

I was in Oregon a few months ago and realized that some veterans had to drive 5 hours to a VA facility. They need the community care bill in their community. We provide the funding for that bill to bridge us over until the new Secretary implements that.

We have a caregiver. I am a Vietnam-era veteran, and I have seen many catastrophically injured Vietnam veterans whose families struggled for decades. 520-plus Vietnam veterans are dying every day. It is time we implement this bill and get these needed benefits to those World War II and veterans up to 9/11.

We need to rightsize the VA. Healthcare is not provided like it used to be. It has become much more sophisticated and streamlined. And outpatient, the VA needs to get to be able to do that also. That is what the AIR Act is about. We are increasing the internal capacity so we can train and get new clinicians and providers in.

The speaker, SAM JOHNSON, who spoke a minute ago, said it all. We should be able to look at that hero, who is a true American hero, and listen to his speech, which brought tears to my eyes, and vote for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUTHERFORD). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

The Speaker pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 891 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1653

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, with Mr. MITCHELL in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, more commonly known as the farm bill. I do so, proudly, because I still believe that rural America and our farm and ranch families are the backbone of this country.

Our farmers and ranchers ensure that Americans across this great country pay the lowest grocery bills in the world. They also hand us a rare trade surplus, while creating 21 million American jobs.

In the heartland, agriculture is the lifeblood of the economy. When agriculture does well, Main Street does well; and when agriculture is suffering, so is Main Street.

But beyond the economic contributions, rural America and our Nation's farmers and ranchers are imbued with the values that I cherish deeply: the values of faith, family, God, country, and duty; of neighbor helping neighbor, hard work, and personal responsibility.

In short, Mr. Chairman, rural America and our Nation's farmers and ranchers make America great. I expect that is why the President of the United States strongly supports this farm bill and urges passage.

Times are not good right now in the heartland. Our Nation's farmers and ranchers are struggling in the midst of a 5-year recession, with no end in sight. Net farm income has been cut in half over this period of time. As a result, rural America is not partaking in the economic recovery that urban counterparts are experiencing.

There are many reasons behind the hard times in farm and ranch country. I will briefly discuss two.

In my hometown of Midland, Texas, we have received 1 inch of rain over the last 195 days. Drought is ravaging my State. Last year, we saw record losses due to hurricanes and wildfires. And to the north, in the ranking member's home State, farmers are struggling to get into the fields to plant, although it is the middle of May. The fact is the men and women who clothe and feed us in a manner that is absolutely

unrivaled in world history are the ones hit hardest and first by Mother Nature.

A second reason for the current condition is another factor totally beyond the control of our farm and ranch families: the predatory trade practices of foreign countries. For the sake of brevity, I will offer just one example.

In just 1 year, China oversubsidized just three crops by more than \$1 billion. To put that in perspective, the entire safety net for all of our farmers and ranchers under this farm bill is expected to cost just 64 percent of the amount China spent on illegal subsidies in just 1 year on just three crops.

Mr. Chairman, the global market is awash with high and rising foreign subsidies, tariffs, and nontariff trade barriers, and these are hurting American farmers and ranchers.

So what do we do about that? We heed the call of the President of the United States and the Secretary of Agriculture to pass this farm bill.

No, this farm bill is not a cure for all that ails rural America and our farmers and ranchers, but this farm bill does provide a safety net to see them through the hard times.

For my colleagues interested in the budgetary impacts of this farm bill, H.R. 2 keeps faith with taxpayers, with CBO now projecting more than \$112 billion in savings, nearly five times what was pledged back in 2014.

There are many other aspects of this farm bill, but I will just briefly touch on three.

First, Secretary Perdue has shown great leadership on two particular issues that are extremely important to rural America: the opioid epidemic that is ravaging rural America needs an aggressive, effective response, and the lack of broadband in many parts of rural America puts farmers and ranchers in rural communities at a terrible disadvantage. The Secretary is determined to tackle these problems and has asked for the tools he needs to make it happen. This farm bill provides those tools.

Second, it is no secret that we do not have a bipartisan farm bill process at this moment, and that I deeply regret. Ultimately, Democrats and Republicans chose to agree to disagree on the question of whether work-capable adults should work or get free job training for 20 hours per week in order to be eligible for SNAP.

I respect my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but I do want to be clear about something: This farm bill in no way, shape, or form disrespects Americans who depend on SNAP. To the contrary, the farm bill keeps faith with SNAP beneficiaries, providing needed benefits and something more—the dignity that comes with work and the promise of a better life that a job brings. I want these Americans to realize the American Dream.

Finally, in closing, I want to note that there is a cottage industry in this town that is determined to defeat this farm bill. They want this House to ignore the realities of Mother Nature and

the predatory trade practices of foreign countries and turn our back on farm and ranch families struggling to hang on in the face of these hard times.

Mr. Chairman, that should not happen on our watch. I urge my colleagues to stand by the hardworking families that put food on our tables and clothes on our backs and still live every day by the values that made this country truly great. Let's stand up for rural America. Let's pass this farm bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, April 30, 2018.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP: I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Natural Resources will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Natural Resources does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Natural Resources represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Natural Resources as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, April 30, 2018.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I have received your letter regarding H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, which contains provisions within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources.

In the interest of permitting you to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this very important bill, I will not seek a referral of H.R. 2. I do so with the understanding that the Natural Resources Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in the bill that fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. Further, I appreciate the work between our committees on forest management and look forward to working with you to build upon the important provisions within Title VIII of the bill as it moves through the legislative process. I also appreciate your support to name members of the Natural Resources Committee to any conference committee to consider such provisions and for inserting our exchange of letters on H.R. 2 into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Congratulations on marshalling this monumental achievement through committee, and thank you again for the very cooperative spirit in which you and your staff have worked regarding this matter and many others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, May 1, 2018.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CONAWAY: I write with respect to H.R. 2, the "Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018." As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions within H.R. 2 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 2 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 2 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 2.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 1, 2018.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on the Judiciary will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on the Judiciary does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on the Judiciary represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on the Judiciary as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON DC.
May 2, 2018.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

I write concerning H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House of

Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that foregoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. Lastly, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I request your support for the appointment of conferees from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure during any House-Senate conference convened on this or related legislation.

I would ask that a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest as well as the mutually agreed upon changes to be incorporated into the bill be included in the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor, to memorialize our understanding.

I look forward to working with the Committee on Agriculture as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2018.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2, Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2018.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to confirm our mutual understanding with respect to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Education and the Workforce with regard to H.R. 2 on those matters within my committee's jurisdiction, including provisions relating to workplace safety, work requirements, and child nutrition.

The Committee on Education and the Workforce will not delay further consideration of this bill. However, I do so only with

the understanding this procedural route will not be construed to prejudice my committee's jurisdictional interest and prerogatives on this bill or any other similar legislation and will not be considered as precedent for consideration of matters of jurisdictional interest to my committee in the future.

I respectfully request your support for the appointment of outside conferees from the Committee on Education and the Workforce should this bill or a similar bill be considered in a conference with the Senate. I also request you include our exchange of letters on this matter in the Committee Report for H.R. 2. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA FOXX,
Chairwoman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2018.

Hon. VIRGINIA FOXX,
Chairwoman, Committee on Education and Workforce, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN FOXX: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2, Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Education and Workforce will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Education and Workforce does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Education and Workforce represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Education and Workforce as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2018.

Hon. MICHAEL K. CONAWAY,
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, which contains substantial matter that falls within the Rule X legislative jurisdiction of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I appreciate the consultation and cooperation between our committees, both before and after your markup of that bill.

Based on that cooperation and our associated understandings, and in order to expedite House consideration, the Foreign Affairs Committee agreed not to seek a sequential referral of H.R. 2, with the understanding that that decision in no way diminishes or alters the jurisdictional interests of the Foreign Affairs Committee in that bill, any subsequent amendments, or similar legislation. I respectfully request your support for the appointment of House Foreign Affairs conferees during any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

Finally, I respectfully request that you include this letter and your response in the

Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 2 on the House floor.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2018.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2, Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Foreign Affairs will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Foreign Affairs does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Foreign Affairs represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Foreign Affairs as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

□ 1700

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. H.R. 2 is not a work product that I am proud of because it is not one that I or my Democratic colleagues had much of a role in producing.

More than that though, I am opposed to H.R. 2 today because it is simply not good enough for American farmers, consumers, or rural advocates. H.R. 2 fails our farmers. The bill does not improve the safety-net programs farmers need to manage a troubled farm economy. It fails to make needed increases to reference prices under the PLC program to address the 52 percent drop in national farm income.

It neglects repeated requests to increase funding for trade promotion to help strengthen overseas markets in response to this administration's actions on trade and renewable fuels.

H.R. 2 fails our Nation's hungry. While I agree that there are changes that need to be made in the SNAP program, this is so clearly not the way to do it. The bill cuts more than \$23 billion in SNAP benefits and will result in an estimated 2 million Americans being unable to get help that they need.

Within the nutrition title, the bill turns around and wastes billions that the majority cut from SNAP benefits to create a massive, untested workforce training bureaucracy.

H.R. 2 fails our conservation goals by reducing the Federal funding for our

voluntary conservation programs by almost \$800 million. It fails our next generation. It lacks mandatory funding for scholarships at 1890 land grants. It underfunds our programs for beginning farmers, and outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

H.R. 2, also fails our energy independence goals. Aside from eliminating the entire energy title, the bill hobbles renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts in rural communities by eliminating funding for the Rural Energy for America Program.

H.R. 2 fails the farmers, rural advocates, and consumers that we are here to represent on all of these fronts. But what is so incredibly frustrating for me is, the failure of this process.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I would simply say for the record that all of the bill was negotiated—except for the SNAP title—in good faith with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Not once did they mention anything on many of these issues that were just brought up, but we did have an agreement on those non-SNAP titles. It was a SNAP title, quite frankly, that caused the rift.

Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), my colleague, the chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman of the Agriculture Committee so much for yielding, and for his tireless work on this important legislation in order to support rural America and our most vulnerable.

Over the past 3 years, the Agriculture Committee has spent countless hours talking with constituents, performing outreach, and holding hearings with stakeholders to see how we can improve upon the 2014 farm bill.

Contrary to the claims of some, this legislation was not created in the dead of night or without input from my friends across the aisle.

Mr. Chairman, I have before me a letter that was sent to Chairman CONAWAY and Ranking Member PETERSON with priorities identified by the Democratic Members that I am proud to serve with on the Agriculture Committee. I am proud to see—under nutrition specifically—all of these, and I believe all of these titles, these priorities were incorporated into the farm bill.

Over this 3-year period, we held 21 hearings and heard from 81 witnesses at the Nutrition Subcommittee alone. Members of the Agriculture Committee traveled to every corner of the country to participate in listening sessions and obtain vital input from our farmers, our ranchers, and our growers.

As the farm bill was in development at the committee, every Member had the opportunity to provide input and that input was considered during this process. Yet, even with an open process, no amendments were offered during the committee markup by my

friends across the aisle. That is an opportunity for refinement, as is being on the House floor an opportunity for refinement.

From voluntary insurance programs, to conservation in rural development programs, to agriculture research, H.R. 2 contains critical supports for our Nation's farmers, ranchers, and rural America.

On the farm side, I am especially pleased with the continued reforms to the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, as well as the forestry provisions in title VIII. Now, while I could go on about all of these good policies contained in H.R. 2, this legislation ultimately is about supporting American food—both on the farm, and on the consumer side.

Food is a national security issue. And whether we realize it or not, every American shakes hands with a farmer at least three times a day. As chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, I am proud that we maintain nutrition assistance for our most vulnerable through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Approximately 65 percent of these dollars directly provide food to children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities who rely on benefits of SNAP when times get tough.

H.R. 2 also does make historic changes to SNAP by providing new job opportunities for work-capable adults. This bill does this by reinvesting significant dollars within our budget into education and training programs.

By providing the States the increased resources to do this, every work-capable SNAP recipient will be guaranteed a slot in a job-training program, leading to ultimate food security. By doing this, we can help folks elect a pathway to long-term employment, self-sufficiency, and a way out of poverty.

Mr. Chair, I ask that Members support H.R. 2.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT).

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, let me make it very clear at the very beginning, that this is a racist farm bill. Make no mistake about it.

The good Lord said: Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. And the truth is that this is, unfortunately, a racist farm bill. Let me tell you why.

After the Civil War when the South was utterly destroyed, they established land-grant colleges, and then 30 years later, because there was so much struggle without adequate freedom for my people—African Americans—they established the 1890 land-grant colleges because they had Plessy v. Ferguson, the separate but equal doctrine. Yeah, they were separated already, but never equal.

These 1890 colleges have never gotten the financial support that they have needed to even come close to the White 1860s that were there. And so we tried

to make amends in this farm bill to come up with a very noble idea. With the shortage of younger people not going into agriculture, not going into science and technology and research to feed the future, we established scholarships to go to the 1890s.

But you know what? When they took our bill, put it into the farm bill, they took the money out—just like they did back in the 1890s. Black people in this country have suffered too long, and we need to put a stop to it. I am here. I know that this House will not put the money back in. It was just \$1 million a year for each of the 5 years to try to get people in. And these land grants knew.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Every Black man does not necessarily want to play football or basketball. They want to feed the future. This is a terrible bill.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is no longer recognized.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. * * *

The CHAIR. The gentleman is no longer recognized.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. * * *

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chair, I would like to recognize the fact that this brand-spanking-new program that never had any funding is authorized in the bill for discretionary spending to create the scholarship program that has just been referenced. There was no money taken out of the bill, because there was never any money in the program.

We simply recognized the need and we set that program up in place as a direct result of the gentleman's passionate plea for a scholarship program.

Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. King).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the yielding and the work that has been put in to get this farm bill together.

First thing that I am happy about, it has the protect interstate commerce language in it, which passed in committee by simply a voice vote. It is well-established. It protects and preserves the commerce clause. We can't have States regulating interstate commerce. That violates the commerce clause. This restores it. That is item number one.

Item number two, in title I, we have in the bill that we protect the PLC program. We improve and protect the ARC program, and we protect the crop insurance. All of that keeps our families on the farm, and if we don't have that, market fluctuations take them off.

We have also increased funding for the MAP program, Market Access Program, and for the Foreign Market Development Program. We have got another FMD program too, and that is the vaccine bank that is in this bill.

Putting work into the SNAP program is an important component. All

work has dignity. All work has honor. It is a good start for what we need to do to get a lot better turnout of what goes on with our welfare programs.

Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman for putting this bill together here on this floor today.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I am now pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE).

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman so very much for the fight he put up during this process.

Mr. Chair, I stand today with my Democratic colleagues fighting for the very soul of America. Inscribed on the Statue of Liberty are these words:

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

We have lost our way, Mr. Chair. There is no longer a lamp, nor a golden door. And if we fail to protect the weak, the frail, the poor, the children, the seniors, and the disabled, we have lost our soul. We no longer live up to the promise of America and the true meaning of our creed.

Mr. Chair, it is just cruel to American families and food producers, those who rely on farm bill programs, to put them at risk, only to carry out a hateful, demeaning, and mean-spirited partisan agenda. It is dishonest to promote the idea that SNAP recipients are undeserving; that we are lazy.

Sixty-five percent of our SNAP recipients cannot work. They are children, seniors, and disabled. And most of the others do work—some of them in the very building in which we stand today.

Mr. Chair, I ask my colleagues: What have poor children ever done to you? What have seniors done to you? What have the disabled ever done to you? Republicans are paying for the \$2 trillion debt they created in the tax bill on the backs of the poor. It is just sad, Mr. Chair. Really, really sad.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST).

Mr. BOST. Mr. Chairman, I hear from my constituents in southern Illinois that rural America is hurting. That is why we need the farm bill, to address the concerns facing agriculture all over rural America.

The farm bill does just that. The farm bill protects the farm safety net, including commodity programs and crop insurance, invests in rural broadband, modernizes FSA loan programs for new and beginning farmers and ranchers, and invests in conservation.

President Eisenhower once said: "Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're 1,000 miles from a corn field." Those words hold true today, and that is why this bill was crafted with those farmers in mind, because farmers are everyone's bread and butter.

The CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a Joint Resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S.J. Res. 52. Joint Resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to "Restoring Internet Freedom".

The CHAIR. The Committee will resume its sitting.

AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

The Committee resumed its sitting.

□ 1715

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM).

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I came to Congress to solve problems and create economic opportunities for New Mexico, which is still struggling with one of the highest unemployment and poverty rates in the Nation.

Now, we had a chance in this farm bill to do just that, and I have worked for years on an array of bipartisan initiatives in this bill, including creating a first-ever broadband grant program to increase internet access in rural communities; expediting the adoption of innovative conservation and water management technologies; and finally banning the heinous practice of lunch shaming.

Unfortunately, the bill the majority brought to the floor today not only jeopardizes all of that bipartisan work, it also includes provisions that will cause so much pain to so many people in my State.

This bill creates new restrictions on SNAP eligibility and a massive unfunded mandate on State bureaucracies which will further destabilize an already broken SNAP system in New Mexico.

I have spent years working to hold my State accountable for their mismanagement of SNAP and for illegally denying thousands of individuals their benefits. Under this bill, those mistakes will become much more common. Millions of Americans will be needlessly kicked off SNAP, and more children and families will go hungry.

Mr. Chairman, it may be politically expedient to bring this partisan bill to the floor that destroys SNAP as we know it, but passing a partisan bill that will undoubtedly die in the Senate

does nothing for the Americans who wait for Congress to do their jobs.

This bill is the perfect reflection of what is wrong with Washington: that politics will always take priority over progress. I urge my colleagues to recommit to the bipartisan collaborative work that is desperately needed by farms, ranchers, and vulnerable Americans in every single one of our districts. This is the only way we will pass a farm bill and fulfill our commitment to the constituents we have a duty to serve.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER).

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, America's farm families have had to weather a 5-year recession with depressed prices resulting in a 52-percent drop in net farm income. Two-thirds of our farming operations today are in economic trouble, and chapter 12 bankruptcies have risen by 33 percent in just 2 years. So it is no secret that our Nation's farmers and ranchers are struggling.

I hear all this talk during the past month about a free market, how everything would be so much better without farm programs. "We want a complete, total free market," they say. From an intellectual and philosophical standpoint, I would love that. We all would. But here is the problem: that isn't the real world.

There is no free market when you have countries all around the world subsidizing their agriculture production to the hilt. For example, Communist China agreed to a subsidy limit as part of their accession to the WTO in 2001. But what do they do? They exceed that subsidy limit by \$100 billion on just three crops alone in 1 year. That is no free market.

Farm programs account for 0.24 percent of the total Federal budget, and in return, every individual and family in this country is guaranteed an abundant, affordable food supply, and the very best nutritious food at an exceptionally affordable price. That is, quite frankly, a huge return on a relatively small investment, not to mention what agriculture means to our rural economies and our trade balance with the rest of the world.

American agriculture is more than just being the best producers in the business and feeding the world. It is about food security and national security. Once a farm is gone, it isn't coming back. It is not like your local hardware store that goes out of business; it is not like that space isn't going to be replaced by another business; it will. Farms, on the other hand, are replaced by developments taking some of our very best farmland out of production.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman from North Carolina an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, we have lost 44 million acres of farmland during the past 30 years.

Mr. Chairman, passage of this farm bill is absolutely critical to the livelihood and success of our farm families and food supply. I encourage and hope that every one of us will vote for this bill.

This farm bill strengthens the farm safety net while making other vital improvements to current law that will benefit our farm families, rural communities, and animal agriculture sector—such as the establishment of a new U.S.-only vaccine bank to prevent Foot-and-Mouth disease, authorizing \$1.1 billion to provide broadband service to harder-to-serve rural areas, and providing the Secretary of Agriculture with tools necessary to help combat the ongoing opioid crises which is hitting rural America especially hard.

Additionally, this farm bill makes common sense changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to encourage work and provide for job training.

The vast majority of Americans would agree that if you work you should be better off than if you don't work. Under this bill, we simply ask that those who are of working age and are perfectly capable, work 20 hours a week. And, if one can't find work we will pay for their job training so that everyone can attain the skills necessary to get the job they want.

The unfortunate reality is that we have too many SNAP recipients stuck in the program with no pathway to upward mobility. Why? Because current SNAP requirements are outdated and riddled with loopholes that incentivize the status quo and fail to support those who need it most. In fact, more than 2/3 of work-capable adults on SNAP are not currently employed.

Today unemployment numbers are at 3.9 percent. In the year 2000, the last time unemployment was this low, there were 17 million people on SNAP. Today, we have more than 41 million people on SNAP yet the unemployment is exactly the same. Mr. Speaker, if that doesn't illustrate the problem, I don't know what does.

We must do better.

This farm bill puts this country on the path to do just that. It makes much needed reforms to ensure that recipients of these benefits—those who are perfectly capable of work—have a pathway to upward mobility, can get good jobs, and ultimately use their God-given talents to achieve a rewarding career.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), who is the chairman of the House Democratic Caucus.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

We need to talk about what is really happening with this bill. Just months after giving massive tax cuts to corporations and the wealthiest individuals through their tax scam, Republicans are now penalizing the most vulnerable among us by cutting one of the most proven and valuable programs that ensures that kids, seniors, and working Americans don't go hungry.

If my Republican colleagues looked at the facts, they would see that SNAP—or food stamps—actually work. They would see that a worker is more likely to keep a job if they can put food