

in rural communities don't get stuck with lower service quality than those living in urban areas.

The Community Connect Broadband Grant Program will create better broadband access to unserved remote and Tribal communities and help spur economic growth in rural America. It is a step forward and one of the many things that we need to do to connect Minnesotans to people across the Nation with affordable, reliable internet service.

I also hear from Minnesotans about their love of local produce and the importance of supporting regional food economies. I am happy to see that this bill creates a streamlined Local Agriculture Market Program to support developing local and regional food systems, and it increases mandatory funding for organic research, another priority of mine.

I am proud that this bill includes the Rural Health Liaison legislation, which I worked on with Senator JONES from Alabama and Senator ROUNDS of South Dakota. The Rural Health Liaison will encourage collaboration between USDA and Health and Human Services to address the specific healthcare needs of rural communities.

I am pleased to see the inclusion of my bill encouraging USDA to assist veterans in joining the agriculture workforce after leaving service. This is going to expand access and job opportunities for returning servicemembers.

As we consider the farm bill on the Senate floor, we also need to listen to all of our communities, including leaders in Indian Country. We have many good provisions in the bill for Native communities. In addition to addressing Tribal food fraud, this bill requires the Secretary of Agriculture to support greater inclusion of Tribal products in Federal trade promotion efforts. It also expands eligibility for forestry program funding to include the 1994 Tribal colleges so more students in Minnesota and around the country can get involved in forestry research.

I was glad to join Senator HEITKAMP in supporting a new technical assistance program that will help Tribes access rural development initiatives and will authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to designate Tribal promise zones to further improve access to Federal economic development resources.

Finally, I am eager to see Native farmers in Minnesota take advantage of the improved resources for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in this bill. There are so many opportunities for success in agriculture, and it is important that USDA resources are available to all communities. But there is a lot left to be done. We still need to access many more USDA programs for Native Americans and empower Tribes to make sure that these programs work for Tribal communities.

We need more investment in conservation projects, and we should allow Tribes to develop their own technical standards for conservation based on

their traditions and ecological knowledge.

When I first became a Senator, I asked to be a member of the Indian Affairs Committee. As the newest member of that committee, I have picked up on a couple of themes.

One is that virtually every program for Indian Country is underfunded, and, two, we have to empower Tribes to create solutions that work for their members. We need to listen to leaders in Indian Country and make sure that the farm bill works for them.

I introduced an amendment to make sure that Tribes have the authority to administer the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. This is a top priority of the Native Farm Bill Coalition.

Over 360 federally recognized Tribes participate in Tribal self-governance programs at the Indian Health Service and at the Department of the Interior. With a 30-year proven track record, Tribal self-governance is widely considered by Tribes and stakeholders as one of the most successful Federal Indian policies. Approximately 25 percent of Native Americans receive some type of Federal food assistance, and in some Tribal communities, participation is as high as 80 percent. Giving Tribes the authority to administer SNAP will allow them to meet the specific needs of their communities to fight hunger.

I am hopeful that this very important, bipartisan amendment will get proper consideration.

We need to pass this farm bill now to give the farmers and ranchers certainty.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

KNOWLEDGEABLE INNOVATORS AND WORTHY INVESTORS ACT

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 2245 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2245) to include New Zealand in the list of foreign states whose nationals are eligible for admission into the United States as E-1 and E-2 nonimmigrants if United States nationals are treated similarly by the Government of New Zealand.

There being no objection, the Senate proceed to consider the bill.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be

considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2245) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2245

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Knowledgeable Innovators and Worthy Investors Act” or the “KIWI Act”.

SEC. 2. NONIMMIGRANT TRADERS AND INVESTORS.

For purposes of clauses (i) and (ii) of section 101(a)(15)(E) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(E)), New Zealand shall be considered to be a foreign state described in such section if the Government of New Zealand provides similar nonimmigrant status to nationals of the United States.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, it is an honor to be involved in the passage of this important legislation. The Knowledgeable Innovators and Worthy Investors Act, or KIWI Act, is a bipartisan bill that legislatively extends E-1 and E-2 visas to citizens of New Zealand. It does not increase the number of available visas.

Granting access to these visas to New Zealand would increase both investment and trade into the United States and strengthen our relationship with New Zealand.

New Zealand is, of course, a country that is critical to our relationships. We have a critical strategic military and economic partner in the Asia-Pacific region with New Zealand, and this legislation will further strengthen America’s presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

E-1 and E-2 visas allow qualified foreign nationals to engage in substantial trade or to develop and direct the operations of an enterprise in which the individual is heavily invested.

The United States will benefit from increased investment in trade with New Zealand. New Zealand’s citizens and businesses currently make substantial investments in the United States. These businesses have created more than 10,000 jobs. In 2017, \$10.5 billion in trade passed between the United States and New Zealand.

Allowing New Zealanders to apply for E-1 and E-2 visas will affirm reciprocity and strengthen the United States’ relationship with New Zealand. Again, this is a country that is a critical ally and a partner in the Asia-Pacific region, and it will also increase the United States’ presence in that region.

New Zealand is the only Five-Eyes country whose citizens are currently ineligible to apply for these visas, while American citizens are currently eligible for reciprocal visas in New Zealand. So I am grateful and honored to be involved in moving this legislation.

I am grateful to my colleagues for consenting to this. I am grateful to have worked on this with my distinguished colleague, the Senator from Hawaii, who worked hard with me to put together this bipartisan piece of legislation that we have been fortunate enough to pass through the Senate today.

Thank you.

I see that my colleague from Hawaii is here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I want to thank my colleague, the Senator from Utah, Mr. LEE, for working with me on the act that we just passed.

AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018—Continued

FILLING THE UPCOMING SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, if this week has shown us anything, it is that courts matter. In three important decisions over 2 days, the Supreme Court majority endorsed Donald Trump's bigotry and handed him the power to exclude any group of people for any reason, as long as he couches it as a national security matter.

Justice Alito led a narrow majority in a concerted effort to destroy unions—in this case, public sector unions—and Justice Thomas told States that they cannot tell women what reproductive services are available to them.

We have also seen a Federal trial court judge in San Diego, who combined his understanding of the law with his capacity for human kindness, order that children who were separated from their parents at the southern border be reunited with them in short order.

We have seen the Third Circuit Court of Appeals rule in favor of transgender public school students being able to use the bathrooms that match their gender identity.

The work that judges do affects the real lives of people living and working in this country—people who are trying to care for their families, to serve their country, to earn a living; people who count on us here in Congress to make sure that they are safe and that their rights are protected. In the Judiciary Committee on which I sit, that responsibility is normally never greater than when we consider a nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court.

These are not normal times. When we have a President who avows that the Supreme Court should always be Republican, ignoring the independent role of the Court, the Senate's advice and consent process is even more crucial.

Take a look at the President's tweet. He believes the Supreme Court is an extension of his political party. Last March, he reiterated: "We need more Republicans in 2018," he said, "and must **ALWAYS**"—he likes to capitalize—"ALWAYS hold the Supreme

Court!" Any nominee from this President comes to us with this taint attached.

The President is not the only one to politicize the courts. Neil Gorsuch would never have made it to the Supreme Court if not for the majority leader, whose proudest achievement, according to him, is Neil Gorsuch's confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court.

There is no question that the majority leader wants to ensure a conservative majority on the Supreme Court to upend the fundamental rights of millions of Americans. It started in 2016 when he refused to even meet with the President's Supreme Court nominee and would not grant him a hearing. The majority leader held this seat hostage precisely because he wanted someone who would serve as a rubberstamp for his radical conservative agenda.

Here is what MITCH MCCONNELL said when he did this. He said that the American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Court Justice. Under the McConnell rule, this vacancy created by Justice Kennedy's resignation and retirement should be treated no differently.

If the people's voice should have been heard in 2016, it is no less important now, because these are clearly not normal times. On Tuesday—the same day the Supreme Court ruled that the President could discriminate against people coming to our country on the basis of religion—the majority leader tweeted this picture of himself with Neil Gorsuch.

The message is clear. The twisted process got the Republicans just what they wanted, and they want to do it again. They want to keep doing it, and we should not let them.

Democrats should do everything we can to ensure that the Supreme Court stays independent and protects fundamental rights and values. The American people certainly deserve no less.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. ROUNDS. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, or what is commonly known in our part of the country as the farm bill, which we are considering on the Senate floor this week.

The farm bill is a vital piece of legislation to the people of my home State of South Dakota, where our economy depends on agriculture to survive. With more than 31,500 farms across the State, South Dakota ranks in the top 10 for ag production, providing a \$25 billion impact on our economy annually. Stability and certainty for our farmers, which this farm bill helps to provide, is crucial as they do their part to feed and fuel a growing global population.

I would like to thank Chairman PAT ROBERTS, Ranking Member DEBBIE STABENOW, and all of the other members of the Senate Ag Committee and

their staff, who worked tirelessly to get this market-oriented bill to the floor for consideration by the full Senate body. This bipartisan bill will provide much needed certainty to our ag community at a pivotal time, when the ag economy is facing significant challenges. The ag economy is down more than 50 percent over the past 5 years, and the numbers don't look much better for 2018. According to the Department of Agriculture's own Economic Research Service, net farm income is projected to fall an additional 7 percent this year to \$58 billion.

A 5-year farm bill is necessary to give South Dakota producers the certainty they need to help weather times of economic downturn, such as the one we are experiencing right now in ag country. Additionally, the uncertainty surrounding trade and tariffs has created instability in the market, which is having a significant effect on our commodity prices.

For example, in my home State of South Dakota, soybeans are one of the top commodities, and we rely heavily on exports to sell our soybean crop each year. A significant importer of U.S. soybeans is China, which accounts for about 25 percent of all of the U.S. soybean sales and 60 percent of all soybean exports.

While the tariffs on soybeans have not taken effect yet, they are already having a real impact on the market prices. Since the tariffs on Chinese goods were announced in early March, soybeans are down \$1.86 per bushel on the cash market, representing a \$449 million loss in South Dakota alone when we look at farmers' balance sheets. The USDA had projected ag exports to be flat in 2018 before tariffs were levied on the ag industry—or at least before those tariffs were suggested to be added to the ag industry.

With so much uncertainty surrounding trade deals since tariffs were announced, reauthorizing programs like the Market Access Program, or MAP, and the Foreign Market Development Program, FMD, are vital to help gain access to new markets for U.S. products. This bill does exactly that.

These programs help encourage the development, maintenance, and expansion of the ag export market to foreign customers.

I am pleased that this legislation also strengthens the crop insurance program with outlays projected to be approximately \$7.6 billion annually. Crop insurance is a highly effective public-private safety net that helps farmers customize protection for their individual operations. Sometimes I don't think we emphasize that this is one of those safety net items for which farmers and ranchers actually pay premiums to participate. Crops in my home State of South Dakota contribute roughly \$10.3 billion to our economy. Last year, in South Dakota alone, more than 50,000 crop insurance policies were written to provide \$4.8 billion in protection for over 17.5 million acres of cropland. Nationwide,