

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 18, 2019

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

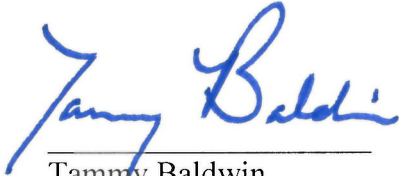
Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley:

As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you support funding for programs that provide our nation's farmers with critical support and mental health resources. We are encouraged by the inclusion of funding for a pilot program to address farmer stress and suicide in the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) appropriations bill, and request that you support robust funding for this critical effort, as authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill.

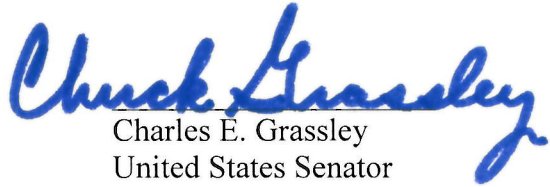
Farming is a high stress occupation, and recent reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have found that farmers and other individuals who work in agriculture experience a high rate of suicide. The 2018 Farm Bill took an important step in addressing the needs of farmers, and included the bipartisan *Facilitating Accessible Resources for Mental health and Encouraging Rural Solutions for Immediate Response to Stressful Times (FARMERS FIRST) Act* to provide funding for local mental health resources and expand access to stress reduction strategies and suicide prevention programs for people who work in agriculture. Furthermore, the FY19 appropriations bill included \$2 million for a pilot program address the high suicide rates among farmers.

More than 22 million Americans have jobs in food and agriculture, generating an economic output of over \$2 trillion. Agriculture is an essential force in our nation's economy and our farm families keep their rural communities strong. Congress has clearly recognized the need for farmers to have access to mental health resources that respond to the challenges they face. We request that the FY20 appropriations bill reflect the challenges that farmers are facing and the stressors that they experience during difficult years by providing robust funding for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network as outlined in Section 7412 of the 2018 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,



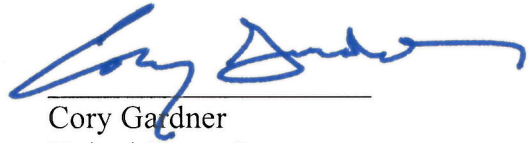
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



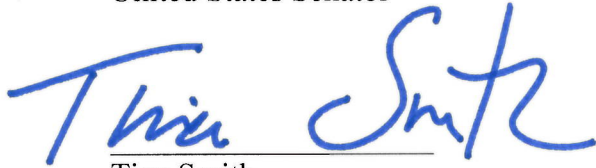
Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



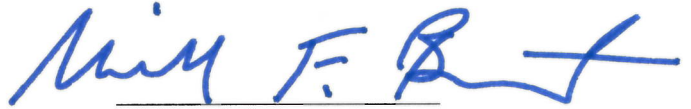
Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



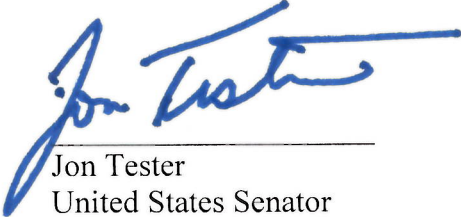
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



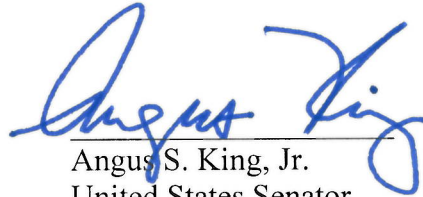
Jon Tester
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



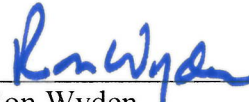
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



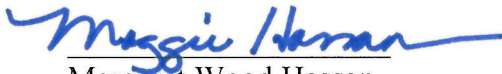
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



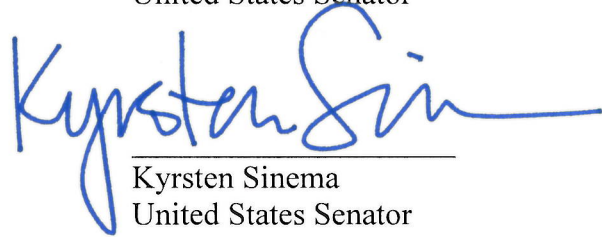
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



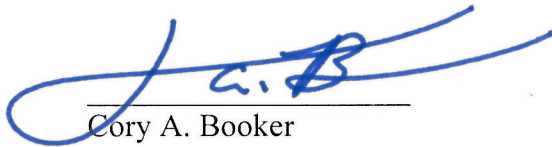
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Maggie Hassan
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator