

September 26, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Coalition Urges Opposition to Spartz Amendment (Submitted #113; Rules Print #76) to H.R. 4368**

Dear Speaker McCarthy and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned trade associations, which collectively represent millions of American farmers, ranchers, and foresters; commodity producers, processors, users, and consumers; and state agencies, write today regarding the proposed Spartz Amendment to H.R. 4368, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024.

The proposed amendment states:

*None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out any program established under a commodity promotion law (as such term is defined in section 501 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7401)).*

This language targets commodity research and promotion boards, better known as “checkoff” programs. Checkoffs were established at the urging of the producers of their respective product. While each individual program operates in a manner uniquely crafted to suit the needs of that specific commodity, generally, a small portion of the sales receipts of that commodity is allocated to a research and promotion board overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Congress has expressed support for these programs multiple times by adopting legislation authorizing checkoffs requested by different producer groups. These programs are entirely funded and directed by those who pay assessments into them—in other words, producers themselves. As such, all checkoff expenses, including the salaries of USDA personnel overseeing them, are funded by the same receipts they generate. There are no taxpayer dollars used to implement checkoffs, and no appropriated dollars are used to oversee. Further, contrary to claims made by proponents of this amendment, checkoffs are regularly audited for transparency and compliance and this amendment would do nothing to increase transparency measures at USDA. We urge opposition to the Spartz Amendment and request a ‘NO’ vote on its adoption.

Research and promotion boards exist to develop new markets and strengthen existing channels for specific commodities while conducting important research and promotional activities. They also work to educate consumers on behalf of a particular commodity to expand total demand to the benefit of all producers. Using the pooled resources and stakeholder investments obtained through checkoff assessments, they promote the product as a whole to create an industry-wide benefit through increased sales, consumer awareness, and higher overall demand both at home and abroad. For every dollar invested into a commodity checkoff, producers see several more in return. Congress should not interfere with these popular, successful programs which benefit U.S. agriculture and natural resources producers.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to reach out to our organizations directly with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

## National Organizations

Almond Alliance  
American Beekeeping Federation  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Honey Producers Association  
American Mushroom Institute  
American Sheep Industry Association  
American Soybean Association  
American Wood Council  
Clean Fuels Alliance America  
Corn Refiners Association  
International Fresh Produce Association  
National All-Jersey  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Christmas Tree Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Pecan Federation  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Potato Council  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Watermelon Association  
North American Blueberry Council  
North American Meat Institute  
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association  
Soy Aquaculture Alliance  
Soy Transportation Coalition  
United Egg Producers  
U.S. Peanut Federation

## State Organizations

Alabama Cattlemen's Association  
Alabama Soybean and Corn Association  
American Beekeeping Federation  
Arizona Cattle Growers' Association  
Arizona Dairy Producers Trade Association  
Arkansas Cattlemen's Association  
Arkansas Soybean Association  
Colorado Cattlemen's Association  
Colorado Dairy Farmers  
Colorado Livestock Association  
Colorado Potato Legislative Association  
Dairy Producers of Utah  
Empire State Potato Growers  
Florida Cattlemen's Association  
Georgia Cattlemen's Association  
Georgia-Florida Soybean Association

Hawaii Cattle Council  
Idaho Cattle Association  
Idaho Dairymen's Association  
Idaho Grower Shippers Association  
Illinois Beef Association  
Illinois Milk Producers Association  
Illinois Soybean Association  
Indiana Beef Cattle Association  
Indiana Dairy Producers  
Indiana Soybean Alliance  
Iowa Cattlemen's Association  
Iowa Soybean Association  
Iowa State Dairy Association  
Kansas Dairy Association  
Kansas Livestock Association  
Kansas Soybean Association  
Kentucky Cattlemen's Association  
Kentucky Soybean Association  
Louisiana Cattlemen's Association  
Louisiana Cotton and Grain Association  
Maine Potato Board  
Maryland Shorthorn Association  
Michigan Cattlemen's Association  
Michigan Soybean Association  
Mid-Atlantic Soybean Association  
Midwest Dairy Coalition  
Milk Producers Council  
Minnesota Soybean Growers Association  
Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association  
Mississippi Cattlemen's Association  
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation  
Missouri Cattlemen's Association  
Missouri Soybean Association  
Mississippi Soybean Association  
Montana Stockgrowers Association  
Nebraska Cattlemen's Association  
Nebraska Soybean Association  
Nebraska State Dairy Association  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
New York Beef Producers' Association  
New York Corn and Soybean Growers Association  
North Carolina Cattlemen's Association  
North Carolina Soybean Producers Association  
North Dakota Soybean Growers Association  
North Dakota Stockmen's Association  
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives  
Northeast Dairy Producers Association  
Northland Potato Growers Association  
Ohio Cattlemen's Association  
Ohio Dairy Producers Association  
Ohio Pork Council  
Ohio Soybean Association

Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association  
Oklahoma Soybean Association  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association  
Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association  
Potato Growers of Michigan  
Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania  
South Carolina Cattlemen's Association  
South Carolina Corn & Soybean Association  
South Dakota Cattlemen's Association  
South Dakota Dairy Producers  
South Dakota Soybean Association  
South East Dairy Farmers Association  
Tennessee Cattlemen's Association  
Tennessee Soybean Association  
Texas Cattle Feeders Association  
Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association  
Texas Soybean Association  
Texas Watermelon Association  
Utah Cattlemen's Association  
Virginia Cattlemen's Association  
Virginia Grain Producers Association  
Virginia Soybean Association  
Washington Cattlemen's Association  
Washington Cattle Feeders Association  
Washington State Dairy Federation  
Washington State Potato Commission  
Western States Dairy Producers Association  
Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association  
Wisconsin Soybean Association  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association