

2007 U.S. Farm Bill / Bill should be passed

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Position: Bill should be passed

This position addresses the topic 2007 U.S. Farm Bill.

For this position

“ Latino farmers, a group that often harvests specialty crops, will undoubtedly benefit from the \$1.6 billion allocated for fresh fruit and vegetable production. Resources will be funneled to Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI's) that have programs in agriculture, so that they can continue to improve on and pioneer new innovations in the agricultural sector. America must remain on the cutting edge of technology. With Latinos continuing to be an integral part of this industry, it is only wise to incorporate them and the institutions of higher learning that serve them, in efforts to promote this sector's growth.”

From A Farm Bill for All Americans, by Joe Baca (*The Huffington Post*, May 21, 2008) (view)

“ Perhaps the most important improvement in the new farm bill is a reduction in a per-gallon ethanol tax credit that supports blending fuel with the corn-based additive from 51 cents to 45 cents. That cut helps pay for a Salazar-sponsored \$1.01 per gallon production tax credit through 2012 for biofuels produced from renewable cellulosic feedstock. This is a first-time incentive for cellulosic biofuels, which Salazar estimates "have the potential to displace 3.5 billion barrels of oil annually, equivalent to 60 percent of our country's yearly consumption of oil, without affecting our need for food, feed or fiber.”

From Greener farm bill also better, by The Denver Post editorial board (*The Denver Post*, May 11, 2008) (view)

“ Less than 12% of this bill funds farm payments. The bill also includes historic increases in nutrition, fruit and vegetables, conservation, rural development, and renewable energy. This small investment in farm programs means Americans spend less on food than any other nation. We have a first-class agriculture system that is sometimes taken for granted.”

From Good deal for all Americans, by Collin Peterson (*USA Today*, July 31, 2007) (view)

“ "Prior to 1996, families were allowed an income deduction for basic living costs that was pegged to inflation. But since 1996, the deduction has been frozen at \$134 for smaller families, so they get a smaller allocation of food stamps. Both the House and Senate farm bills would update benefit amounts. And the bills would increase funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program, a federal program that buys food and gives it to states to distribute through food banks."

”

From A reason to pass the farm bill, by The Boston Globe editorial board (*The Boston Globe*, December 5, 2007) (view)

Against this position

“ "IF YOU measure the success of a pressure group by its ability to cram lousy policy through Congress, you might imagine that Big Oil or Wall Street would top the league: they are the lobbies most berated on the campaign trail. You would be wrong. If there were any doubt, the past few days should have confirmed that America's farmers are the capital's handout kings."

”

From A harvest of disgrace, by The Economist editorial board (*The Economist*, September 22, 2008) (view)

“ "Indiana's Richard Lugar and New Jersey's Frank Lautenberg want to stop the costly practice of subsidizing wheat, corn, soy, cotton, and rice crops even when prices are high, as they are now. Their bill, to be offered in the Senate this week, would switch to a government system of revenue insurance, premium-free for both ranchers and farmers, including vegetable and fruit growers who now get little benefit from the farm bill."

”

From A food bill, not a farm bill, by The Boston Globe editorial board (*The Boston Globe*, November 7, 2007) (view)

“ "When you consider that farm income is at record levels (thanks to the ethanol boom, itself fueled by another set of federal subsidies); that the World Trade Organization has ruled that several of these subsidies are illegal; that the federal government is broke and the president is threatening a veto, bringing forth a \$288 billion farm bill that guarantees billions in payments to commodity farmers seems impressively defiant."

”

From Weed It and Reap, by Michael Pollan (*The New York Times*, November 4, 2007) (view)

“ "The nation's farm policy is not only unfair and a waste of money. It's hurting the country's health by helping to foster an obesity epidemic through its crop-support policy. It's hurting the environment and contributing to energy and water shortages. It's hurting free trade by supporting an international system of protectionism for agriculture."

”

From Farm bill a bitter harvest for just about everybody, by Milwaukee Journal Sentinel editorial board (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, November 30, 2007) (view)

“ "Those who pay any attention have long understood that the government's crop subsidy programs are not a safety net for the hard-pressed denizens of Farm Country but rather a tremendous waste of taxpayers' money, artificially raising grocery prices and transferring income from the poor to the rich."

”

From Farm Follies, by The Washington Post editorial board (*The Washington Post*, November 25, 2007) (view)

“ "President Bush should veto the bill, as he has all but threatened to do, and Congress should deny it the two-thirds vote in both houses necessary to override. Then all concerned could sit down to draft a bill that increases food stamps and extends current law for a year. Admittedly, that would leave in place policies that are, in some respects, even worse than those that emerged from the conference committee yesterday. But it would avert having bad policy locked in for the next half decade." ”

From Plow It Under, by The Washington Post editorial board (*The Washington Post*, May 9, 2008) (view)

“ "Small farmers and family operations aren't the real beneficiaries of this \$300 billion boondoggle. The Council for Citizens Against Government Waste estimates 60 percent of the subsidies will go to the wealthiest 10 percent of recipients. How wealthy? The White House proposed capping direct payments to farmers who make more than \$200,000 in adjusted gross income, down from the current \$2.5 million. Under the bill Congress is poised to pass, farmers who earn \$950,000 would still receive a full subsidy." ”

From Plow under this wasteful farm bill, by San Antonio Express-News editorial board (*San Antonio Express-News*, May 8, 2008) (view)

“ "The Sweetener Users Association, an organization of sugar-using industries, estimates that the farm bill will add \$2 billion to grocery bills over five years. Commodity prices and farm incomes are exploding, imposing higher food costs on American consumers and threatening poor people around the world with outright hunger. Perhaps only in the U.S. Congress could it seem like a good time to compound the problem with a dose of sugar shock." ”

From Sweetheart Deal, by The Washington Post editorial board (*The Washington Post*, May 6, 2008) (view)

“ "Another purported change is the arrival of "fiscal discipline," in Nancy Pelosi's favorite phrase from the 2006 campaign. Yet it turns out this farm extravaganza may bust federal budget targets even more than we thought a week ago. That's because the new price supports – the guaranteed floor payments farmers receive for their crops – have been raised to match this year's record prices." ”

From Change You Can't Believe In, by The Wall Street Journal editorial board (*The Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 2008) (view)

“ "As grocery bills soar, food banks go bare and food rationing occurs on a global scale, we must challenge the wisdom of this bill. We must question policies that divert more than 25 percent of corn out of the food supply and into subsidized ethanol production. We must question a supply-control sugar program that costs Americans \$2 billion annually in higher sugar prices." ”

From Farming for riches, by John McCain (*Chicago Tribune*, May 20, 2008) (view)

“ “Food prices are setting records. But the five-year bill increases price supports on almost every crop it deals with (rice and cotton are the exceptions). It brings additional crops like chickpeas under subsidy, and its transfer of more wealth to the wealthy is an outrage. (Farmers, now less than 0.7 percent of the population, are in the top 2 percent of income distribution.)” ”

From Farm bill a major win for old politics, by Boston Herald editorial board (*Boston Herald*, May 18, 2008) (view)

“ “The legislation preserves an indefensible program of direct payments amounting to about \$5 billion a year that flow in good times and bad. It raises support levels for wheat and soybeans, while adding several new crops to the list in a way that will make it easier for farmers to raid the federal Treasury even when prices go up.” ”

From A Disgraceful Farm Bill, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, May 16, 2008) (view)

“ “My great granddad was a farmer in Mason City, Iowa and I am proud about my own heartland connections. But let's get real: that was in the 19th century and today, with less than a couple percent of Americans still working the land, it's not struggling farm families but huge agribusiness firms that till the land and rake in the profits.” ”

From Farm Bill Baloney, by Benjamin Barber (*The Huffington Post*, May 16, 2008) (view)

“ “Less than a month ago, the Associated Press reported that "it's not a good year for a farm bill," what with surging food prices, record farm income and a tight federal budget. But in DC, the solution to wasteful, unjustified government spending is more wasteful, unjustified spending. ” ”

From Grand Theft Agriculture, by Jacob Sullum (*New York Post*, May 15, 2008) (view)

“ “While their constituents are struggling to pay grocery bills, elected representatives in the House and Senate have increased total subsidies for farmers, many of whom are benefiting from rising crop prices. Farm income is expected to reach a record high of \$92.3 billion this year, making it difficult to feel sorry for farmers.” ”

From Farm bill only inches toward real reform, by Star Tribune editorial board (*Star Tribune*, May 15, 2008) (view)

“ “Besides enriching many farmers who don't need them, subsidies fuel overproduction, wasting resources and adding to pollution from fertilizers and pesticides. They distort the food market and antagonize U.S. trade partners.” ”

From The new farm bill deserves a swift veto by President Bush, by Orlando Sentinel editorial board (*Orlando Sentinel*, May 14, 2008) (view)

“ “It's vital for many Republicans and Democrats in metropolitan areas such as the Puget Sound region to stick to their principles and vote against the bill's giant subsidies for wealthy producers and corporations. Many urban and suburban House members understand (as Pelosi did before she became speaker and started trying to protect her majority) that the bill should be about healthy eating, the environment and an adequate Food Stamp program, as well as farm incomes.” ”

From Farm Bill: Buying votes, by Seattle Post-Intelligencer editorial board (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 13, 2008) (view)

“ “As negotiators work to reconcile the bills and close the \$10-billion gap, they're fighting ferociously over one of the more obscene line items in the Senate's version: a new \$5-billion disaster-assistance program intended to help growers whose crops are destroyed by drought or flood. In practice, this would simply encourage farmers to plant in drought-prone areas, knowing the government will bail them out if their crops fail.” ”

From Farm bill feeds greed, by Los Angeles Times editorial board (*Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 2008) (view)

“ “The Agriculture Department predicts farmers this year will beat their average income over the last decade by around 50 percent. Prices for crops like corn and wheat are going gangbusters, making life better for farmers but undermining the case for extending nearly \$40 billion in subsidies for crops like corn and wheat.” ”

From Oppose this farm bill, by The Dallas Morning News editorial board (*The Dallas Morning News*, March 17, 2008) (view)

“ “Even most U.S. farmers don't like the current system because its benefits are distributed so unevenly: The top 20% of recipients collect 84% of crop payments, and roughly two-thirds of American farmers don't get any subsidies at all.” ”

From Cut farm bill fat, by Los Angeles Times editorial board (*Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 2007) (view)

“ “These payouts distort domestic markets for crops and cropland to favor large agribusinesses over smaller outfits. They affect international crop prices, undercutting poor nations' economies and derailing vital world trade talks.” ”

From The Fat of the Land, by The Washington Post editorial board (*The Washington Post*, June 24, 2007) (view)

“ “In addition to boosting just a few crops, the subsidies also favor a tiny sliver of the largest farms and agribusinesses: The top 10% of recipients get nearly three-fourths of subsidy payments, while the bottom 80% of recipients divide up a scant 12%. For that cockeyed system, U.S. households pay an average \$320 a year in taxes and higher food prices, according to the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank.” ”

From Down on the farm, it's business as usual, by USA Today editorial board (*USA Today*, July 31, 2007) (view)

“ “In so doing, Pelosi is rejecting alternative legislation that, while still bloated with excessive spending, promotes healthier foods, more sustainable growing practices and a partial transition to greater competition in the farm sector. Such a transition is essential if poor farmers in Africa and Latin America are going to compete against subsidized agriculture in the United States and other industrialized countries.” ”

From Pelosi backs the wrong side in farm bill fight, by The Sacramento Bee editorial board (*The Sacramento Bee*, July 26, 2007) (view)

“ "American farmers have seldom been as prosperous as they are today. Yet the House is poised to approve a subsidy-laden farm bill more nearly suited to the Great Depression. The bill would perpetuate an outdated and hugely expensive — \$70 billion over the last five years — system of price supports and direct payments that disproportionately rewards big growers of row crops like corn, wheat and soybeans." ”

From The Anti-Reform Farm Bill, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, July 25, 2007) (view)

“ "What began as a Depression-era safety net for the nation's breadbasket has grown into a corporate welfare program for some of the richest agricultural producers. About 10 percent of the nation's farms receive 75 percent of the subsidies." ”

From Modernize U.S. crop subsidy system, by The Philadelphia Inquirer editorial board (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 28, 2007) (view)

“ "But if you're a full-time farmer, the Senate doesn't care how much you earn - you can collect subsidies even if you rake in millions annually. At least the House version would immediately end payments for "real" farmers who earn \$1 million or more a year. The Senate bill is a sham. And since the House bill isn't much better, President Bush should veto whatever eventually reaches his desk." ”

From Feeding at the trough, by Rocky Mountain News editorial board (*Rocky Mountain News*, December 26, 2007) (view)

“ "The bill expands the already bloated subsidies for wheat, barley, oats and soybeans, despite record prices for those crops. It does not reduce direct payments, which many farmers receive for simply owning land and growing crops on it. These antiquated policies subsidize rich investors, feed the unhealthy American diet, distort international trade and enable the rape of the environment." ”

From Harvest of shame: Senate farm bill feeds subsidies to agribusiness, by The Salt Lake Tribune editorial board (*The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 19, 2007) (view)

“ "The \$288 billion abomination is a virtual candy store for big agribusiness -- all paid for by taxpayers. Farmers are earning record prices for many crops, yet the measure -- passed 79-14 in the Senate last week -- showers them with increased subsidies and direct payments. If there's a microcosm of what's wrong with Washington, this is it." ”

From Down on the farm, by Las Vegas Review-Journal editorial board (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 18, 2007) (view)

“ "Space doesn't allow listing all the reasons Bush should reject this woeful bill, so let's start with the fact that it would give welfare to millionaires. As passed by the Senate, your hard-earned tax dollars would go to agri-businessmen who earn as much as \$2.5 million a year in adjusted gross income." ”

From Farm bill is a loser for taxpayers, environment, by The Denver Post editorial board (*The Denver Post*, December 18, 2007) (view)

“ "Farms have one of the lowest failure rates of any industry and farm incomes are setting records. The average farm household earns \$81,420 and has a net worth of \$838,875. And yet the Senate passed a \$286 billion five-year farm bill expanding subsidies for growers. Never mind the adverse effect of government subsidies on the cost of food." ”

From Endless manure, by Pittsburgh Tribune-Review editorial board (*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, December 18, 2007) (view)

“ "About 65 cents of every farm payment dollar goes to the wealthiest 10% of farmers. Where is that Democratic devotion to class warfare when we really need it?" ”

From Green Acres, by The Wall Street Journal editorial board (*The Wall Street Journal*, December 11, 2007) (view)

“ "The House did sweeten the pot for conservation, renewable energy, nutrition and specialty crops - all good steps, which confronted reform-minded lobbyists with a tough choice. Should they settle for these modest gains, or keep pushing for systemic change against long odds? They should keep pushing. The Senate can and must do better than a \$286 billion bill that "promotes protectionism, overproduction and market interference," as Taxpayers for Commonsense says." ”

From Food for thought, by The Philadelphia Inquirer editorial board (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 18, 2007) (view)

“ "Given that big growers and commodity corporations are enjoying the windfall - and experts say these price spikes are not just a temporary "blip" - you might think that Congress would want to pass a farm bill that reflects current realities. Nope." ”

From Farm subsidies unnecessary as prices rise, by The Sacramento Bee editorial board (*The Sacramento Bee*, April 28, 2008) (view)

Mixed on this position

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