

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2013

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Conferees:

As you begin formal negotiations with the Senate on the *Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013* (H.R. 2642), we write to express our strong support for the reforms and savings found in the House-passed bill and encourage you to maintain these commonsense provisions as you resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions.

Specifically, the House of Representatives provided fundamental reforms to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps, by ending broad-based categorical eligibility which allowed individuals receiving nominal benefits from programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to bypass asset and income tests and automatically qualify for SNAP.

We were also successful in requiring able-bodied adult recipients to participate in a work program, prepare for work, or at the very least look for work in exchange for receiving taxpayer assistance. Both of these reforms return SNAP policy back to the intent of the bipartisan 1996 Welfare Reform package signed into law by former President Bill Clinton. Additional reforms passed by the House, including the option for states to require drug testing of participants, the option to eliminate access to the program for violent criminal offenders, and elimination of funding used for recruitment activities, are critical for real reform in this program.

The House-passed bill is not limited to reforms only in SNAP. The House reduced funding by completely eliminating the outdated direct payment system, ensuring no payments are made to individuals who are not farming. We modernized agriculture programs to be cost-effective and market-oriented and updated commodity policy to respect and address the diverse qualities of each crop and region.

Furthermore, we consolidated or eliminated more than 100 outdated or duplicative programs within the Agriculture Department and improved the risk management options to ensure farmers have more skin in the game. The House also approved an amendment to allow dairy farmers to enroll in a market-based margin insurance program without requiring them to participate in a government controlled supply management program.

As Members of Congress, we respect the significant challenges you face in the upcoming negotiations and understand the difficult choices you must make in order to complete an agriculture authorization which has been three years and over forty Congressional hearings in the making. We strongly urge you to consider the important reforms the House has passed and look forward to completing this process and getting a law signed for our farmers and agribusiness community.

Sincerely,



RICHARD HUDSON
Member of Congress



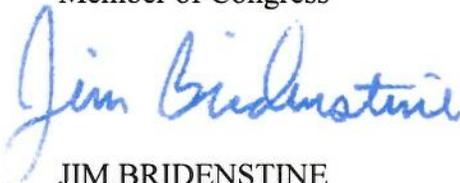
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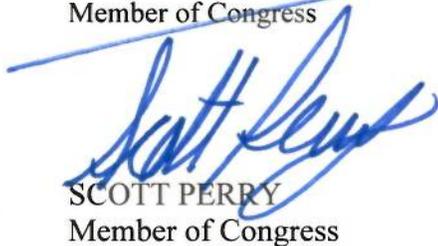
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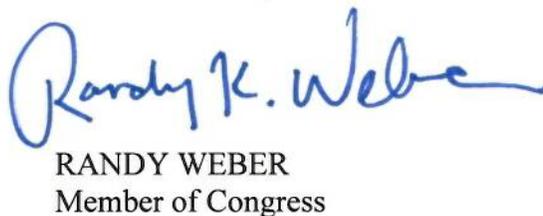
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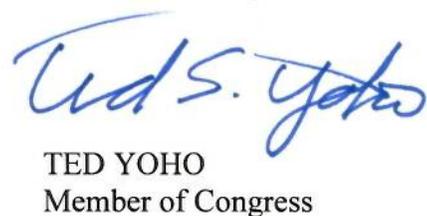
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