I support this amendment offered by Congresswoman Tokuda, and I thank you for your leadership on the Rural Health caucus, of which I'm a member. With you, because we have to strengthen rural hospitals. This is, fortunately, one of these areas where we can find consensus in at least recognizing and identifying the problem across party lines. Whether I'm talking to Democrats from Hawaii or Republicans from Oklahoma West Virginia, they agree that rural hospitals and the preservation of rural hospitals is critical to their communities, and so this offers us an opportunity to do something about it.

We often talk about rural hospitals as economic anchors, but first and foremost, they are. They are lifelines for people, and when rural hospitals struggle, the consequences are not abstract. These this results in loss of life we have I've mentioned in my district, I got 13 counties, and 10 of them either don't have a hospital or have a hospital that is struggling to to maintain itself. Just last week, a very notable citizen won't use the person's name or position, but had a stroke in one of our rural counties.

His hospital was one of the ones that's struggling. Had that hospital not been there, the nearest medical care to treat him would have been over an hour and a half away. He may not have made it, and that is, unfortunately, a story that too many citizens and districts that we all represent here. Order that they're all too familiar with.

I had a colleague in this very body had a car wreck. Her daughter had a car wreck in a rural part of my district passing through the state. Had that rural hospital not been there, outcomes for people could have been different, and that is one of the hospitals that is now literally dangling by a financial threat. This amendment allows us to take a meaningful step towards addressing it, and so I urge my colleagues to support it.

Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Thank the gentleman. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Any other members seek to speak, if not, I'll utilize my time.

I thank the gentlelady from Hawaii for amendment. I know how important rural healthcare is to her. I appreciate her leadership on this topic this committee, and I share your support for rural hospitals, and appreciate your raising this issue in the base bill, in the farm food and National Security Act 2026 we codify and we strengthen the rural hospital technical assistance program with the intention for the program to continue fulfilling its current responsibilities, focusing on preventing closures, strengthening essential Health Services and improving the financial and operational sustainability of rural healthcare facilities. The rural hospital provisions in this bill aim to ensure their hospitals thrive.

And while I support the intention of the amendment, it would expand eligible activities of the existing program, and there is no offset. So with that, unfortunately, I will be voting no no other hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no,, in the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it and Mr. Chair, request a recorded vote.

Recorded recorded vote has been requested pursuant to community committee rule 312, further, three. Aye, two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. I have an en bloc number one amendment at the desk The Clerk will report the title of the en bloc number one amendment

The Clerk

Included in en bloc number one is Mr. Vasquez, of New Mexico. Amendment number 46 amendment number 103 offered by Mr. Vindman of Virginia. Amendment number 89 offered by Mr. Figures of Alabama. Amendment number 102 offered by Mr. Vindman of Virginia and amendment number 31 offered by Mr. Feenstra of Iowa, the the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment, the en bloc number one amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize myself as sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendments en bloc is an opportunity whether, where there's consensus, basically among both both parties on an amendment is just meant to Be efficient, given there's no no, strong or real objection to those amendments and but we will certainly give members an opportunity to speak on the en bloc, especially if one of these is Your pieces of legislation. So with that, does any I yield back? Does any other members seek recognition to speak on this en bloc amendment? Ranking Members

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Recognized Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and thank you for the efficiency at this late hour. We appreciate the democratic amendments that you've accepted in the en bloc. And with that, thank you again, and we will support it.

I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the Ranking Member and she yields back. Does any member seek recognition to speak on en bloc number one, no, okay, all right, hearing no further conversation. Ms. figures. Ms. figures recognized for five minutes you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

You now, Mr. Finger is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

Thank you. I just wanted to highlight amendment 89 which would strengthen land grants abilities to be able to provide ayes property education, which may seem like a very nuanced issue, but across many of our districts, this is an actual, this is an actual, real problem, where we have, for generations, farming families have worked the land. They have not often, in many cases, they have not proper, gone through the proper estate planning. And because of that, ownership ends up fragmented, and that

leads to issues, that leads to errors, finding themselves unable to access credit, unable to qualify for disaster assistance, unable to enroll in conservation programs.

And just as recently as a couple of weeks ago, I was meeting with our USDA offices in the state of Alabama, and they flag this as still a chronic and persistent issue that prevents relief and eligibility for many programs and services that USDA offers as being a prohibitive factor. And so this amendment would allow our land grant institutions to be able to provide these sorts of education and technical assistance services for people to be able to avoid this problem with that, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Thank you for that, Mr. Feenstra is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-Iowa)

Just on a quick note, I have amendment number 31 it's a ropes amendment. What this does is the leading cause of death amongst farmers is tractor rollovers. And what this bill does, it gives a rebate opportunity for farmers to go to the USDA and retrofit their tractors. About every other tractor does not have roll bars today, so this would allow roll over protection through the USDA to get a rebate on these bars that can be put on this tractor.

So it's a great amendment, again, to protect the lives of farmers and try to reduce the cause leading cause of death amongst our producers. So with that, thank you and I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Thank him for that.

Rep. Josh Riley (D-N.Y.)

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I know it's late, but I hope you'll forgive me. I just want to talk a little bit about Randy's amendment here on tractor safety, because this is for me, this is one of my top priorities in this Farm Bill, and frankly, it's this is the sort of work I came to Congress to do. Randy just

mentioned, tractor rollovers are the leading cause of death and serious injuries on our farms, and I've heard just heartbreaking stories from folks across upstate New York.

David Hughes and Jody Judy Pangman and Mark Stillwell all shared their stories with me. One of the stories I've heard a lot of times was from my grandpa. He was one of 12 kids. Grew up on a dairy farm in little meadows, and one day back in the 50s, he was out working the farm with one of his younger brothers, Michael, and they took the tractor down a hill that they'd been down probably hundreds of times before.

But that day, something went wrong, and Michael's tractor was out of gear. It hit a rut. He lost control, and the tractor rolled on him. So my great uncle fully never fully recovered from from the injuries he suffered.

It's something I know my grandpa carried with him for decades. I think it's one of the reasons he left the farm and joined the United States Army. But look, my my great uncle is one of the relatively lucky folks. Could have been a lot worse.

He needed care and treatment for the rest of his life, but, but he lived. Reality is too many farmers don't walk away from a rollover, and when the worst happens, it's not just changing one life, it's changing that entire family's future. Too often, the farm can't survive. What comes next?

An accident turns into a shutdown, and before long, you're looking at an auction sign out front. And it's not just one farm, it's the whole community. You got fewer purchases at the feed store, less business for local dealers and repair shops, lost jobs and another empty storefront on Main Street. But this is something that really doesn't have to be that way.

We know that roll bars with seat belts 99% effective at preventing death or serious injury and a rollover, and that's the difference between a broken bone and a burial, between a family keeping a farm or selling it off. So as Randy mentioned, why don't all the tractors now have roll bars like all the cars have seat belts? Well, a lot of the tractors in use today were actually built before roll bars were standard, a lot of the farms in upstate New York

are running tractors that are older than the guys fixing them because they still work good enough get the job done. And let's face it, these days, new tractor is not a luxury that many folks can afford.

So you got a lot of old tractors, and it's really expensive to retrofit these things. A typical retrofit runs around 1200 bucks, maybe more now, more than ever. As we've heard all day, the margins are razor thin, so most farms just can't swing the big expense, like retrofitting the tractor with a new roll bar. So the safety upgrade ends up getting put on the back burner, not because the farmers don't care, but the math just doesn't work, and that's a real problem.

So the thing is, in upstate New York, when we have a problem, we don't just talk about it. We actually roll up our sleeves and fix what needs fixing, and that's especially true when it comes to helping our neighbors and supporting our farmers. So a bunch of upstate New Yorkers at the Center for Agricultural medicine and health now part of Bassett in my district, they started this rebate program for farmers to retrofit their tractors, and they've done nearly 4000 retrofits across the country. It's thousands of tractors that now have roll bar protection that they wouldn't have otherwise, all because of what started in upstate New York.

So this amendment part of our bipartisan tractor Safety Act, this is really important. It means more rebates for more farmers to save more lives and more farms, because no farmer anywhere, upstate New York, anywhere in America, should have to choose between their safety and their bottom line, their life for their livelihood. One of the best things is this bill pays for itself. Every dollar returns three bucks, $3.75 in public health benefits.

And so I really care a lot about this. When I talk about bringing up state, New York values to Congress, this is the sort of thing I'm talking about. Think very often in Albany and Washington, you got a lot of politicians who like to fight with each other and yell at each other on cable news and social media and trying to score points and like an insider's game that nobody up state really is paying attention to or playing or caring about. But back home, you know, we're focusing on what really matters, and this bill, this amendment really, really matters, might not be the thing that's going to get a lot of attention inside the beltway, but it's the thing that gets my attention because it's the thing that's going to make a real difference in our community.

So I urge everybody support it. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Premier's back. Recognize Mr. Van. Run for five minutes.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Thank you Chair. So I want to start Briefly speaking in support of the my organics amendment, and I'm going to read two letters from constituents, and I'll ask them to be entered into the record. So the first one is

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Dear, long hours, without objection.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

My name is Everett Husar. I'm age 10, and I think you should lower prices for organic foods so people can have the best chance to live a long, healthy life, no artificial flavors. The second one dear lawmakers. I am Emma Edwards, and I live in Stafford.

I'm 10 years old. I feel like the stuff in stores should not, should be not a lot of money. I'm not saying, I'm trying to clean it up a little bit here. I'm not saying everything in stores.

I'm saying that the stuff that we need should be less. I think this because not a lot of people have the money to pay for it. Everyone deserves to live well. I also think there is a much, is too much litter on Earth.

So I was going, I was thinking that we create a group that goes around and picks up trash, because this is our only Earth and I, I believe this is about organics, because there's a little apple at the bottom here. So look. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this amendment. My amendment would incorporate a small but important part of my organic Science Research Investment Act, It codifies and authorizes the researching the transition to Organic Program, which gives dollars to help farmers transition to organic farming.

The organic sector is growing at a record pace. US. Organic sales reached $71.6 billion in 2024 consumers are looking for more organic options in their grocery stores, and many farmers are interested in meeting that demand. But transitioning to organic production is not simple.

It requires new practices, new knowledge, and often several years of adjustment before a farm can fully be certified. This amendment solves that by authorizing competitive research, education and extension grants to study the transition from non-organic production to systems, systems to organic agriculture. Specifically, this research would help farmers overcome barriers to transition. Transitioning be better understand how organic practices affect ecosystem services like soil health, water management, bio diversity and greenhouse gas mitigation, and develop improved tools and technologies to support farmers making that transition.

Transition. This is about giving farmers better information and better tools. The amendment authorized $7.5 million for this important work. The Appropriations Committee has appropriated these funds.

Many times in the past with bipartisan support, and I strongly believe that codifying this important pot of funds in the Farm Bill would help us continue that strong tradition into the future. And believe me, we've seen how much more expensive organic eggs and fruit are than the non-organic kind. We ought to change that if we want the American people to be healthier and for American agriculture to be more environmentally friendly, more organic farms farmers, means higher supply. That means more competition for shoppers dollars at every store, and organic eggs will be a lot more affordable to the average customer.

So this amendment helps both farmers sending products to the grocery store and the working families that shop there. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment. I yield back. Thank you.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appreciate gentlemen gentleman yields back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on the en bloc April, you're recognized.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

I have an amendment. It's amendment number 79

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I'm sorry. No, we're on the I'm sorry. We're on the en bloc at this point. Any other members?

Secret mission to speak on the en bloc. All right, hearing. No further conversation. The question is on the en bloc?

Amendment. All those in favor the amendment, sign by saying aye. Those opposed saying no, in the opinion of the Chair the ayes have it in the amendment, the en bloc amendment is agreed to. And now we'll recognize gentlelady from Maryland, who I believe has an amendment

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

At the desk. My apologies. I think I'm tired. I think we're all getting a little bit tired.

So many, many apologies. Amendment number 86 Thank you,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Mr. Chairman, this amendment just just second, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 86 offered by Mrs. McClain Delaney of Maryland,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-Md.)

This amendment is straightforward and necessary. It would make it unlawful for any non-authorized entity to access sensitive financial systems overseen by the USDA, including databases managed by the Farm Service Agency. At its core, this is about trust. When a farmer applies for a federal loan, disaster assistance or conservation support, they're not just submitting paperwork.

Actually, these farmers are submitting their most sensitive financial and operational information with the federal government, information about their land, their income, their debt, and in many cases, their very families, livelihood, and I deeply believe in data privacy is for over 15 years, I worked in a non-profit Common Sense Media related to kids and their online privacy and well being and safety for more than 90% of our agricultural producers in this country received some sort of USDA support. That means the vast majority of farmers and ranchers have entrusted USDA and the Farm Service Agency with deeply personal financial data. They do this with the understanding that this information will be hired and be handled by trained, accountable federal employees, not by outside actors or companies with unclear authority or limited oversight. And I said, we head into another appropriation cycle.

And I say this to my fellow holders of the purse. I don't need to remind you that the FSA manages tens of billions of dollars in federal payments and loans that keep our farm communities running. Reports last year indicated that Jose gave high level access to us days national payment system, and it should concern every member of this body that kind of access raises questions about data security, about cybersecurity, about the risk of fraud, identity theft and the potential misuse of sensitive personal information. Our farmers should not have to worry about applying for disaster relief after a hurricane, a drought or flood, which could expose them to financial harm because their data was improperly accessed.

I urge support of this amendment and yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Generally for yielding back any members seek recognition. Speak on behalf of this amendment. Members seek recognition, if not. Let me weigh in here.

You know, I'd like to thank the gentlelady from Maryland for offering this amendment protecting sensitive borrower information from data breaches at USDA is a vitally important step in maintaining the trust of rural America. Producer privacy remains a top priority for the committee, for myself and for my colleagues. Thankfully, existing confidentiality requirements already ensure this data remains secure. Because of that, I will be a no on this amendment.

Any other ranking Ranking Member's recognized,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

I would just like to add, thank you so much for introducing this amendment. Look, I think we, we all thought we had the right laws in place coming into last year, but as we saw special government employees who worked for DOGE access some of Americans most sensitive financial information under the USDA, including databases managed by the Farm Service Agency. So I would simply say this amendment would ensure that this is the case moving forward, that that information is protected and that USDA responsibility to safeguard sensitive information and imposing strict penalties on anyone who knowingly violates this trust. And for those reasons, I would urge members to join me in supporting this amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Julie yields back. Chair. Members seek recognition. Mr. Costa.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Yes. Last night, whenever that was on our opening, I made mention of this to this amendment, the problems we're having with FSA offices around the country and the ability to access, I mean, they tried to close the one in Bakersfield and Fresno. I mean, these two of the largest agricultural counties in the country, certainly in California, and they've removed people. And then, you know, I farms that have been approved on an equip program, on a loan, or on a other conservation program, and there's nobody there.

And I guess the frustrating thing is, notwithstanding the merits of this amendment, given what the Ranking Member said, and the author of The

amendment is, they don't have people in some of these places, and they've removed people. And so Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding the fact that you may say this is already an existing law, the fact is, is that this whole rear organization, we've got to bring this to the light of day. We don't know what's going on there and what personnel and downsizing. It's just a real problem.

And so I'm likely to support this not withstanding existing law, if it's you know, the fact of the matter is, is our farm service offices are are not doing well in California, maybe they're doing well in your districts.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I yield back, gentleman yields back. Any other members seek recognition that speak on this amendment, any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Hearing, no further conversation. A question is on the amendment offered by Representative McClain Delaney, amendment number 86 All in favor.

All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no no, and you pen the Chair that the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to. [CROSS TALK]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

She asked for a record vote. Thank you to Ms. chatter over there. Recorded vote has been requested, requested pursuant to committee roll three I two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. I believe Ms. McDonald Rivet has amendment at the desk.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

All right, waking up, okay, yes, the amendment number is 56

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Ms. McDonald Rivet has amendment to desk and the Clerk shall report the title.

The Clerk

Amendment number 56 offered by Ms. McDonald Rivet of Michigan,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read and now recognize the distinguished, gentlelady sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I will try not try not to take the whole five. Buying a home is central to the American dream. You work hard, you save up for a place to build and raise your family. I know it firsthand.

I grew up in a small farm town in Michigan about 4000 people, where my parents worked really hard, and nothing made my dad more proud than looking at our house that he earned and literally built with his own hands. But for too many families in rural communities across my. District, that dream is completely out of reach. This amendment offers a simple bipartisan fix right now, federal tax law defines a rural community as having a population of 2500 or less, a definition that keeps too far many deserving families from getting housing assistance, including the town that I grew up in, while I plan to withdraw this amendment based on the Farm Home Loans act that I wrote with my colleagues from Michigan Mr. Huizenga, it would update that threshold to 10,000 a small step allowing more small rural communities to access affordable Farm Credit Home Loan Financing without increasing red tape or taking from anybody else.

This bill will open the door to the American Dream for thousands of families in all of our districts. I know you all hear about housing costs from families back home as much as I do, and if we're serious about addressing it, this is a common sense step to help it has the support of both Republicans and Democrats, and I am very encouraged by the offer, offer of members of this committee to work on this bill moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentlelady from Michigan for offering this amendment. I've heard and seen many times how difficult it is to access credit in rural areas, whether we're talking about business. About businesses or individuals, and for many individuals, the largest loan they will ever take out is for a house. Because of this, I realized the need for rural residents to be able to find a home lender so they can plant the roots in a rural community and grow a career in a family.

So I appreciate Ms. McDonald Rivets attention and willingness to work on this issue, and I look forward to working with her in the future to help our rural communities.

Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw my amendment.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I appreciate that. And Ms. Davids is anxiously awaiting recognition. You got amendment at the desk.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, number 70.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will report the title of the amendment. Amendment

The Clerk

Number 70, offered by Ms. Davids of Kansas, without objection.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment will be considered. As read, I now recognize distinguished gentlelady, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And despite it being past midnight, I certainly hope something about good is about to happen. I'm offering this amendment, which would provide mandatory funding for the agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority known as a Garda. This program was created by the 2018 Farm Bill with the goal of adopting the successful Department of Defense ARPA research model that has been used for high risk, high reward research.

However, the program has received minimal funding thus far and has not yet received mandatory appropriations in a Farm Bill. Agriculture Research is critically important to Kansas producers, Americans who rely on a stable and safe food supply chain, and the communities that I represent the Kansas City animal health the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor includes institutions like the National bio and agro defense facility or mbaf, the Kansas State University and a large concentration of animal health companies. These entities do critical work protecting American agriculture producers and people from serious animal disease. For instance, the continued spread of New World screw worm threatens Kansas cattle ranchers and has the potential to raise already high beef prices at the grocery store.

And additionally, in the last several years, we've seen the impact of avian influenza on egg prices. New and Emerging animal diseases have the potential to infect humans, threaten our food supply and ultimately weaken our national security, as frequently said in this committee, food security is national security as agricultural challenges become more complex, Congress should and needs to support long term and high risk advanced research and development. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this amendment to invest in critical research and protect our food supply and human health. Thank you, and I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appreciate you. La, she yields back any members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Any Amen, any members seek recognition the speak on this amendment. If not, I'll let me claim my time.

I want to thank the gentlewoman for bringing this amendment forward, and I appreciate her support for the A guard up program. I'm unable to support this amendment because of the cost would it would carry by requiring $100

million per year in mandatory. Refunding whoever look forward to continue to work with her, with work with the gentlewoman on the other improvements to our Garda that are contained within this bill, the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 and I yield my time if Ms. 10 or do you have comment on this amendment? No, I didn't think so.

Okay, justice. A look on your face,

Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.)

Mr. Chairman, I was hoping for something really good to happen after midnight, but I'll withdraw the amendment and look at us working together on this in the future as the good thing, you bet,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Look forward to that it's a, you know, as it parallels DARPA. I mean, it is, it has. It's been disappointing, how it's been the lack of appropriations for this, you know, very good. So, Mr. Figures, I have you down, or is your amendment already taken care of?

Rep. Shomari Figures (D-Ala.)

My amendment is already taken care of, but I will take this time if I'm allowed to just say thank you to all of the staff that has made this day possible for all of us.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Thank you. Done. Mr. Vasquez is recognized.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, amendment number eight.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Very good. Ms. Vasquez says amendment number eight, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number eight, offered by Mr. Vasquez of Mexico,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read and now recognize the distinguished gentleman from Mexico sponsor the amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of their amendment.

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this bipartisan amendment is similar to my ranching without red tape Act, which cuts unnecessary regulatory hurdles for Public Land grazers, and gives ranchers more flexibility to make minor improvements to their least range lands in a timely fashion. This is an easy, common sense fix for a chronic problem that impacts thousands of ranchers with federal allotments in many of our districts nationwide. In my district alone, 9000 ranchers raise over 1.2 million head of cattle, and those ranchers hold over 2000 grazing allotments across millions of acres of public lands throughout New Mexico. Currently, folks who lease federal grazing permits must undergo an absurdly complex and time consuming paperwork process to make even the most minor of improvements to their leased rangelands.

That means sometimes a task as simple as putting out a new water, repairing a fence or making a minor road repair becomes a months long bureaucratic headache that usually results in a lengthy lease renegotiation process. That's the last thing they need when they're making minor improvements. In my first month in office, a cow grower in my district came to my office and told me about his struggles with these straightforward improvements. When his pasture fence deteriorated, as many of them often do, he was forced to wait several months for a response from the forest service for approval to rebuild a new pasture fence, risking his cattle and his livelihood.

Since then, in my conversations with cattle growers and other producers across the district, I've heard this consistent message, the current federal permitting process for minor range improvements is excessively burdensome and needs reform. These delays cost time and money and

contribute to the rising cost of beef and other meat products in this country. It's also important to emphasize that this bill isn't about short cuts. I personally spend most of my time when I'm outdoors in the back country, and I can personally attest to the simple fixes on lease grazing land that can and should be done along remote stretches of Forest Service, land that shouldn't trigger an unnecessary and new regulatory process.

By eliminating this unnecessary red tape, we can help producers improve relationships between lease holders and federal land management. Land managers local communities and the federal government, and give ranch hands the tools they need to get to work and increase productivity. This bipartisan solution is sensible for ranchers, for our public lands and the communities we represent. I urge support for this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Appreciate the gentleman offering this amendment today. The farmers and ranchers are the original conservationists, and they are the most effective and caring stewards of the land that I have ever met. Whoever some forest service grazing permittees have reported that they've experienced delays with approvals for common activities such as fetching repairs. This amendment from the gentleman from New Mexico takes an important step to give greater autonomy to those who have a strong moral and financial incentive to improve the land.

I appreciate you bringing this issue forward today, and I encourage my fellow committee members to vote in favor of the. Amendment, any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment? Any other members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Vasquez amendment? Yeah, hearing no further conversation.

The question is on the amendment. All those in favor the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, depending the Chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to. Ms. Mrs. Hayes, you have an amendment at the desk. Ms. Hayes, that amendment at the desk that number 43 the 143 The Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 143 offered by Ms. Hayes of Connecticut,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady from Connecticut, sponsor amendment for up to five minutes for an explanation of her amendment.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know if you're going to like this one. It's for hot foods for SNAP a person receiving SNAP benefits cannot purchase hot foods, meaning, if they are homeless, living at a shelter, do not have adequate cooking facilities, or do not have the time because of a busy work schedule to prepare Mills, then their benefits are no good to them. I have had constituents who are staying in shelters, renting a room or even extended stay hotels, talk to me about the challenge to getting hot foods for themselves and their children you don't even have the option to buy healthy food choices like hot soup or a rotisserie chicken.

Snap should reflect modern grocery options, instead of creating unnecessary barriers for recipients. My amendment, based on the bipartisan hot foods Act would allow SNAP benefits to be used at grocery retailers to purchase hot food products that are ready for immediate consumption. Current SNAP rules prohibit the use of SNAP benefits to purchase hot foods from food retailers. This change is necessary to ensure equitable and convenient access to food for SNAP recipients, how Americans shop and eat their food has dramatically changed over the last 50 years, yet SNAP policy has not kept pace.

My amendment is a common sense amendment that has garnered support on both sides of the aisle. Now is the time to expand nutritious food choices for hungry Americans, and provide a much needed reform to SNAP. We go back and forth about some of the challenges with addressing this issue, but I urge my colleagues to face those challenges head on, and let's work out a solution to get this right. It's something that we need to do.

People deserve to be able to have hot foods. We have to work on a way to make this happen. And I urge my colleagues to support this measure. Thank you, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Julie yields back do any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment. Mr. McGovern is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

I want to agree with the amendment that Ms. Hayes offered, I want to thank her for offering it, and I think everybody here should support it. The reality is, is that the work that this committee has done around SNAP has resulted in making the lives of millions and millions of people more miserable. We are throwing people off of a food benefit because of the cuts that are not being addressed in this Farm Bill, because of the new work requirements and red tape that are in place that we're not addressing. You know, people are struggling.

People's lives are complicated. I mean, I have visited people's apartments where they have no stoves, no working kitchens, and so their only opportunity for a hot meal is to be able to go to a grocery store and buy a rotisserie chicken or buy something pre prepared. So this is about helping make people's lives more livable, more reasonable, and addressing the realities that millions and millions of people face. And I don't think this should be controversial.

I think we should all be able to get behind it. And again, it's the least we can at least we can do, given the fact that these recipients on SNAP are about to get hit with a $200 billion cut in the program, you know their benefit is going to decrease. And I think this is the least we could do. And again, I thank her for offering the amendment, and I hope everybody supports it.

I yield back,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back. Any other members seek recognition to speak on this amendment, any other members seek recognition, not I will claim my time. I

want to thank the gentlelady for raising this issue. As I mentioned previously, SNAP was designed by Congress to purchase food at eligible retailers to be cooked and prepared at home.

The change of this magnitude requires more meaningful debate about the purpose of SNAP and a strong consensus in this body, as well as a reflection on what it would do for adding adding costs for the consumer, their SNAP benefits not going as far during a given month. For these reasons, I have to vote no on this amendment and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.)

The Mr. Chair, I don't want you to vote no on my amendment. I'm going to withdraw it because I am deeply invested in it passing, and I want to take the time to garner the necessary support, because it is a good amendment and it needs to pass. I yield back,

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

And that is a great strategy. And Mr. Chair, I just want to point out, just for the record, that hot foods are found at grocery stores as well.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

We have two more amendments left. Best of my knowledge, I recognize Mr. Vindman for an amendment that he has at the desk.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Thank you. Mr. Chair, my amendment is number 105

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment number 105 of Mr. Vindman, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

Amendment number 105 offered by Mr. Vindman of Virginia,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read, I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, the sponsor of the amendment, for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk supporting $185 million in funding for the foundation for food and agricultural research, as we've said many times in this committee. But but always bears repeating, food security is national security. Far is one of the smartest agricultural investments Congress has made in the last decade. It operates as a public private partnership, leveraging federal dollars with private sector matching funds to stretch every dollar the taxpayers put into the system further at a time when farmers are facing more extreme weather, invasive pests, supply chain disruptions and rising global competition, we cannot afford to fall behind in agricultural innovation.

AG research not only helps us grow food more efficiently here, but also protects our food supply from any future threats, whether from natural disasters or biological attacks from our adversaries. This is especially important when China has been out spending us in agricultural research since 2008 and their investments are growing twice as fast. This amendment is responsible investment in innovation, competitiveness and long term agricultural strength. In fact, this is the same language from the 2018 Farm Bill.

I hope that if we this committee, could fund far on a bipartisan basis in 2018 it can do so again in 2026 Thank you. And I yield back gentlemen

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Gentleman yields back any members seek recognition to speak on Mr. Vindman's amendment number 105, any members seek recognition to speak? If not, I'll take the claim the time. I want to thank the gentleman for his amendment and his attention to agricultural research. I've been a champion for our research capabilities that help our producers for a long time, and we saw historic investments for different research programs in H.

R. 1 that including mandatory spending for research facilities agriculture research to be able to construct agriculture research facilities that will bring innovation to the industry for years to come.

This amendment would carry a score because of the increase in mandatory funding. Given this committee's intention of delivering on a cost neutral bill and returning far to its original intent, I will not be able to support the gentleman's amendment, seeing no additional hearing, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, any opinion of the Chair, the noes

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-Va.)

Chair request a roll call vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And a roll call vote has been requested. A recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee Rule three, I two further proceedings on the amendment will be postponed, and I believe Mr. Tenedor. Is seeking recognition with an amendment at the desk.

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I have an amendment number 119,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Stand or has amendment 119, at the desk, the Clerk will report the title of the amendment.

The Clerk

It's 118118 amendment number 118 offered by Mr. Tandar of Michigan. Report

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Without objection, the amendment will be considered as read and I now recognize the distinguished gentleman and the sponsor of this amendment up for up to five minutes for an explanation of his amendment.

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Thank you. Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Craig. Before I came to Congress, I was a serial entrepreneur. When I talked to Michigan farmers, I see a lot of their struggles in challenges I have faced as a small business owner.

Long nights, a great deal of uncertainty about how much your next pay day will be, while having people depend on you for a paycheck every two weeks and a strong desire to innovate in their field, I'm a new member to the Agriculture Committee this Congress, and if there is one thing I have learned, it is the rapid degree that farming is increasingly dependent on technology. In this committee, we have heard incredible stories from farmers across the country about how they are using technology in increasing incredible, innovative ways to optimize years and reduce costs, The Testimony We have heard throughout the 119th Congress on broadband makes one thing clear, farmers need high speed internet, specifically high high upload speeds to manage data driven modern Agriculture, including cloud based real time tracking of GPS, guided machinery, soil sensors and drones in particular, high upload bandwidth is crucial for sending large amounts of data to the cloud for precision farming, remote monitoring and livestock management to optimize yields reduce cost and make farming more efficient in the field, improved connectivity at high speed thresholds has been shown to correlate with higher crop yields, But the technology that makes higher yields possible, all depends on the robust upload and download speeds that modern farm equipment relies on to function efficiently. However, none of this incredible technology is truly effective without access to high quality broadband that prioritizes both high speed download and upload speeds, in particular, symmetrical speeds an internet connection that has both equal download and upload speeds are important to meet the unique needs of today's farmers. This is something even Trump's USDA in 2019 said was needed, specifically citing the need for more symmetrical data flows with a better balance of download and upload speeds to allow for farmers to truly succeed.

In one report, there are numerous bipartisan proposals to pass symmetrical speeds in some form in both the House and Senate. I hope we can work together to pass this amendment and improve internet connectivity for the American people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I thank the gentleman. This yields back any member wish to be recognized to comment on Mr. Tander's amendment number 118, any members wish to be recognized? If not, I will claim the time. I thank the gentleman from Michigan for his amendment.

In ensuring that all communities across rural America have broadband access is a priority for me and this committee. The base bill, the farm food and National Security Act 2026 raises the minimum eligibility speeds from 25 over three megabytes per second to 50 over 25 Mbps is to make sure all rural America is served to anticipate advancement and broadband capability. The bill provides the Secretary the authority to adjust the minimum eligibility speed within limitations through a 30 day notice and comment period excuse me, requiring symmetrical speed could inadvertently limit the deployment of broadband to underserved areas, and so based on that, I will be opposing this amendment. Encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Erin, no further conversation. The question is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment signify by saying aye, those opposed by saying no, and the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it and the amendment is not agreed to,

Rep. Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.)

Mr. Chair. May I have recorded votes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

A recorded vote has been requested pursuant to committee roll three, I two further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. Are there? Is there any further debate or amendments to title 12?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Hearing? None. Title 12 is now closed, and we will now open the bill for any remaining No, we did that. Hearing none.

The bill is now closed. Okay, let me before we proceed to voting, I just want to say now that now I'd like to yield to the Ranking Member for any closing remarks that she would like to make.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll make this brief. I came to Congress this session with this sincere hope that we could get a five year, 12 title Farm Bill across the finish line with the farm and hunger coalition that has so successfully worked together so many times before. As we walk through each of the titles over the course of the last two days, it's clear what a shell of a Farm Bill.

This bill truly is. The farm programs funded in the Big Beautiful Bill would have supported, would have been supported by the minority in the Farm Bill, but unfortunately, we picked winners for new investment in the Big Beautiful Bill and decimated title four outside of regular order. Now today, we've proposed, but it's been rejected, to invest new money into many farm programs, farm programs that have been stagnated after nearly a decade of inflation. This bill delivers what no one is asking for, the status quo.

Folks, it is not status quo in farm country, a global trade war has left devastating impacts to our nation's farmers, and the farm assistance offered thus far by this administration is a fraction of the need we offered to help farmers and families during this markup today, but apparently we can only spend money when it cuts taxes for the wealthy in this country, like my colleagues voted for in reconciliation last year, I don't know any farmer in Minnesota who is asking for the status quo. Have we made some bipartisan improvements to the bill during the amendment process over the past couple of days, of course, but despite that, this remains a disappointing Farm Bill process that does not meet the moment. This bill doesn't lower input costs or stabilize our export markets. It doesn't help make food more affordable while prices surge under Trump's backward economic policies, and it's going to have challenges getting broad bipartisan support on the House floor if it makes it there.

My colleagues, my sincere hope is that this is just act, one of several acts to get a true bipartisan Farm Bill across the finish line in this Congress. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say I will vote no on this bill, but I appreciate all of my colleagues and their efforts here these past two days. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Generally yells back. Let me just say, over the last two days, a little more than 20 hours, we've heard a lot of good discussion on farm. Programs, I want to thank all members for engaging with the 12 titles of the farm, food and National Security Act of 2026 both during this mark up and over the course of this Congress, the basis for this Farm Bill came from trip partisan work, Republicans and Democrats joining with key stakeholders in agriculture, visiting 43 different states in one territory, over 150 different listening sessions. You're not going to find in construction a more bipartisan bill.

Take the politics, take the Trump derangement syndrome out of it, pure and simple, this is a great Farm Bill. Let's if we focus on the people we're supposed to be focusing on, and that's the hard working farm families, the ranchers, the foresters of this nation. This is what they've asked for. We asked them what they needed, and they told us, and that's what we put into this, and we did it in a trip partisan way, bringing those key stakeholders to the table.

And for those of you on Committee last Congress, thank you for staying the course and for your input and contributions to this Farm Bill reauthorization. Also, thank you to majority and minority committee staff and house legislative council for all their hard work and support in crafting this bill, and we thank the Congressional Budget Office for their work between policy, research, drafting technical assistance and the countless terms with the Congressional Budget Office, our staff have proved themselves To be invaluable advocates and resources for sound agricultural policy. Now, I appreciate the entire teams on both sides of the aisle for the work that they've done to organize and carry out the committee's business. I hope everyone in this room has a sense of urgency about what we are doing here today, our farmers, ranchers in rural communities, need a new Farm Bill, and they don't need it next year or need it next Congress.

They need it now. In my opening remarks yesterday, I encouraged everyone on this committee to not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. In fact, I think I heard that statement repeated by a few of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I hope everyone here today, felt that they had the opportunity to deliberate ideas, offer amendments and engage with the will of the committee.

It was a slog, but ultimately, that is how legislating is supposed to work. It's not meant to be a rubber stamp of the Chairman's Mark crafted in secret, but rather a process by which the Chairman generates a starting point, and then every member of the committee has an opportunity to refine and approve this underlying bill. We built this bill in a way that is not typical for Washington. We did it from the outside in as versus the inside out all those travels.

Look around the room with many, many of the members here and and this is where the needs were identified, out in the fields, on the farms, on the ranches, in the local fire halls. We, we that is the way you should do legislation. That is the way this was done. We every, every member of this committee has an opportunity to refine and improve the underlying bill and as what happened here today, and I'm proud of all of you who participated.

Please believe me that when I say that, I want to continue working good faith with each of you on important policy within our committee's jurisdiction. With that commitment in mind, I ask you to think about the constituents that you represent and the good this bill will do for them. This bill is not about us. This bill is about them.

It's about the people that, quite frankly, that that feed and clothe this nation, that provide energy resources, is the people of rural America that provide so much to every American family, and, quite frankly, many families around the world. If you care about the future, the farmers and ranchers who feed fuel and clothe our country, I hope you'll support this bill. If you care about the 60 million Americans living in rural areas, I hope you can support this bill, and above all, if you believe food security is national security, I encourage you to support this bill. We know that a full five year Farm Bill moves the needle for our entire nation, not just farm country before us.

We have a real opportunity to move American agriculture forward now. I'm proud of this bill, and I'm proud of the work that we've done to further improve it in the last 24 hours, and this is just the first step in the process. There's more work to be done, more refinements that can be made, and if we report this bill. Out with a robust bipartisan vote, we'll have a path to the floor where more improvements can be made.

However, if we let partisanship get in the way, if we let perfect be the enemy of good, and allow the momentum to stall, then our farmers and rural communities will be left waiting for another year for a long overdue Farm Bill that would be a disservice to our hard working stakeholders. Thank you all again for your dedication during this markup, I encourage everyone to vote yes on the farm food and National Security Act of 2026 and we now proceed to our previously postponed votes. The committee will pause for approximately five minutes to allow the Clerk to set up the electronic voting. [IN PROGRESS]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All members, all members could take their seat. All members have. Just want to make sure everyone has a voting device in hand. The first vote that we will have will be recorded.

Vote. Number one is amendment number 54 offered by Mrs. Budzinski of Illinois in conservation title, and it removes, I don't think we need to say that our recorded vote was requested. Members will record their vote using electronic voting system. The Chairman intends to vote no.

I now recognize the Ranking Member.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member intends to vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Okay, the first vote. You ready. The Chairman intends to vote no. Ranking Member intends to vote yes, and go ahead and enter your

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded. Does any member wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27 the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment is not adopted. Second vote will be filed. Amendment number 106, by Mr. Sorensen in conservation title and the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member intends to vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Yeah, here we go. Have all members been recorded? Or wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote?

Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And the amendment is not adopted. Your third vote is amendment filed, amendment number 127, by Ms. Brown from Ohio. The the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member intends to vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

As all, have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Ms. Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 25 and the nays are 26

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Next vote will be recorded. Vote number four, it is filed, amendment number 98 by Mr. Vindman, the Chairman intends to vote no. The Ranking Member will vote yes.

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Has all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the yeas are 25 and the nays are 26

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. The next vote will be recorded. Number vote recorded vote number five. It is listed as filed amendment number 90 or 28 by Ms. Hayes of Connecticut, and the Chairman intends to vote no

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Will the Clerk please open the vote?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change your vote. Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. The recorded vote next will be number six, which is filed amendment number 92 by Dr. Adams in North Carolina, the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes. The Clerk

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. The seventh recorded vote is number seven. Filed amendment number 29 by Ms. Brown of Ohio, the Chairman intends to vote no,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member intends to vote yet, yes,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Will the Clerk please open the vote?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted the recorded vote. Number eight is filed amendment number 140 by Mr. Vasquez of New Mexico. The the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Will the Clerk please open the vote?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded or wish to be recorded. Do any members wish to change their vote?

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Oh, come on. Come on. Save a veteran day

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Hearing none The Clerk will please close the vote and announce the tally. You aye.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 25 and the nays are 26

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Recorded vote number 10 is filed, amendment number 88 by Mr. Figures of Alabama, the. Chairman intends to vote, no. Mrs. Tokuda, oh, I'm sorry, I'm down one, number nine, start again.

Amendment number nine is file. Amendment 128, by Mrs. Tokuda of Hawaii, the Chairman intends to vote, no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member votes yes. The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Has all members been recorded who wish to be recorded. Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27 the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment is not adopted. Recorded vote number 10, filed amendment. Number 8088, by Mr. Figures from Alabama, the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote. The got it.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Next amendment, amendment number 11 is filed. Amendment as 43 by Mr. Riley of New York, the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 25 and the nays are 26

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Amendment number 12, listed as filed. Amendment number 117, by Mr. Thanedar of Michigan, the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes. The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

All members voted, or all members recorded, who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Recorded vote number 13, filed amendment number 26 by Ms. Hayes of Connecticut, the Chairman intends to vote no,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Do any members wish to change. Your vote. Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the ayes are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. The next vote will be recorded. Vote number 14 filed amendment. Number 22 by Mr. Scott.

Mr. David Scott of Georgia, the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The have all members been recorded? Or wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change your vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted this next recorded vote is number 15, filed amendment number 38 by Mr. Harris of North Carolina, the Chairman intends to vote yes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote no.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote. Roger them.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members? Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 26 and the nays are 25 the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment, the amendment is approved next. Next amendment recorded vote is number 16, filed amendment number 19, by Dr. Adams in North Carolina. The Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes,

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Next amendment is recorded. Vote number 17 filed. Amendment number 35 by Ms. Salinas of Oregon, the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote all.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 23 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. The next vote is recorded. Vote number 18, filed, amendment number 51, by Ms. Pingree of main Chairman intends to vote no

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member. Intends to vote yes, the Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded? Or wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 22 and the nays are 28

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Amendment number recorded vote. Number 19 file amendment number 27 by Mrs. Hayes of Connecticut. The Chairman intends to vote

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

No. Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. The 20th recorded vote. Number 20 file amendment number 135, by Mr. Jackson of Illinois, the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

And have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Did any member wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote. The yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Our next vote will be vote number 21 filed amendment number 68 by Ms. Davids of Kansas, the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Okay, start up here. If all members been recorded? Or wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change your vote?

Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Next vote is vote number 23 this is a second degree amendment offered by the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Mann, and it's a second degree to amendment number 119, the Chairman intends to vote yes on this amendment,

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote no.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote one

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 29 and the nays are 22

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Okay with the second degree amendment, agreed to. The question is on the underlying amendment, members will record their votes using electronic voting system. The Chairman intends to vote. Vote, aye, and I know.

Now recognize the Ranking Member.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member will vote aye as well.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all, the Clerk will open the vote.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded. Does any member wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the ayes are 51 and the nays are zero.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The underlying amendment, as amended is is approved, is adopted. Next vote is number 24 it is listed 146 by Ms. Craig of Minnesota, and the Chairman will vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote. Do?

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk, please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. The next vote is vote number 25 listed as amendment number 36 by Mr. Harris of North Carolina. The Chairman intends to vote yes.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

The Ranking Member will vote no.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote. Second

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 27 and the nays are 24

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not or is adopted. The amendment is adopted. Next vote is vote number 26 listed as amendment 108 by Ms. Tokuda of Hawaii, and the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes, the Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded. Who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27 the

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Amendment is not adopted. The next vote is vote number 27 listed as amendment 86 by Ms. McClain Delaney of Maryland. The Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes. The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

I have all members.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

We you got it. Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this. Vote. The ayes are 25 and the nays are 26 the amendment

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Is not adopted. The next vote will be vote number 28 listed as amendment 105 by Mr. Vindman of Virginia. The Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes. The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing? None will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Next vote is vote number 29 amendment 118, Mr. Tandar of Michigan, and the Chairman intends to vote no.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Ranking Member will vote yes.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The Clerk will open the vote.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Have all members been recorded who wish to be recorded? Do any members wish to change their vote? Hearing none will the Clerk please close the vote and announce the tally.

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote, the yeas are 24 and the nays are 27

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The amendment is not adopted. Now going to recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Scott, for a motion.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I move that the bill, H.R. 7567 as amended, be reported favorably to the house with the recommendation that it do pass.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Does any member wish to discuss the motion? Do no.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia to favorably report H.R. 7567 as amended. All in favor signify by saying Aye, Aye. All opposed by saying no,, in the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the bill, H.R. 7567 as amended, is ordered to be reported favorably to the house.

Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.)

Mr. Chairman, we'd like a recorded vote, a

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Recorded a recorded vote has been requested. The Clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Are there? Where's my script here. Have all members? Have All members voted, and Does any member wish to change their vote?

Let me check, if not the Clerk, just keep down just a little bit. So we communicate here, if not, the Clerk will report

The Clerk

Mr. Chairman on this vote. The yeas are 34 and the nays are 17.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

The majority haven't voted in favor a motion to is agreed to, and H.R. 7567 is Amen. Amended, be reported favorably to the house, without objection. The usual instruction will be given to staff that consists of making such technical, clarifying or conforming changes as are appropriate without changing the substance of legislation. Any members wishing to submit additional dissenting or minority views, shall submit such views to the council's office room 1407, Longworth by 5pm on Friday, March 6.

Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.)

Just wanted to quiet you one more time. This concludes today's business meeting. I thank all members and all staff, this meeting is adjourned. [END]