June 19, 2013

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the millions of members our organizations represent, we are outraged at the process surrounding the consideration of the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013 (H.R. 1947), the Farm Bill. After two years of Farm Bill debate occurring everywhere but on the House floor, there is a pent up demand to amend and debate the bill. With a price tag of nearly $1 trillion, we believe taxpayers deserve a more robust debate and too many common sense amendments have been denied an up or down vote.

On June 10th, Speaker Boehner issued a challenge to you and your colleagues regarding the Farm Bill. He said, "If you have ideas on how to make the bill better, bring them forward. Let's have the debate, and let's vote on them." And lawmakers responded, submitting 230 amendments to the Rules Committee. The speaker also promised that "The [Majority] Leader and I will encourage the Rules Committee to provide a fair process that will allow for a vigorous and open debate."

The Rules Committee evidently had a different idea, only accepting 103, or 45 percent of the amendments filed to this nearly $1 trillion piece of legislation. This is in contrast to other legislation considered this Congress that despite costing far less had a much greater percentage of filed amendments accepted.

The Farm Bill amendments that were discarded included ones that would have helped reform farm and nutrition programs. In a cynical maneuver not in keeping with the Speaker's direction, the Rules Committee structured the amendment process in an attempt to ensure that the least possible reform would happen. Many smaller reform amendments would have had a greater likelihood of passage. Popular amendments that would make sweeping reform such as splitting the nutrition title off the Farm Bill were left behind. Here's a handful of the reform amendments – big and small - that the Rules Committee denied an up or down vote. Our individual organizations may support or oppose some of these, but we agree that all deserve debate:

- Amendment (freestanding) to set an Adjusted Gross Income limit on crop insurance premium subsidies
- Amendment to eliminate support for the Brazil Cotton Institute (the House has supported this before)
- Amendment to bifurcate the Farm Bill into agriculture and nutrition bills
- Amendment to eliminate the Harvest Price Option that enables farmers to get higher crop insurance payouts than the level they were initially insured to
- Amendment (freestanding) to limit the crop insurance premium subsidy to $50,000
- Amendment to sever Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program categorical eligibility
- Amendment to prohibit lawmakers or their spouses from receiving benefits or subsidies authorized by the bill
- Amendment to eliminate two year continuation of direct payments for cotton
- Amendment to block grant Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to the states
- Amendment (freestanding) to cap crop insurance industry subsidies at $900 million per year and rate of return at no more than 12 percent

The Farm Bill is a massive piece of legislation. We urge the House not to jam this bill through the floor without adequate debate and attempts at reform. For more information please contact Josh Sewell at 202-546-8500 or josh[at]taxpayer.net.

Sincerely

Americans for Prosperity
Campaign For Liberty
Club For Growth
Freedom Works
R Street Institute
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayer Protection Alliance