SENATE IMMERSION MODULE (SIM)
U.S. Food Policy: The Farm Bill
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**Primary Sources:**

- Dick Durbin (D-IL)—February 4, 2014
- Jeff Flake (R-AZ)—February 4, 2014
- Sherrod Brown (D-OH)—February 4, 2014
- Michael Bennet (D-CO)—February 4, 2014
- Bill Nelson (D-FL)—February 4, 2014
- Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)—February 4, 2014
- Jack Reed (D-RI)—February 4, 2014
- Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)—February 4, 2014
- Carl Levin (D-MI)—February 4, 2014
- Deb Fischer (R-NE)—February 4, 2014
- Maria Cantwell (D-WA)—February 4, 2014

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WELCOME TO THE EDWARD M. KENNEDY INSTITUTE

We are delighted to welcome you to the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate. The Kennedy Institute aims to teach students about the role of the Senate in our representative democracy, introducing important elements of the legislative process to young audiences and encouraging participation in civic life. Our programs serve the general public, students of all ages, teachers, scholars, senators, Senate staff, international visitors, and others in public service.

The materials in this curriculum are designed to enhance the Institute’s immersive Senate Immersion Module (SIM). The SIM program is an educational, role-playing experience, developed to engage new generations of Americans. This program is conducted in the Institute’s full-scale representation of the United States Senate Chamber. Running with up to 100 students at a time, participants take on the roles of senators to study issues, debate, negotiate, and vote on legislation.

Digital projections, handheld tablets, and a life-size replica of the U.S. Senate Chamber enhance the immersive role play. The resources in this curriculum help students and teachers prepare for the SIM program and discuss the experience afterwards. They can also be used independently as print outs in the classroom.

The Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate is dedicated to educating the public about the important role of the Senate in our government, encouraging participatory democracy, invigorating civil discourse, and inspiring the next generation of citizens and leaders to engage in the civic life of their communities.

The Institute encourages classroom preparation for the SIM, active play at the Institute, and debriefing at the end of the experience.
ABOUT THIS CURRICULUM

The purpose of this learning module is to help students learn how a U.S. senator might address an issue of public significance under consideration in the United States Congress. Learning about personal, state, party, and national interests will help students understand representation more fully. It will also help them play their roles more effectively when taking part in the Institute’s SIM. The pre-visit lesson introduces students to the history of the Farm Bill and the policy issues involved in feeding the nation. The post-visit lesson acts as a debrief and reflection on the SIM experience.

SIM Learning Goals

Using this curriculum and the Kennedy Institute SIM, students will be able to:

• Understand the basic tenets of representation: balancing personal convictions with state, party, and national interests
• Research and analyze issues of national importance
• Negotiate, persuade, and develop strategies to reach consensus
• Take a stand on issues and proposed solutions
BACKGROUND OVERVIEW

President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Agricultural Adjustment Act in 1933 to assist farmers who were struggling during the Great Depression. This act was the basis for future farm bills which are now renewed every five years and are far-reaching. Teachers of United States history classes can make a direct connection between the Great Depression and New Deal and the Farm Bill. Participating in this SIM allows students to connect the history of the time period they are studying with today’s issues. Students can also examine how legislation can change and grow over time.

*The Farm Bill* SIM is not limited in its connections to history classes. It also fits into the curriculum of classes that examine the connection between science and public policy within our nation. The bill started as and continues to focus on agriculture policy as well as conservation. Students in career and technical education programs with a connection to agriculture would also benefit from participating in this SIM.

Another reason to participate in *The Farm Bill* SIM is that many students are personally connected to provisions that address Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This legislation regulates and provides for food stamp benefits, free and reduced lunch, expanded nutrition for children, and food banks. Many students benefit from one or more of these programs and connect personally to this legislation. This SIM may also be appropriate for certain health classes.
# Farm Bill Policy Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>The Agricultural Committee was established in the House of Representatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>The Agricultural Committee was established in the Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>The Agricultural Act of 1862 established the U.S. Department of Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>The earliest form of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) was created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>The Agricultural Adjustment Administration was created by the Agricultural Adjustment Act during the New Deal era to regulate crop production in an attempt to increase prices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td><em>United States v. Butler</em>—The Supreme Court ruled the Agricultural Adjustment Act unconstitutional because it violated the Commerce Clause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Congress passed an updated version of the Agricultural Adjustment Act. This version created marketing quotas and overproduction penalties instead of subsidies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td><em>Mulford v. Smith</em>—The Supreme Court upheld the Agricultural Adjustment Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>The first “omnibus” farm bill included subsidies and production controls with the goal of raising incomes and increasing conservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>This Farm Bill created new conservation laws with the creation of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>This Farm Bill of 1990 created new regulations surrounding organic agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>This Farm Bill of 1996 added additional research programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 was the first to address bioenergy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 added sections relating to horticulture and local food systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>The 2008 Farm Bill was extended until the end of 2013 after the 2012 Farm Bill failed to pass in the House of Representatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>The 2013 version of the Farm Bill passed in the Senate but not in the House of Representatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>The Farm Bill of 2014 was signed into law on February 14, 2014 and funds its programs through 2018.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PRE-VISIT LESSON: THE FARM BILL**

**Pre-Visit Lesson Introduction**

During the pre-visit lesson, students will participate in a brainstorming activity that asks them to consider what is involved in feeding a nation, and challenge them to think about the large reach of the Farm Bill. Students will also have the opportunity to review essential vocabulary and a timeline of legislation related to past farm bills. The main activity of the lesson requires students to examine primary source Congressional speeches about the provisions and passing of the 2014 Farm Bill.

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**Lesson Learning Objectives**

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- Analyze and summarize a position in the farm subsidy and food assistance debate
- Summarize and analyze Congressional speeches and opinions on the Farm Bill
- Draw conclusions on how the Farm Bill impacts the nation

**Enduring Understandings**

- Senators must take into account their own personal beliefs as well as those of their party and constituents when voting in Congress.
- Conflict resolution involves compromise, cooperation, and change.
- There is constant debate over the proper role of the government.

**Essential Questions**

- How have the key provisions of the Farm Bill changed throughout history?
- What key programs under the Farm Bill should be expanded, cut, or maintained?
- What about the Farm Bill is appealing to both political parties?
## Pre-Visit Lesson Plan

TOTAL TIME: 50 minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Warm-Up—Graffiti Board Activity</td>
<td>At the start of the lesson write “How do you feed a nation?” on a blank board. Ask students to stand around the board in silence and think about the question. When students are ready, invite them to write their thoughts, ideas, or questions on the board around the original prompt. After all students have had a turn, ask them to step back and read what their classmates have written. Next, invite students to write comments or questions on what at least two of their classmates have written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Topic Introduction</td>
<td>Introduce the topic of the Farm Bill to the class with a focus on the key issues contained in the bill that will be discussed during the SIM. Also review the key vocabulary and timeline. <strong>Materials:</strong> - Farm Bill Timeline (p. 6) - Farm Bill Vocabulary (p. 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 minutes</td>
<td>Jigsaw</td>
<td>Split students into groups of five to six students to create home base groups. Assign each student in the group a different Congressional speech. Students should actively read their speech individually first and complete the analysis handout. Next students should meet in larger groups with the other students who were assigned their same speech. In these groups, students should discuss the main ideas of the speech and the analysis questions. Lastly, students should return to their home groups and take turns explaining their speech and the answers to the analysis questions. <strong>Materials:</strong> - Congressional Speeches (p. 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Closing–Think, Pair, Share Activity</td>
<td>When each of the students in the group have finished explaining their speech, ask them to complete the brainstorm at the bottom of the sheet. Once the groups are done, have them share with the larger class and encourage students to answer and discuss the responses of other students and groups. Conclude the discussion by reminding students about the role of a senator who is representing a state that includes multiple different groups who are affected by the Farm Bill. This is also an opportunity to leave students thinking about their task during the SIM tomorrow. <strong>Materials:</strong> - Farm Bill Worksheet (p. 9)</td>
</tr>
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**STUDENT WORKSHEET**

**FARM BILL**

**DIRECTIONS:** Read your assigned Congressional speech on the Farm Bill and complete the worksheet below.

1. Who is the speaker?
   - State:
   - Political Party:

2. What is the speaker’s overall position on the Farm Bill?

3. What specific evidence or examples does the speaker give to support his or her opinion?

4. How will the Farm Bill affect the senator’s state?

5. Does the speaker address any of the key areas of the Farm Bill listed below? If yes, briefly summarize their position.
   - SNAP Benefits
   - Crop Insurance and Subsidy Programs
   - Conservation Programs

**Brainstorm**
Make a list of groups within our nation who are affected by the Farm Bill. Also note if they are positively impacted or negatively impacted or if there is a neutral impact.
# FARM BILL VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>The science and practice of farming and raising livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodity</td>
<td>An item that can be bought or sold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>The act of following a rule, order, or request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Preserving, protecting, or repairing something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deficit</td>
<td>When the amount is less than what is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deregulate</td>
<td>To remove restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)</td>
<td>A living thing whose DNA has been changed in a way that would not occur naturally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>The science or art of growing plants mainly for consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td>A reward or penalty that motivates a person to do something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Foundation or framework needed for a system to operate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>A guarantee of compensation in the event of a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling (mCOOL)</td>
<td>A law that requires retailers to inform customers the source of certain food products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Energy</td>
<td>Energy that comes from a source that is naturally replenished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reauthorization</td>
<td>The process by which Congress renews legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td>Laws that control how businesses operate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)</td>
<td>Provides nutritional assistance to low-income individuals and families</td>
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FARM BILL VOCABULARY
(Continued)

Specialty Crops
“Fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops” (Farm Bill, 2014)

Surplus
An amount that is left over after all needs have been met

Subsidies
Money paid by the government to keep the price of a product low or competitive
Mr. President, this is the conference report for the Agricultural Act of 2014. Senator Stabenow was on the floor earlier. She has stepped off now. She has poured her heart and soul into this document and into this work. Two years ago we passed the farm bill on the floor of the Senate—2 years ago. She did it with Senator Roberts of Kansas. I voted for it, and I thought it was an exceptional effort on her part. It went to the U.S. House of Representatives—as is the custom under the Constitution—to wither and die 2 years ago.

Then a year ago they said let’s try again. Let’s pass the farm bill again in the U.S. Senate in the hopes that the U.S. House of Representatives will take it up—a year ago. So a year ago Senator Stabenow and Senator Roberts sent this measure to the House of Representatives for consideration, and again it languished. It may have been one of the longest running conference committees in the history of Congress, but thank goodness for the perseverance of Senator Stabenow and many others; they produced this document.

For those who do not live in farm country, this may seem like a foreign text, but for those of us who do live in farm country, just reading the table of contents will tell you the important elements of this bill and why it is so critically important to Illinois and virtually every State in the Union.

I commend Senator Stabenow. As I said, she really poured her heart and soul into this document. There are provisions in here that many of us may never really appreciate that she fought for over a long period of time. I am going to acknowledge a few of those during the course of my formal remarks. But while she is here on the floor, let me give special credit to my colleague. She really took on this task and did it in an extraordinary way.

After years of expirations and short-term extensions, primarily due to the problems and inaction in the House of Representatives, this bill finally is going to provide farmers in Illinois and across the Nation with some guarantee of certainty on their future.

Compared to the pre-sequester budget levels—that is budget talk around here for past budgets—this bill is going to save $23 billion over the next 10 years. This conference report before us works to do four things: invest in energy and research, help our rural communities grow—those of us who represent smalltown America know how important that is—ensure stability for our farmers who face the vicissitudes of weather and markets, and provides food assistance for those most in need both here and overseas.

These are amazing and important goals. I am glad Senator Stabenow and all the conferees applied themselves to make this happen. I am disappointed by one provision. I know Senator Stabenow will not be surprised. Despite modest reforms, we still provide extraordinary outside premium support for many farmers who buy crop insurance.

In fairness, this bill eliminates a price support program that was no longer defensible, a program that paid farmers in good times as well as bad. So it was not what it was designed to be, emergency help for farmers in need. She eliminated the direct payment program, by and large. That, to me, is a step forward. Instead, this bill moves farmers toward crop insurance. Most of us, stepping back, say: That sounds like a responsible thing to do. A farmer buys an insurance policy, so if things go bad on the farm, a flood, a drought, some other problem, or the prices happen to be disastrous when the farmer goes to market, the insurance policy will make sure they can live to plant again. That is a good thing. But as I have said several times, any time you put the two words “Federal” and “insurance” in the same sentence, I advise my colleagues to step back and ask some questions. This is not insurance as you envision it. It is not a matter of automobile insurance, where the automobile owners pay enough in premiums to create a reserve to cover the exposure of accidents.

This is different. Under the Crop Insurance Program, similar to many Federal insurance programs, there is a massive Federal subsidy: 62 percent of the reserves that are necessary to make the program function are provided by the Federal
In Illinois, over 2 million people, almost one in seven residents, rely on SNAP benefits to buy the food they need. Who are these people? Who in the world needs food stamps in a great State such as the State of Illinois? Let me tell you about two or three of them.

One of them was the elderly lady whom I met at the Irving Park Methodist Church food pantry. She was on a walker. She had a very short haircut, suggesting that perhaps she had been through some chemotherapy or radiation. She soldiered her way right up there to get a bag of groceries. She sat down and I talked to her.

I said to her: Can you tell me a little bit about how you are doing.

Sure Senator. I am doing OK. I get $800 a month in Social Security.

I said: How in the world do you live in Chicago on $800 a month?

Ain’t easy, Senator. Got to pay the rent. Got to pay the utility bills and the basics. She said: I come to this food pantry and one other one. Each one of them gives me 3 days' worth of food. So I get about 1 month, 6 days' worth of food, out of the two food pantries. I thank them for that. I get food stamps worth about $130 a month.

That is it, folks. That is what she lives on, an elderly person. When the House Republicans said what we need to do is cut $40 billion—that was their original recommendation—$40 billion out of food stamps, they apparently had never met this lady and what she was up against or they might have met a couple of workers whom I had a press conference with on Sunday in Chicago, working full time and qualifying for food stamps. One was a fellow who worked on the west side of Chicago at a used car lot. Does it all, he said—cleans the cars, shovels the lot, sells the cars, and gets paid $8.25 an hour, which is our State minimum wage—four kids, his wife is sick and cannot work.
I thank the Senator from Michigan. She worked long and hard, was a real champion when it came to SNAP, the Food Stamp Program. Incidentally, the good news is, as the economy improves and people get back to work, the number of people on food stamps is going down, which is what we want to see. But does it not say something about us as a nation, a caring, compassionate Nation, that we are going to be there to help those families living in our towns and our States, going to our churches, when they are struggling to put food on the table?

Why was that such an inviting target for some of the House conferees? I do not understand that. There is a lot of money that can be saved in government. We do not want to waste a penny of it. But let’s focus primarily on those who can afford to pay and are getting a Federal subsidy as opposed to those who are just struggling to get by and are asking for a helping hand. This bill does so much. I could not even start to describe all of the different areas dealing with risk on the farm, key investments in energy and research, ag research, programs to help rural communities grow, and helping those in need.

Most importantly, this reauthorization gives Illinois farmers certainty about farm programs. They need it. That is something they have not had for the last 3 years. I am going to support this bill. I wish we had been able to preserve the provision that Senator Coburn and I included. But I believe, on balance, it is an important step forward in farm country across America.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1

He gets food stamps. He needs them to put food on the table for the kids, for a full-time worker at a minimum wage job. Then on the other side was a lady who is a waitress. She told the story of being a single mom. Her son is now 19. She is heading him off to the City College of Chicago. That is a great deal. But she works a job which has a guaranteed minimum wage in Illinois of about $4.50 an hour. That is what waitresses are guaranteed—tipped wage. Nationally, the tipped wage is $2.13 an hour. She said: I do not work in a fancy restaurant. I am lucky to come home with $10 or $20 in tips in a day.

So do the math. She said: Some days they do not call me in to work. I get nothing. She relies on food stamps too, a woman who is ready to work and works hard, standing all day, waiting tables. So in come the House Republicans saying we need to come down hard on these people, these lazy people on food stamps. I wish they would meet some of those folks who use food stamps to get by, to survive. These people are our neighbors. They are hard-working people who lost their jobs or got sick. They are seniors living on a limited fixed income.

This bill does cut $8 billion out of SNAP, the Food Stamp Program. I understand the cuts that were made. I think Senator Stabenow and others have done these carefully. I do not want any fraud in this program. She does not either. We think we have tightened it so it will not affect the payments to those who are truly eligible and those who need the help. Yet it will make sure the taxpayers are treated fairly as well.

But look at the contrast. Some of the conferees walked into this hearing and said that farmers who make almost $1 million a year should not have any reduction in their subsidy for crop insurance, but people such as the lady at the Irving Park Methodist Church food pantry, being paid $800 a month, we ought to take a hard look at the $130 a month we give this lady. That is upside down. That does not reflect the values of this country or the priorities we need to face.
SPEECHES ON THE FARM BILL

Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ) on February 4, 2014

Mr. President, as the Senate turns its attention this week to the farm bill conference report, my thoughts turn to the Wild West to put its provisions in context. Frankly, its 950 pages lend themselves to talking about the good, the bad, and the just plain ugly.

I mention the good, because while this farm bill falls far short of gaining my support, it is not entirely without provisions worth highlighting. Conferees, including a one-term extension of the Payments in Lieu of Taxes, or the PILT Program. That gives temporary predictability at least for counties with low tax bases due to Federal land ownership and provides Congress with time to chart a long-term solution in this regard.

In addition, the bill authorizes permanently the stewardship contracting authority. This is a critical land management tool that allows us to proactively reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. It is one I have long called for. While reforms to the liability requirements are also included, the report fails to include necessary flexibility on cancelation ceilings. That is something I will continue to work on in the future.

Sadly, when it comes to the bad, there is not enough time to list all of the items in the report that should make any lawmaker cringe who is concerned about our crushing national debt or those of us trying to reform agriculture policy.

Rather than truthfully trimming the already generous agriculture safety net, taxpayers should prepare for yet another round of entirely new alphabet soup subsidy programs. The Senator from Illinois explained very well the Crop Insurance Program that is so heavily subsidized, 62 percent.

I think all of us with auto insurance or other types of insurance would love to have that kind of contribution from the Federal Government. This report does not even provide commonsense reforms that limit waste and largess to sustained hallmarks of agriculture subsidies. The report also fails to limit agricultural payments to those who are actually involved in farming.

It cannot even provide a reasonable income limit, as was discussed by the Senator from Illinois, for those who already receive crop insurance subsidies. Incomprehensibly, any renegotiation of the arrangement between crop insurers and the Federal Government would be required to be revenue neutral, despite billions of dollars in taxpayer savings having been found in previous renegotiations.

This bill is purported to be fiscally conservative because it saves $16 billion or so in tax dollars. Before we pat each other on the back in this regard, we need to remember that Congress has a pretty dismal record of actually knowing how much farm bills are going to cost.

According to Taxpayers for Common Sense, “The last two farms bills are on pace to exceed their Congressional Budget Office score by more than $400 billion, and there’s no assurance that this farm bill will be any different.”

Let’s get to the ugly. For years, direct payments have been one of the clearest signs of what needs to be changed in Federal spending. The Federal Government has been handing out roughly $5 billion a year to farmers regardless of whether they are farming the land. I want to pay tribute to the Senator from Michigan who has fought to end these direct payments.
The Senate did a pretty good job there, but the House did not. I myself have long sought to end these direct payments. I was encouraged with the Senate action to end these payments outright. But despite our fiscal situation, the best we could get in the House was allowing direct payments to continue, albeit slightly reduced for cotton, for 2014 and 2015.

This conference report purports to end direct payments but ends them in name only for cotton. Let’s be clear. It simply renames direct payments for cotton for 2 years. They will now be called transition payments. Cotton growers will continue to receive payments until—wait for it—the other new subsidy programs created in this report come online.

Perhaps, instead of western movies, I should have conjured up images of Shakespeare to describe this fiscal tragedy: a government-funded handout by another name is still a government-funded handout. It is also worth recalling that when originally created in 1996, in the 1996 farm bill, direct payments went by the name AMTA payments or Agricultural Market Transition Assistance payments.

It would appear that for some commodities, there will always be a transition from something to something else that will result in a taxpayer-funded handout.

According to the CBO score, the report actually takes the zero cost from the Senate proposal and the $443 million cost from the House proposal and compromises at a higher cost of $556 million in 2015. That is some compromise, to go well above both the House and the Senate numbers.

While the 10-year score for the transition payments in the report is lower than the House proposal, the first-year costs are actually higher. It is at this point that one can simply stop being surprised at what will happen when it comes to farm subsidies. Sadly, rather than a blockbuster of fiscal sanity, taxpayers are going to be saddled with what looks to be another rerun of missed opportunities to reform Federal agricultural policy. Although livestock groups have decried the absence of fixes to ongoing regulatory problems, and fiscal conservatives are chafing at the continued waste in spending, this report is still likely to be adopted.

There are other issues addressed, and I am pleased that some of this will end up on the President’s desk, but I cannot support this conference report. I will continue to push for real fiscal discipline and sound agricultural policy.

I should note I remember when I first came to Congress, or about 1 year after, I came to the floor of the House to rail against the farm bill at that time, the 2002 reauthorization. We had gone in the 1990s from the Freedom to Farm Act to the Farm Security Act. For those of us conservatives who talk about moving from freedom to security and all that means, that was actually in the title of the bill, and we haven’t improved much since that time. That was more than a decade ago. I have to say we should have made progress that was simply not made in this bill.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1
I rise today to discuss legislation that benefits all Americans, and particularly my home State of Ohio.

I appreciate Senator Flake’s comments. I admire his integrity and his focus on waste in government for the decade or so that I have known him—longer than that. I think he makes good points in this legislation. We come down on different sides in the end. Some of the things he had talked about, eliminating a lot of direct payments, were especially important and were made possible by legislation Senator Thune and I introduced.

This is an ongoing process to improve this bill every year. Every 5 years I am hopeful we can do that. I thank Senator Flake for his comments.

This bill is bipartisan. It reduces the deficit, it helps farms, helps families, helps our economy, and it helps our environment. It saves 23 billion taxpayer dollars. It provides certainty and support to one of the nation’s largest job creators, agriculture. Food and agriculture together are about one in seven jobs in Ohio. Agriculture-related businesses such as food processing, fertilizer and feed sales also are part of Ohio’s largest industry.

I thank Senator Cochran and Senator Stabenow for getting us to this point. They have been dogged in their support for our Nation’s farmers and our rural communities.

I have spoken with Ohio’s corn and soybean growers, as well as members of the Ohio Farm Bureau. On Friday I spoke and met with a group of 300 farmers, members of the Ohio Farmers Union, in Columbus. They have told me the importance of passing a 5-year farm bill. They especially emphasized the certainty, finally, of this bill. They can make the planning and planting decisions that business people and farmers need.

I have traveled across Ohio’s 88 counties and listened to farmers from Minster to Millersburg, who have told me they want a leaner, more efficient, and market-oriented farm safety net. Taxpayers deserve that too.

This bill is a reform farm bill. It eliminates direct farm payments, links crop insurance to conservation compliance, and it reforms our risk management programs—all important things in agriculture policy.

Ohio farmers were clear they wanted a farm bill that eliminated those direct payments and provided the risk management tools they needed when times are bad, but without the market-distorting policies that ensure farmers are planting for the program and not the market. Unfortunately, that was happening far too often.

In the last 6 or 7 years during my time in the Senate, leading up to the 2007–2008 farm bill and the 2013–2014 farm bill, I held some 25 roundtables with farmers and rural development people around my State. Working with my colleagues Senator Thune and Senator Durbin, we were able to streamline the farm safety net and make it more market oriented. Our bill, the Aggregate Risk and Revenue Management Act, is the basis for the Agricultural Risk Coverage Program, which was included in the commodity title. By reforming commodity programs to better align with the market instead of simply sending out checks—even when times were good and in many cases to people who don’t need them—this bill will provide farmers with increased risk management tools while improving the integrity of these programs.

The bill incorporates many portions of the Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act that I introduced. We know too many farmers struggle to find local markets for their products. Too many Ohioans are also unable to access fresh and affordable food. This legislation...
helps to put them together. Whether by improving Farmers Market Promotion program, or the Value Added Producers grant, this bill makes a significant investment in local and regional food production and marketing.

We know what has happened in rural America in terms of development. While agricultural prices have been such that farmers have been prosperous enough and that many in rural America are doing OK, rural development is still an issue as people move out of the these communities looking for jobs.

Whether it is bringing broadband to southeast Ohio or a water and sewer project in Henry County or a low-interest loan to Buckeye Power, this bill will make sure rural communities have the tools, the programs, and capital that they need to succeed.

My State is home to approximately 130 companies that use agricultural crops to make new biobased products, ranging from natural pet foods to paint, soy ink, toner, and plastics. Last week, USDA Secretary Vilsack and I toured a Columbus plastics factory, where they are working to make more of their products with biobased feedstocks instead of oil. We know what that means for renewable energy in our State. Our homegrown products can replace imported oil in our everyday products. This is a win for our local economies and for Ohio farmers.

We also know the importance of helping young farmers. If someone goes to any farm organization meeting, farmers are typically in their fifties, sixties, and seventies. We don’t see enough in their twenties, thirties, and forties. In this legislation, we will help to recruit, train, and retrain the next generation of farmers. That is part of this conference report. USDA needs to redouble its efforts, particularly in making capital available, and ensure that young and beginning farmers are able to succeed.

The bill streamlines and, in my opinion, improves USDA’s conservation programs. That is so important in the western Lake Erie basin of the Great Lakes. We have seen what has happened with algae blooms east of Toledo along places like Port Clinton and Sandusky. It is reaching almost as far east as Lorain.

We are seeing the problems it causes to water quality, recreation, tourism, and to development along the lake that is so important.

The House wanted, on the SNAP issue, to slash food stamps by $40 billion. We fought back. Our conference committee rejected every proposal passed by the House to cut off the assistance to workers and their families who have fallen on very hard times. When we couple what some in this body want to do with cutting unemployment, failing to extend unemployment insurance, failing to raise the minimum wage, making huge cuts in Food Stamp Programs, this was a huge victory in our conference committee.

This bill needs to pass. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to pass it and send it to President Obama so he can sign this bill at the end of this week or the beginning of next week.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1
Mr. President, I thank my friend from Oklahoma for yielding.

I wish to speak about the farm bill which, thanks to months and months and actually years of tireless work by Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Cochran, and other conferees on the bill, Democrats and Republicans in both Houses of Congress—thanks to all of this work, we are going to be able to pass this bill this afternoon.

There are 16 million people working in agriculture in our country. These workers and our rural communities are demanding the certainty which comes with a long-term bill. I am pleased to say we are passing not a 2-month extension, not a 10-minute extension, not an “I hope we get it done tomorrow before we leave town” extension but a genuine 5-year farm bill, which is going to give us a lot of certainty.

This bill eliminates direct payments made to farmers regardless of market conditions or what they planted and prioritizes what is working for producers; namely, crop insurance.

I have spoken on the floor before about Colorado’s battle against historic drought conditions. Some of our farmers lost half their corn yields in 2012. It is hard to imagine any business losing half its production in 1 year, but that is what has happened to many Colorado corn producers. Mr. President, 2013 was a little better for corn in our State, but it is hard to celebrate when producers still face significant losses fighting against this dry soil. The Crop Insurance Program is what is keeping these farmers and rural economies in business during these tough times. That is why it is a priority.

That is why we should have passed it 1 year ago, 2 years ago, but today we finally have the chance to do it.

Beyond crop insurance, another key highlight of this bill is its conservation title. I spoke last week on the floor about the revamped easement programs, and the important linkage between conservation practices and crop insurance which has been preserved in this conference agreement.

But beyond those highlights, the bill places a new emphasis on water conservation, which is so important to the West. Programs such as EQIP and the Regional Conservation Partnerships Program are going to be critical as the West faces record drought conditions brought on by climate change. New conservation tools, coupled with crop insurance to help hedge risk, will help our producers as we move into a new normal of a drier American West.

The conservation title programs help producers, but they also help the fish in our rivers and the wildlife on our lands.

Here is a great illustration of why sportsmen groups support this bill. This is a photo taken of my friend John Gale hunting pheasants in Yuma County, CO. The Conservation Reserve Program, CRP—a program reauthorized through this farm bill—provides important habitat for pheasants and other upland birds all across the country. The land surrounding this photo is all CRP land.

The program protects habitat but also helps hold highly erodible soils in place—such as the soil in Baca County, CO, where over 250,000 acres are enrolled in CRP. As the Presiding Officer may know, Baca County in many ways was the epicenter of the area devastated by the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Thanks to CRP, Baca County has weathered recent droughts a lot better than their forefathers did. Healthy grasslands, open landscapes, and abundant wildlife are a fundamental part of the West, to be a part of the West, and we need
to preserve those grasslands, those open spaces, and our species. That is what the conservation title of the farm bill does. A lot of people don’t know about it, but it is a very important part of the farm bill.

As a result, this farm bill is supported by over 250 conservation and environmental organizations—groups such as Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, National Wildlife Federation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the National Rifle Association, among others.

This legislation not only ensures we have healthy croplands and grasslands but also prioritizes the health of our forests—an issue of huge importance to western States as we deal with our massive wildfires.

Here we can see the Waldo Canyon fire from 2012. I chair the agriculture subcommittee on forestry, and we held a hearing on wildfires not too long ago. We looked at the terrible fires which have raged across the West, the budgetary nightmare they have caused, and Washington’s inability to understand what we are actually facing out there. My clearest takeaway from this hearing was that when it comes to our forests, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

If we prioritize the fuel mitigation work on the front end, we will save on fire suppression and recovery costs on the back end. If we don’t, we will break our budget and not preserve our forests. The Congressional Budget Office has found that for every $1 we invest in forest health, we save $5 in costs associated with wildfire.

This farm bill conference report makes these investments and gives the Forest Service new tools to treat areas in need of restoration and mitigation. This bill makes commonsense reforms, reduces the deficit, and will bring certainty and continued prosperity to rural America. It passed the House last week with broad bipartisan support.

I strongly urge a “yes” vote when we vote on the farm bill conference report later today. With all the uncertainty our farmers and ranchers are facing in these tough times, in these drought times, it is the least we can do.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1
Mr. President, today we will pass the final conference report for the farm bill, called the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013. This important bipartisan bill protects jobs and identifies new reforms that will ensure the long-term success of our Nation’s agricultural industry. I would like to thank Chairman Stabenow for her leadership and commitment to getting this bill passed. In addition, I would like to thank Senator Cochran for his work on this bipartisan bill.

The U.S. citrus industry is facing a devastating disease called greening, for which we know no cure and which kills the citrus tree within 5 years. The disease is spread by an insect called the Asian citrus psyllid. Citrus greening spreads quickly and, because of its dormancy period, has often already destroyed surrounding groves once it has been discovered.

In a 2012 report, University of Florida researchers found that the disease cost Florida's economy $4.5 billion and 8,000 jobs between 2006 and 2012. Florida was ground zero, but the disease is spreading to every citrus-producing State, including Texas, California, and Arizona. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has already affirmed this emergency with the citrus quarantine for Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Mississippi as well as parts of California, South Carolina, and Arizona in October 2012. If we don’t do something, soon we won’t have a domestic citrus industry.

The farm bill sets up a new research initiative especially for the citrus industry within the existing Special Crop Research Initiative, which is called the Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program. The primary goal of this program is to help fund research to find a cure to citrus greening and save the U.S. citrus industry.

The new Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program will ensure the close collaboration between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the citrus industry stakeholders, and the relevant entities engaged in scientific research under this program. The farm bill directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture to consult closely and regularly with the industry stakeholders in the formulation, consideration, and approval of research projects and grants performed under this program and will give great weight to input from these stakeholders. This close coordination will ensure the research program will advance the research for citrus greening and other threats to the U.S. citrus industry.

Because of the devastating nature of the citrus greening disease, I worked to make sure the citrus program established guaranteed funding in the farm bill. Senator Stabenow agreed and worked with other members of the farm bill conference to include $125 million in mandatory funding for the citrus research program. Money in this grant program will go toward scientific research aimed at addressing diseases, domestic and invasive pests, and other challenges to the U.S. citrus industry, helping to also disseminate the research findings to growers.

In this age of economic uncertainty, Congress should be doing everything it can to improve our economic situation. In this case, we are doing just that by saving an industry that is vital to not only Florida’s economy but to Texas, California, Louisiana, Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, and the Nation as a whole.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1
Mr. President, while this is far from a perfect bill, I am pleased that the Senate will pass the Agriculture Act of 2014. This legislation—a result of more than 2 years of deliberation—reaches a compromise that protects small farmers, fights hunger, and saves taxpayers more than $16 billion.

I thank Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran, along with leaders in the House of Representatives, for their hard work in reaching this agreement.

This year's farm bill makes targeted investments in our Nation's agricultural and nutrition sectors while eliminating some of the wasteful subsidies that cost taxpayers billions of dollars. The bill supports our rural economies and helps protect our farmland and forests for generations to come. And it makes historic investments in fruit and vegetable farming and in organic agriculture.

During negotiations on this bill, I worked with Chairwoman Stabenow and Senator Leahy to ensure that new dairy programs will adequately protect New Hampshire's small farms, which are struggling to deal with high feed costs and volatility in milk prices. I am hopeful that the new dairy program will provide stability for New Hampshire's dairies and create an environment in which these family-owned businesses that are so important to our State's economy can grow and thrive.

I am particularly pleased that the conference report includes language nearly identical to my bipartisan legislation, the Oilheat Efficiency, Renewable Fuel Research and Jobs Training Act.

This important provision will reauthorize the widely supported National Oilheat Research Alliance, NORA, the oilheat industry's national program for research and development, consumer education and technical training. It will allow the industry to continue funding vital national oilheat efforts for 5 years—at no cost to local, State or Federal governments.

Consumers will benefit from the development of improved and efficient equipment, increased safety through technical training, and the availability of up-to-date information regarding safety practices and fuel conservation. Importantly, these objectives will be achieved without raising consumer costs. NORA provides a direct path for responsible, domestically produced and efficient energy consumption without raising consumer costs. Its inclusion in the farm bill is good for consumers, American businesses, and the environment and will provide tangible value for the country for many years to come.

I also thank Chairwoman Stabenow and Senator Wyden for working with me to preserve the Environmental Protection Agency's treatment of regulating forest roads as nonpoint sources through State-adopted best-management practices. This approach will allow for the continued sustainable development of working forests in New Hampshire.

In New Hampshire, more than 100,000 people rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program each month to keep from going hungry. The farm bill reauthorizes SNAP and other critical programs that help millions of American families put food on the table. The bill also contains important reforms that will provide food for our Nation's food banks and improve low-income Americans' access to fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.

The legislation also improves consumer access to local foods with increased funding for farmers' markets. In recent years, interest in supporting local agriculture has grown significantly. New Hampshire currently has more than 70 farmers markets across the State, with nearly 30 open through the winter. Americans want to know where their food comes from, and farmers want to be able to sell their products in their communities.
The farm bill significantly increases funding for programs that support small and beginning farmers, including greater support for grant programs that enable small farmers to invest in improving the value of their products.

One dairy farmer from Landaff, NH, accessed these programs to help her grow her cheese-making business. Because of the grant, she was able to hire two full-time employees and several part-time employees, and her second-generation farm now sells award-winning cheeses in stores and restaurants around the country. These are the kind of job-creating investments we need to be making in rural America.

However, while the legislation implements some reforms to subsidy programs that will save taxpayer dollars, it does not go far enough in cutting wasteful spending.

Senator McCain and I worked to repeal a duplicative catfish inspection program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which has already cost taxpayers $20 million over the past 5 years and has yet to inspect a single fish. Unfortunately, this bill does nothing to end this unnecessary and wasteful program.

I am also disappointed that this bill continues the Federal Sugar Program with no changes. Taxpayers were forced to pay nearly $300 million last year to bail out the sugar industry, in addition to the $14 billion this wasteful program has cost consumers and businesses over the past 5 years. The high price supports and strict trade restrictions continued with no reform in this bill will ensure that sugar remains the most tightly controlled commodity in America.

This bill also continues the wasteful practice of providing subsidies to large and wealthy farm businesses with no meaningful payment limits. Some programs in the bill will allow huge farming operations to receive unlimited subsidies, and the new crop insurance program includes no individual caps or means testing requirements.

The Senate-passed bill would have reduced subsidy payments for the wealthiest farmers, but this provision was removed from the final conference report. And there was no consideration of implementing a provision I offered with Senator Toomey to place a reasonable cap on crop insurance subsidies that would have saved taxpayers $3.4 billion over the next 10 years.

As we confront our Federal debt and deficit and as millions of families across the country are tightening their belts, we cannot justify unlimited subsidies for wealthy farmers and giant agribusinesses.

While I will continue working to end wasteful farm bill programs and protect taxpayers, I support this legislation because it supports New Hampshire farmers and our State’s rural communities, reduces the deficit, invests in healthy foods, and helps prevent low-income Americans from going hungry.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1
Mr. President, reauthorization of the farm bill presented an opportunity to make much needed changes in our agriculture policy to rein in taxpayer subsidies for big agribusiness, support the growth of small farms and local food systems, and ensure that our constituents in need do not go hungry. Unfortunately, despite the extraordinary efforts of Chairwoman Stabenow, the reforms included in the bill before us today fall much too short.

Most troubling is that the bill cuts more than $8 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. I cannot support reducing hunger assistance for the most vulnerable Americans while creating new crop insurance programs, increasing crop insurance spending by $5.7 billion, and continuing to subsidize the wealthiest farmers. As such, I will oppose this bill.

The nutrition cuts are particularly challenging in my State, where roughly 1 in 6 Rhode Islanders receive SNAP benefits—a reflection of the challenging economic times in our State, where the unemployment rate remains above 9 percent, the highest in the country. According to a survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, more than 15 percent of Rhode Islanders are food insecure, meaning they do not always know where they will find their next meal and thus are at risk of hunger. And this number has grown over the last 5 years, from 58,000 households to more than 66,500 today. Many local food banks like the Rhode Island Community Food Bank—are struggling to keep pace as the need for food assistance grows. The SNAP cuts in this bill cannot be easily made up by food banks and other charitable organizations even with increased funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

While the conference agreement does not include the far more damaging policy changes proposed by the House, it will reduce benefits for about 850,000 low-income households by an average of $90 a month, according to the Congressional Budget Office. This is on top of the across-the-board cut that hit all SNAP households last November when the benefit boost under the 2009 Recovery Act expired. When these cuts went into effect, families of 4 lost an average of $36 a month, while single-person households lost an average of $11. Without the Recovery Act boost, SNAP benefits will average less than $1.40 per person per meal in 2014. Now we are asking some of our most vulnerable constituents to get by with even less—all while growing the safety net for the wealthiest farmers and the crop insurance industry. This is unacceptable.

As I noted, these remain trying economic times, with many Americans still struggling to find work or working low-wage jobs that do not provide the resources necessary to meet basic needs like food. This is not the time to cut a lifeline benefit like SNAP. I am deeply disappointed that some of the savings generated in this bill were not reinvested into SNAP to help meet the need for food assistance across this country.

Unfortunately, the conference agreement also maintains the duplicative USDA catfish program—a program that both the House and the Senate have voted to repeal, the Government Accountability Office has called wasteful, and the administration proposed defunding in its fiscal year 2014 budget. This program would require seafood processors to comply with USDA regulations for catfish while the FDA would continue to oversee inspections for all other seafood. According to the GAO, repealing this program would avoid duplication of Federal programs and save taxpayers millions of dollars annually. We should be finding ways to make government processes more efficient, not less.

While I am unable to support the conference report because of the deep cuts to SNAP and inadequate reforms to crop insurance and farm subsidy...
payments, I would like to acknowledge several provisions in this bill, including several that will support the development of local and regional food systems and improve the affordability of and access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income families. I am particularly pleased that the bill includes many measures from a bill that I cosponsored, Senator Brown’s Local Farms, Food and Jobs Act, that will increase funding for specialty crop block grants to support research and promotion of fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops. Another measure is the enhancement of the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program to aid direct producer-to-consumer marketing channels and local food sales to retailers and institutions.

The bill also allows Community Supported Agriculture operations to redeem SNAP benefits and creates Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grants, providing $100 million over 5 years for a national pilot to incentivize the purchase of fruits and vegetables at farmers markets by SNAP participants. A similar program has already been successfully implemented in Rhode Island. Farm Fresh Rhode Island runs the “Bonus Bucks” program where every $5 in SNAP benefits spent at a farmers market allows low-income individuals to receive an additional $2 to spend on fresh vegetables, fruit, eggs, fish, meats, and cheeses produced by local farmers and fishermen. Within the first year that “Bonus Bucks” was implemented, Farm Fresh Rhode Island saw a 675 percent increase in the amount of SNAP spent at their markets. In 2013, 22 Rhode Island farmers markets up from 8 in 2008, have booths that can accept EBT cards.

It is exciting to see the ingenuity of our States replicated at the national level in ways to help ensure that low-income families have access to nutritious local foods. These types of programs also help grow local food economies by encouraging purchases from local producers. A win-win.

The bill also makes several changes to enhance and promote conservation. Requiring farmers to comply with conservation practices in order to receive taxpayer-supported subsidies on crop insurance will help further the conservation of natural resources and ensure that our farmers remain good stewards of the land.

Thankfully, the conferees rejected a harmful amendment included in the House bill that would have had far-reaching consequences by prohibiting States from regulating agricultural products within their jurisdiction. This bill also makes it a federal crime to attend or bring a child under the age of 16 to an animal fighting event—a slightly modified version of a bill I cosponsored that was introduced by Senator Blumenthal.

The conference report also includes legislation to reauthorize the National Oilheat Research Alliance, NORA. I have cosponsored bills to reauthorize this program during the last several Congresses and am glad it will now become law. NORA seeks to strengthen and improve the oil heating industry through education and training and improving home heating efficiency. With more than 1 in 3 Rhode Islanders dependent on fuel oil to heat their homes this winter and heating oil prices on the rise, it is important to reauthorize NORA.

While Chairwoman Stabenow’s efforts helped to ensure some positive provisions and reforms, the bill simply does not go far enough. It wisely eliminates direct payments but restores some of those cuts by creating new crop insurance programs, while not going far enough to limit commodity and crop insurance subsidy payouts. The bill does not even include an amendment that I cosponsored and was passed in the Senate to set income limitations for crop insurance making a very modest 5 percent reduction for farmers making over $750,000 annually.

We must do more to ensure that farm subsidies are available to the small and medium-sized farms that need it most and rein in the taxpayer subsidies to large, wealthy farming operations. And we certainly should not be paying for expensive farm programs by cutting SNAP, thereby placing additional burdens on those who are struggling to make ends meet.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1
Mr. President, I rise in support of the bipartisan farm bill conference agreement before us today. This 5 year bill provides certainty to both the producer and the consumer. It’s a jobs bill supporting 16 million jobs across the Nation. It also is a reform bill that cracks down on fraud and abuse and ends direct payments.

Agriculture is the No. 1 industry in Maryland. We have 12,800 farms and 350,000 Marylanders employed in the industry. Poultry is Maryland's largest agricultural industry followed by nursery grown plants and dairy.

Maryland's Eastern Shore is home to a $1.4 billion poultry industry responsible for over 5,000 jobs. There are nearly 1,000 chicken farms and three processing plants. In fact, one in seven jobs on the Eastern Shore is poultry related.

For poultry growers, this bill continues the supplemental agriculture insurance assistance which provides disaster aid. This program lapsed in 2011, and this bill makes the program retroactive to 2012. This means Maryland's chicken farmers will continue to get disaster payments. The bill also continues to allow farm operating loans for poultry growers who do not qualify for operating credit at other lenders.

This farm bill requires country-of-origin labeling, which I have long supported. Every consumer has the right to know where their food comes from on their dinner table. I acknowledge there are some in the poultry industry that oppose these requirements. I think it is the right thing to do.

For Maryland’s 500 dairy farms, the bill creates two new price and income support programs. The Dairy Production Margin Protection Program takes into consideration the high price of feed costs. This is a first for dairy programs and a win for dairy farmers struggling to survive with escalating variable and fixed operation costs. The premium cost to participate in this program will be very low for Maryland’s small dairy farmers. The Dairy Production Donation Program will guarantee a profit for dairy farmers when the market becomes over saturated.

This legislation is important to the Chesapeake Bay conservation efforts. It includes the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, a new competitive program. The bill provides $100 million annually for this program. The Bay Watershed will compete with eight other regions for these critical conservation dollars. This bill also ties farmers’ conservation compliance to crop insurance. This means if your land is not compliant, you will not receive a premium subsidy.

For sugar producers and refiners, the bill continues the existing Sugar Program. The U.S. Sugar Program supports over 140,000 American jobs, including 500 jobs at Domino Sugar located at the Port of Baltimore. Significant reforms to this program will put these jobs at risk and they may be shipped overseas.

This bill helps Maryland’s growing specialty crop and organic farmers by gradually increasing specialty crops block grants from $55 million a year in 2014 to $85 million in 2018. Maryland receives more than $1.7 million from this program. The bill also increases organic research funding to assist farmers transitioning to organics.

The bill makes modest reforms to the food aid program following a similar path as the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014. I support the reforms in the bill and believe this is another step in the right direction to allow more locally purchased food.

Finally, I would like to address food stamps, now called SNAP. I am for food stamps and always will be. We have approximately 800,000 Marylanders receiving food stamp benefits. In November, I visited...
the Maryland Food Bank with my House Democratic colleagues. We announced that we were standing up for SNAP and opposing the House’s harmful cuts to the program.

During my visit, I met Tracey Coleman, a hard-working Marylander whose husband was laid off through no fault of his own when the steel plant in Baltimore closed last year. Tracey has three kids, including a daughter with special needs. She shouldn’t have to choose between her son’s asthma medication and a family meal. Tracey had nowhere else to turn. She signed up for SNAP benefits to keep food on the dinner table for her family.

I personally thank Senator Stabenow for working so hard to protect SNAP families in this bill. She fought off the House Republicans that wanted to gut the program, cutting $40 billion from SNAP and axing SNAP benefits for 4 million people, including putting 77,000 Marylanders at risk. I am happy to report no American will lose their benefits under this bill—not one. Most important to me, no Marylander will see their benefits reduced from the reforms in this bill.

I know some of my colleagues are going to vote against the bill because of the changes to the standard utility allowance calculation that will reduce benefits for their constituents. I understand. But what we all have to understand is that a compromise is a compromise and Senator Stabenow fended off the worst. I was recently in her shoes negotiating the appropriations bill with the House. It is tough.

I commend Senators Stabenow and Cochran for their hard work on this bill. I urge all my colleagues to support this bill. It is good news for American farmers and consumers.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1
Mr. President, today I will support final passage of the conference report of the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013. The conference report is particularly important to my home State of Michigan, where agriculture, the State’s second-largest industry, supports one in four jobs.

While the legislation presented contains many laudable provisions, I am deeply disappointed that the final conference report includes cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP. SNAP benefits provide nutrition assistance to millions of families. It is distressing that we are reducing food stamp support for those families.

While I oppose the SNAP cuts, the positives of this legislation are important enough that it deserves support. I applaud the work of my colleague from Michigan, Senator Stabenow, whose leadership as the chair of the Agriculture Committee helped craft this important compromise. This legislation makes critical reforms, reduces our deficit, and brings certainty to farmers and business owners.

This legislation is more than just a farm bill. This legislation covers conservation, nutrition assistance, crop insurance, international food aid, forestry and so much more.

This legislation makes significant modifications to help farmers better manage their risk by eliminating direct payments to farmers and replacing it with two new risk management programs. This will ensure farmers receive support only when there is a drop in farmers’ income. This legislation also creates a new and voluntary insurance program to protect dairy farmers from losses. It also includes valuable reforms to disaster assistance. Of note is the creation of a permanent livestock disaster assistance program and retroactive coverage for orchardists and nursery growers who have recently been affected by droughts and winter storms.

Importantly, this legislation also strengthens agriculture research programs, such as the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. This investment in specialty crops is vital to Michigan, which leads the nation in growing a wide variety of specialty crops including tart cherries, blueberries, cucumbers, dry black and red beans, and cranberries.

I am pleased the conference agreement retains important conservation provisions that will help protect our water and air quality, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and improve flood control. The agreement consolidates 23 existing conservation programs into 13 programs which should streamline implementation. Further, conservation compliance is tied to crop insurance, which should ensure that basic conservation practices are implemented more broadly. Conservation provisions in the farm bill will help prevent soil erosion, reduce water runoff and pollution, and shift production away from sensitive lands. In addition, the conference agreement retains the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which should benefit Great Lakes water quality and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

The bill also includes a 1-year extension of the Payments in Lieu of Taxes—PILT—Program, which provides funding to rural communities to help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable Federal lands within their boundaries. Each year, Michigan typically receives about $2.5 million under PILT, funding that is vital for providing essential services such as education, law enforcement, and emergency response.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1
Mr. President, I too rise to speak on the farm bill.

Similar to many Nebraskans, I am relieved that a final conference agreement has been reached and will provide much needed certainty for both producers and consumers. This legislation accomplishes a great deal. It provides risk management and disaster assistance programs. It promotes environmental stewardship. It bolsters export opportunities. It encourages rural development, advances research, helps beginning farmers and ranchers, and delivers nutrition assistance to our needy families.

While the bill is not perfect, it is the result of compromise and a long collaborative legislative process.

One of the most challenging issues for lawmakers was addressing nutrition assistance programs, which comprise 80 percent of the farm bill's total spending. With one in every seven Americans receiving supplemental nutrition assistance, it is important to strengthen the program's integrity and its accountability, while better targeting programs to serve those in need.

I am also pleased the bill empowers States to help capable adults enroll in work programs to reduce reliance on taxpayer assistance. The bill provides tools to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse, including cracking down on trafficking through data mining, terminal ID, and other measures.

While these are all steps in the right direction, it is disappointing that the bill will not achieve additional savings from nutrition programs, which are projected to cost more than $756 billion over the next decade.

True farm programs—the commodity programs and crop insurance—only comprise about 14 percent of all of the farm bill spending, but they account for more than half of the savings under this proposed bill. In fact, the commodity title contributes more savings than any other title in the entire farm bill.

The legislation makes significant reforms to farm policy. Direct payments are repealed and replaced with risk management that offers protection only when warranted by significant price or revenue declines. In Nebraska, agriculture is our No. 1 industry, and it is one of which we are very proud. Our farmers and ranchers take on an enormous amount of risk. They endure the elements every day as they work to feed the world and responsibly take care of our natural resources.

I am pleased this farm bill maintains and strengthens one of the most important risk management tools for our farmers, and that is crop insurance. This is a very successful public-private partnership that helps farmers invest in their own risk management by purchasing insurance policies so they are protected from adverse weather or market conditions.

This legislation also provides needed disaster assistance to livestock producers. Unfortunately, the Livestock Forage Program and the Livestock Indemnity Program both expired in 2011 under the last farm bill. In 2012, livestock producers experienced the most devastating loss of pasture, rangeland, and forage in decades due to widespread drought, affecting approximately 80 percent of our country.

Then, in October of 2013, an unexpected early fall blizzard killed more than 20,000 cattle, sheep, horses, and bison in the Dakotas and in my State of Nebraska. While those affected by these hardships have been without assistance for more than 2 years, this farm bill will now help producers to rebuild those herds and sustain their ranching operations.

I also appreciate that this farm bill continues our commitment to strong conservation programs. The bill consolidates and streamlines those programs, providing landowners with incentives and assistance to protect and improve our land, our water, and our air.
Agriculture continues to be a bright spot for U.S. trade, thanks in part to the successful export promotion programs, and those are reauthorized in this bill as well. An independent study conducted for USDA in 2010 found that for every dollar expended by government and industry on market development, U.S. food and agricultural exports increased by $35. Through the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program, we can expect increased demand for U.S.-grown agricultural products and commodities.

This farm bill also continues investment in rural development, providing assistance to communities to build that very critical infrastructure and access to credit to help grow small businesses.

Also supported by this farm bill are critical agricultural research initiatives which allow American producers to innovate, to become more efficient and productive with fewer and fewer resources. Moreover, the bill also provides support for developing technologies that reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Finally, this bill provides some needed regulatory relief for the agricultural industry. I am very pleased the bill includes an amendment I offered to fix bureaucratic hurdles impacting farmers’ access to seeds. This bipartisan amendment, cosponsored by Senator Carper, ensures that EPA does not treat biotech seeds as pesticides when those shipments are imported.

I was disappointed, though, that the conference did not include language to address one of the worst regulatory challenges confronting farmers: EPA’s overregulation of on-farm fuel storage under its Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Program.

The House farm bill included an SPCC relief provision, and the Senate unanimously passed a similar amendment which I cosponsored to reduce farmers’ SPCC compliance burdens during consideration of the Water Resources Development Act. There is bipartisan agreement on both sides of the dome that this regulation needs to be fixed. The farm bill did provide the perfect opportunity for getting this relief enacted into law, but that chance was missed. However, I stand ready to work with my colleagues to ensure we don’t miss another opportunity to address this issue—to fix this issue—and we can do that during the WRDA Conference.

As I said, this bill is not perfect, but on balance this farm bill goes a long way in promoting opportunity and providing certainty for both producers and consumers. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting the final passage of the farm bill.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.
Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in asking for the passage of the farm bill that we are going to have a vote on shortly. I thank my colleague from Michigan, the Chair of the Agriculture Committee, for her unbelievable work on this very important policy for America. I know she understands these issues well because, while everybody thinks of Michigan as a manufacturing State, it also is a very big agricultural State. We share a lot of the same crops, being kind of on a northern plateau: apples and wine and a variety of others. I certainly thank her for her help and support in getting an important new program in our school lunches for very nutritious peas and lentils, called pulse crops, and to thank her for her input.

I rise today to talk about the importance of the farm bill, because it is a jobs bill for our Nation. Two years ago I joined my colleague Senator Johanns from Nebraska and sent a bipartisan letter with 44 senators saying it was time to act on the farm bill because we thought it was so important for our economy as we were still struggling coming out of a recession. Today it is finally here, that opportunity to put all of that hard work into a bill that goes to the President’s desk.

Agriculture employs 16 million Americans, and it produces exports worth $115 billion of agricultural products to markets around the world. I do not think we always focus on that. A lot of times we come out here and we talk about the individual crops in our State or the individual focus. But what we really need to understand is it is a very big product for the United States.

We live in a very competitive global economy. One of the biggest advantages we have in this global economy is that we in the United States of America know how to grow things. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce CEO Tom Donohue put it best in a speech he gave about the global marketplace last year. He said:

You play to your strength. You leverage your advantages and then you find ways to improve them.

And one of the greatest strengths in America is agriculture.

Mr. Donohue said those remarks as an example of what innovation is driving in American agriculture. He is absolutely right, because not only do we know how to grow things but we also know how to innovate. There is a lot of innovation going on in the ag economy. In fact, there are some people in the Pacific Northwest who say now there is as much investment going into new innovations in agriculture as there was recently in high tech or even green energy. So people get it. It is a great investment.

I have seen in Washington State cutting-edge research done at our lab in Prosser for new wheat rotation crops in the Palouse, to savvy entrepreneurs making connections like getting Washington cherries into the new Korean market. So simply put, this is a growing, growing opportunity for the U.S. economy.

American farmers and businesses are seeing demands for their products rise on two fronts: First, American consumers want to buy their products directly from the farms in their communities, so that means the farms are creating products for exactly what their end customer wants. Because they are doing that, they can make more money on delivering to the end customer exactly the kind of product they want.

Secondly, a rising middle class in places such as Asia to South America wants to use their new-found spending power on purchasing our products as
well. So this farm bill helps on both of those fronts. Again, thanks to the chairwoman from Michigan. It helps get more goods to the market, whether that is a farmer’s market around the corner from your local supermarket, or whether that is a new market in South Korea.

In 2030, China’s middle class will have 1 billion people. That is up from 150 million today. India’s middle class will grow by more than 800 percent. Maybe because we sit on the Pacific, just like the Presiding Officer, he knows how important it is to get products to those marketplaces.

In 2012, the United Nations reported that the world will need 70 percent more food by the middle of the century. This is a tremendous opportunity but only if Congress acts today and passes the farm bill. We need to maintain our investment in research and exports so American farmers can thrive and win in the expanding global marketplace. I am confident if we do that, our farmers and our businesses—and we make sure that they have a level playing—will win.

But other countries are playing for keeps too. Every farmer around the world wants access to that rising middle class. The European Union spent $700 million on export promotion for food products in 2011. That is nearly three times as much as America spent. China is planning to boost its agricultural investment over the next decade. It is a sentiment that I heard in October when I visited one of our wholesalers when he was talking to an overseas client. He was talking about export and agricultural leaders in Washington State and how other countries were starting to use particularly the apple market to try to open new opportunities.

That is why we need to increase opportunities within the farm bill and to move forward on trade deals that help open the door to new agricultural markets. That will help unleash an entrepreneurial spirit we need to be aggressive about. Many people have heard of Walla Walla—or maybe you have not or maybe you thought that was a term. But Walla Walla is a great community in the southeast corner of our State with 30,000 people. It is deeply tied to the global economy. It has wine and wheat and peas and lentils. The farmers there, I know, are very appreciative of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. They thanked me many times for making sure that got passed. I can tell you that many of those farmers went to Bogota to try to sell wheat to the growing Colombian middle class. That is what entrepreneurship in America is all about.

So Congress must not dampen our entrepreneurial spirit. Farmers need to start this season and make sure they can put long-term plans in place. Then the seeds that will be planted, the fields that will be harvested, the crops that will be shipped, the smart, targeted investment toward those new international markets will be done. That is what this farm bill is about.

The bill, I can tell you, is a compromise. Again, I thank the chairwoman for her hard work, because I know how hard she worked on forging those compromises. I can tell you that it cuts SNAP far more than I would have cut it. I was one of 26 senators who voted for the amendment by my colleague from New York offered to restore those cuts. But it is time we move forward.

I want to take a second to talk about three reasons why people should be for this farm bill. First, as I talked about, it continues to expand the export programs that are so important for America’s new markets. While I might have been for a more robust program, some of my colleagues obviously have not quite understood why this is such a great benefit to market U.S. products around the globe. I think some people think of big global corporations and things; why do we need that?

Well, I can tell you, when I am talking about apples or cherries or pears, these are not big corporations. They are a collection of hundreds or thousands of farmers working together. When MAP helps target getting people in the Asian market to consume those products, it is a win-win situation for America.

Secondly, this bill funds research, making our crops stronger and healthier and more competitive.

Third, it starts initiatives on products such as a pulse crop that I think can be so beneficial to us over the long run with new, as I said, school lunches, but just healthier products.
Our new farm bill will do the research on specialty crops that are so important for us in the Pacific Northwest. This is the first time in this farm bill that the reauthorization makes long-term investments in specialty crop block grant programs and specialty crop research initiatives. Again, I thank the Senator from Michigan for her help on that, understanding how important these specialty crops are.

I think everybody in America and around the world knows the brand of Washington apples. I can tell you, I have been in the Chinese marketplace and seen how people took off the Washington label, particularly on Fuji apples, and tried to stick it on other apples, because they knew if that sticker was on that apple, everybody in China would consume those apples even though they were not really Washington Fuji.

So what this specialty research initiative does is say we are not going to let apples and pears and cherries basically constantly fall off the radar as it relates to research, but they will be a permanent part of a program for research and have a block grant program so they can basically continue to do the research that is needed.

Again, if any of my colleagues have ever had a chance to visit the research facilities within their State, they will know what I am talking about. If they haven’t, they should go and do it.

But when we are fighting against or upon a competitive field with Israel, China, or anybody else when it comes to apples, we constantly have to answer questions about phytosanitary issues, and we have to constantly talk about ways we can make sure we gain access to those marketplaces. Science and research are the only ways we can fight some of these trade barriers that exist when our products can’t get into those countries. So we need to make sure we continue to fight that.

Lastly, I am very pleased about pulse crops—peas, lentils, things like chickpeas. I am sure a lot of people ate a lot of hummus over the weekend while they were watching the Super Bowl and the Seattle Seahawks victory. Hummus is a crop that has exploded 500 percent in the last 15 years. It is definitely a product people have been consuming all over the world for a long time, but we in the United States are starting to consume more of it. The fact that product has had such a huge increase has given our farmers in Washington State great opportunity. But this product is also a very healthy product and one that we fought hard to make sure would be included in a new school lunch program, something where students could get access to a high-protein, high-fiber product that certainly is more affordable for our schools. With the research that is going to go on on pulse crop derivatives and the fact that school lunches are now going to have the opportunity to serve pulse crops more aggressively, we are very excited about this farm bill.

I thank my colleagues in the Senate, Senators Crapo and Risch. I also thank my colleagues from South Dakota and North Dakota for helping because both States are very big on these pulse crops. They certainly helped to make sure this stayed in the conference report.

To all of my colleagues, please vote for a bill that will really help our economy, will help us tackle the growing middle class around the world and keep America putting great products on those market shelves and help create more jobs in the United States. I yield the floor.

Source: Congressional Record—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710
POST-VISIT LESSON: THE FARM BILL

Post-Visit Lesson Introduction
During the post-visit lesson, students will reflect on their experience participating in the SIM and compare the views of the senator that they portrayed with their own personal beliefs. Students will also examine the provisions of the Farm Bill in more detail and analyze how the bill impacts their daily life.

Lesson Learning Objectives
By the end of this lesson students will be able to:
• Compare and contrast the senator that they represented in the SIM with their own personal opinions
• Research and analyze how different pieces of the Farm Bill of 2014 affect specific groups within our country and their everyday life

Essential Questions
• How do your interests and those of your state influence your senator’s decision-making in Congress?
• In what ways does the Farm Bill affect individual citizens on a daily basis?

LESSON DURATION
50 minutes

Key Vocabulary
• See Farm Bill Vocabulary Worksheet on page 10 from the Pre-Visit Lesson

Enduring Understandings
• Senators must take into account their own personal beliefs as well as those of their party and constituents when voting in Congress.
• Our agricultural system is directly connected to the social and economic well-being of the nation.
## Post-Visit Lesson Plan

TOTAL TIME: 50 minutes

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<th>TIME</th>
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| 10 minutes | Warm-Up           | Students will reflect on their experiences participating in the SIM, first individually by completing a 3-2-1, and then as a whole class. Students should complete the following reflection activity:  
- List 3 ways in which your personal opinions are similar or different from those of the senator that you portrayed.  
- List 2 ways in which the final version of the SIM bill reflected the opinions of that senator.  
- List 1 provision that you feel is the most important part of the Farm Bill and explain your opinion. |
| 25 minutes | Research Activity | Using knowledge from the pre-visit lesson, the SIM, and other supporting resources, students will draw conclusions about ways in which the Farm Bill affects their everyday life. The handout provided lists the main titles of the Farm Bill. In pairs or groups of three, assign students one of the titles and have them research that particular part of the Farm Bill. (Teachers may want to give more advanced students the more challenging provisions.) On the Farm Bill: Analyzing Provisions worksheet there is a space for them to take notes and analyze how their part affects specific groups within our nation as well as their everyday life. Have students write their findings on a piece of poster paper. |
| 15 minutes | Closing Learning Walk | Give students an opportunity to walk around the classroom and look at what other students researched. Encourage students to add their own ideas of how the provisions affect everyday life as they walk around. |
KEY AREAS OF THE FARM BILL

SNAP Benefits
The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program known as SNAP is a Federal food assistance program. Through SNAP, low-income individuals and families receive food stamps to purchase food. The Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system is currently used to automatically deposit food stamps onto a card that can be used like a debit card to purchase eligible food items at participating retailers.

Crop Insurance and Subsidy Programs
Crop insurance allows farmers and ranchers to protect themselves against the loss of their crops due to natural disaster or because of a drop in the price of their commodity. Subsidy programs are paid by the government to farmers to supplement their income and control the cost and supply of the commodity.

Conservation Programs
The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Department of Agriculture provides assistance to agricultural producers so they are able to create and continue conservation improvements on their land. The NRCS also provides support to landowners to help them conserve agricultural lands, wetlands, grasslands, and forestlands through easements.
FARM BILL: ANALYZING PROVISIONS

On this worksheet, write the area of the Farm Bill you’ve been assigned to research next to “Title.” Record your notes as you do your research and answer the questions below.

TITLE: __________________________________________

Notes:

What groups within our nation are impacted by this provision? Explain.

How does this impact my everyday life?
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

The pre-visit and post-visit lessons along with the SIM, itself, are aligned to the following Common Core and Massachusetts standards.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

U.S. United States and Massachusetts Government and Civic Life

HSS.8.T3.02 Examine the relationship between the three branches of government (the checks and balances system).

HSS.8.T3.05 Describe the role of political parties at the state and national levels.

HSS.8.T4.03 Distinguish among civic, political, and private life.

HSS.8.T4.04 Define and provide examples of fundamental principles and values of American political and civic life (e.g., liberty, the common good, justice, equality, tolerance, law and order, due process, rights of individuals, diversity, civic unity, patriotism, constitutionalism, popular sovereignty, and representative democracy).

HSS.8.T4.05 Describe how a democracy provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process through elections, political parties, and interest groups.

HSS.8.T4.07 Apply knowledge of leadership and the qualities of good leaders to evaluate political leaders at the community, the state and the national levels.

HSS.8.T4.08 Explain the importance of individuals working cooperatively with their elected leaders.

HSS.8.T4.10 Analyze issues involving liberty in conflict with equality or authority, individual rights in conflict with the common good, or majority rule in conflict with minority rights.

HSS.8.T4.12 Examine the role of political protest in a democracy.

U.S. History II Standards

USII.12 Analyze the important policies, institutions, and personalities of the New Deal era.

USII.30 Describe some of the major economic and social trends of the late 20th century

American Government Standards

USG.2.8 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues concerning foundational ideas or values in tension or conflict.

USG.3.12 Use a variety of sources, including newspapers and internet websites, to identify current state and local legislative issues and examine the influence on the legislative process of political parties, interest groups, grassroots organizations, lobbyists, public opinion, the news media, and individual voters.

USG.5.10 Practice civic skills and dispositions by participating in activities such as simulated public hearings, mock trials, and debates.

High School Elective: United States Government and Politics

GOV.T1.10 Argue and defend positions on issues in which foundational ideas or values are in tension or conflict (e.g., liberty in conflict with equality or authority, individual rights in conflict with national or community interests or perceptions of the common good, or majority rule in conflict with minority rights).

GOV.T4.06 Compare the debate over a public policy issue from the past and a contemporary one and evaluate the role of political parties, interest groups and media in influencing public opinion.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

English Language Arts Writing Grades 11–12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.1.A Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s); distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.1.B Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.1.C Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT
(Continued)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.1.D
Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.1.E
Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.6
Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

English Language Arts Speaking and Listening
Grades 11–12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.1
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.1.A
Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.1.B
Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.1.C
Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.1.D
Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.3
Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Grades 11–12 Literacy in Social Studies

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11–12.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11–12.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11–12.6
Evaluate authors’ differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors’ claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11–12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11–12.9
Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11–12.10
By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS
Learning and Innovation Skills

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Reason Effectively
- Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation

Use Systems Thinking
- Analyze how parts of a whole interact with each other to produce overall outcomes in complex systems
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT
(Continued)

Make Judgments and Decisions
• Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs
• Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view
• Synthesize and make connections between information and arguments
• Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis
• Reflect critically on learning experiences and processes

Solve Problems
• Identify and ask significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions

Communication and Collaboration
Communicate Clearly
• Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts
• Listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions

Collaborate with Others
• Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams
• Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal
• Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

THE FARM BILL RESOURCES
Resources related to the Farm Bill

USDA 2014 Farm Bill Highlights

Progress on 2014 Farm Bill Implementation

FDR Address on Agricultural Adjustment Act, 1935

USDA Definition of Specialty Crops

USDA Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)
https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/cool

USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap

Article on Crop Insurance and Specialty Crops

Farm Bill Conference Report—House of Representatives

Farm Bill Conference Report—Senate
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/senate-section/article/S710-1

Additional Speeches on the Farm Bill in the House of Representatives
https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/02/04/house-section/article/H1552-3


GENERAL RESOURCES
The following general resources provide more information and curriculum about the U.S. Congress and the Senate.

Annenberg Classroom
https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/
Provides resources for teaching civics

GovTrack
https://www.govtrack.us/
This website helps track activities in the U.S. Congress

iCivics
https://www.icivics.org
Free curriculum and games to learn civics

Library of Congress
https://www.loc.gov/
Supports Congress in fulfilling their duties and contains millions of resources, like books, photographs, maps, etc.

Library of Congress teacher’s page
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html
Numerous resources, pay special attention to the “Using Primary Sources” section

Library of Congress teacher’s page
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/
Section containing Primary Source sets, lesson plans and numerous other valuable resources

PopVox
https://www.popvox.com/
Enables you to share your opinion about a bill with your representatives and the public

Senate.gov
https://www.senate.gov/
Provides information about past and present Senates

CongressLink
https://www.loc.gov/item/2003557479
Provides resources for teachers about Congress
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

(CONTINUED)

Being a Senator Curriculum
https://www.emkinstitute.org/resources/being-senator-curriculum
Curricular materials to prepare students for the senate immersion modules at the Kennedy Institute

GIGANTIC MECHANIC
INSTITUTE of PLAY

Created in consultation with Gigantic Mechanic and Institute of Play

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