stated, it is unnecessary. It is not something that is going to be considered by the conference committee anyway. I don't know why we are doing it, but it should be defeated in spite of that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, in conclusion, again, this is reform. It is not a repeal of the sugar program. It is a very modest reform, simply going back to what the Secretary had before 2008 with the ability, the flexibility to allow sugar imports, when necessary, to meet domestic demand.

It allows sugar farmers to retain their price supports. It helps save American taxpayers and consumers money, about $3.5 billion per year. It helps protect hundreds of thousands of good American manufacturing jobs. It does not require the import of a single additional pound of sugar, and it reduces market manipulation.

Madam Speaker, I urge the Members on both sides of the aisle to support this resolution. And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 380, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PETERSON. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE RELATING TO CROP INSURANCE

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 380, I call up the resolution (H. Res 379) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding certain provisions of the Senate amendment to H.R. 2642 relating to crop insurance, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 380, the resolution is considered read.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 379

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the managers on the part of the House of the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2642 (an Act to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes) should—

(1) agree to provisions relating to a limitation on premium subsidy based on average adjusted gross income in excess of $750,000;

(2) agree to provisions relating to a requirement for the Secretary to carry out a study on crop insurance and the impacts of an adjusted gross income limitation, as specified in paragraph (1); and

(3) not agree to provisions relating to a delayed effective date.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 379.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I would like to thank Chairman LUCAS for his work on passing a farm bill through the House. It was not an easy task.

And the farm bill got a lot right, in my judgment. It eliminated direct payments. It made reforms to the food stamp program, which are in desperate need of reform. It consolidated duplicative programs, and the Agriculture Committee has started to implement very needed reforms of these programs. Unfortunately, I don't think it went far enough, which is why I am offering this sense of the House.

I think that we should accept what the Senate did—and they did it in a bipartisan fashion—to impose limits on premium subsidies going toward the wealthiest of farmers.

What this sense of the House does is it simply says, let's agree to the Coburn-Durbin amendment which said, for those making above $750,000, the sense of the Congress is that their premiums for crop insurance should not be as generous as everybody else's. In fact, their premiums should be subsidized by 15 percentage points. This is hardly draconian. In fact, I would support going much farther than this, as I have voted consistently in the past.

But what this says is, if you are a farmer and you make more than $750,000, all you will get is a crop insurance subsidy that is not as generous as everybody else's. It will be 15 percentage points less.

Let me give you an example. If you have protection for 50 percent of your yield, right now the Federal Government will subsidize 67 percent of that. Under this, if you make over $750,000, you would be subsidized by 52 percent of your crop insurance. Hardly draconian.

So what we are simply saying is, we had a vote that was 59–33 in the Senate to limit the subsidy for crop insurance for very wealthy farmers. That is 1 percent of all of our agricultural producers in the country, and what we should do is concede to that. We should agree with that in conference, and that is what the sense of this House resolution encourages.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

First, I would note, again, to my colleagues that this is one of the final stages of this long, challenging process of putting a comprehensive farm bill together.

With the conclusion of this debate on this sense of the Congress resolution and the votes that I suspect will come sometime later today or tomorrow, we will begin then with the appointment of conferees, the formal process of working out the differences between House and Senate bills. That is no small accomplishment, considering how many years Ranking Member PETERSON and I and the members of the House Agriculture Committee have put into this effort. As a matter of fact, when we started the process of gathering information and putting the hearing record together, I was the ranking member, and Mr. PETERSON was the chairman. So this has been a long, long process.

Now, I must say that I am obligated to rise in opposition to the resolution. I think the world of the author of this amendment, and in his role as chairman of the House Budget Committee, not only is he well-intentioned in this amendment and his many other efforts, but let's be honest, our friend has a tremendous amount of work on his plate, addressing everything from the issues about how we work our way out of this debt ceiling matter, how we address funding the Federal Government, how we finally put a budget resolution together. I know he is a busy, busy man; but I must say the committee focused very hard for literally years on all of these issues.

I won't pretend that with all of the things going on right now, not that many weeks after some very intense debate on the floor of this House, the goodly number of our Members are not focused on particular nuances of the farm bill, but on everything else going on.

But I would remind my good friends, the perspective of the House Ag Committee and the perspective of the majority—yes, maybe I have had too much fun with farm bills in recent years—of this process has led us to believe that it was important that we encourage participation in crop insurance. Crop insurance is like other insurance. It is about creating a pool of risk and spreading it out as far as you possibly can, having as many participants as you possibly can to share adversity, to contribute more premiums into that pool so that when you have that inevitable loss somewhere, you are better able to address it. And that is the perspective the committee took and I believe the House, as a whole, took. Get as many people involved in

utilizing and expanding the insurance pool as is possible.

Now, this sense of the Congress language is, in many ways, similar to the Senate language and would restrict the number of people based on AGI that would be able to participate, taking people out of the pool, shrinking the pool. These are, in all fairness, some of the most efficient farmers.

I will just simply ask my colleagues, remember the work of the committee and the work of this body. Help us keep this program as viable as possible.

□ 1745

Help us make sure that all farmers have the tools to mitigate their risk.

Now, there is one other perspective here, and we have talked about this many times, and it is the perspective of, what is the farm bill about? Is it about raising food and fiber? Is it about meeting the nutritional needs of our citizens in this country and having our surplus available to consumers around the rest of the world?

Or is it about deciding who a farmer should be, and using policy decisions within the farm bill to pick people who we want to farm, and to deny resources to people we don't happen to like who want to farm also?

I reject that also. Farm bills are about farming, raising food and fiber, meeting the needs.

I would ask again, very respectfully, of my colleagues, honor the decisions of the full House not all that long ago. Reject this sense of the House resolution.

Remember that you are helping us build on something that is kind of amazing in this session of Congress, a bill that came out of committee with $40 billion in mandatory spending reform, with a bipartisan vote, a bill that left the United States House with a total of $60 billion in mandatory spending reforms.

I can think of no other committee in this session of Congress that can lay claim to that—$60 billion in mandatory reform.

Let us go to conference. Let us have as much flexibility as possible. Let us finish our work. Let us finish our good work, and we will bring a product back to you from conference that you can judge on its merits.

With that, Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE), the vice chairman of the Budget Committee.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Chairman RYAN for his leadership on this issue and so many others and for allowing me to join him on this resolution.

Madam Speaker, under our current system, every farmer buying crop insurance gets a subsidy. The question is, How big should that subsidy be? Should all farmers receive a 62 percent crop insurance subsidy or more? Or should 1 percent of the most successful folks in agriculture receive a 47 or a 48 percent subsidy, which is exactly what this resolution would do?

While I support many of the reforms found in the House versions of our farm bill, unfortunately, no provision has been included which would limit crop insurance subsidies, and this resolution rectifies that glaring oversight.

This commonsense resolution will save the taxpayers nearly $1 billion by instructing conferees to implement an economic test for those farmers with adjusted gross incomes over $750,000. Those with incomes which exceed $750,000 will see their crop insurance premium subsidy reduced by 15 percentage points.

We all understand and recognize the need for having a safety net in place for our Nation's farmers. This resolution does nothing, nothing, to undermine that safety net.

We all know the need for serious reforms also to our crop insurance programs. Last year, it cost more than $14 billion, and without reforms, it is projected to be more than twice as expensive as the conventional commodity subsidy programs over the next decade.

So agreeing to this resolution would put into place the same provisions put forward as were mentioned in the Coburn-Durbin amendment in the Senate. That passed the Senate with significant bipartisan support earlier this past summer.

Currently, Madam Speaker, 4 percent of farmers receive 33 percent of the benefits of crop insurance. A stunning 73 percent of subsidy dollars goes to the top 20 percent of agribusinesses. That just doesn't make sense.

In a time of fiscal challenge, programs like crop insurance need serious modifications, and this is a step in the right direction. Though an incremental step, and a small one at that, it is, indeed, a step in the right direction.

Also, at a time when there is little bipartisan agreement in this town, this is just such an opportunity to enhance bipartisan cooperation.

Now, most folks on our side of the aisle, this side of the aisle, have been strongly supportive of an economic test for most taxpayer-subsidized programs. More actions like this are necessary in order to avoid this Nation's fiscal ruin.

So, Madam Speaker, I urge support of the resolution.

Mr. LUCAS. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), the chairman of our primary subcommittee on the House Agriculture Committee.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank the chairman for allowing us time to talk.

Madam Speaker, it is a bit surreal on a couple of levels, one, to be speaking from this side of the Chamber, and two, to be speaking against two of my colleagues who it is rare in my term here in Congress that I have been on a different side of an issue from—my good colleagues from Georgia and from Wisconsin. But on this one I stand in strong opposition to the Ryan-Price amendment.

I just wanted to say how weird this feels to talk against something that my good colleagues from Wisconsin and Georgia are proposing to do.

One point that was just made was that there was a $14 billion payout last year in disaster insurance losses to farmers in America. That's a cherry-picked year. Folks, remember, 2012 was historic droughts throughout most of ag production America, and so, consequently, last year was a much higher year than would have normally been the case. It is normally about $4 billion a year in that regard.

I would also remind our colleagues that we fought this fight in July. Just like the Senate went one direction with the vote, we went the other direction, with a 208–217 vote on this floor. So we have had these conversations already and won this argument already.

This effort will punish success, will punish efficiency. It is hard to farm using $300,000 tractors if you have got a small farm. It takes 3,000 acres to be able to support the implements and the tools needed to farm as efficiently as American farmers produce. And so we are punishing the folks who are the best at what they do.

Also, Madam Speaker, I would argue that this is a risk tool. This is not an income support tool. Income support tools, as some of our approps have gone, clearly means-testing those makes sense. We have had those in place for quite some time. But this is a risk management.

Risks at big farms are no different than risks on small farms, and to limit crop insurance, to restrict crop insurance this way is, in my view, wrong-headed.

I would also argue that using AGI at this stage in the development of the broader issues going on in this country creates several unknowns.

Both my colleagues from Wisconsin and Georgia are working very diligently on the Ways and Means Committee to, in effect, have a fundamental tax reform. That fundamental tax reform will have the impact of eliminating deductions and credits and, in effect, raising AGI. They can't tell us today where that AGI number is going to go to, so that creates one of the additional unknowns.

A second unknown is in their bill itself. Their resolution says they don't know what the impact is going to be. We heard the Budget Committee chairman say one percentage. We heard Mr. PRICE say a different percentage. So even on their side of their arguments, they are not clear yet on what the impact will be for folks who go above the $750,000 AGI.

But their amendment itself, or their resolution says, in paragraph 2, agree with the provisions relating to the requirement for the Secretary to carry out a study on crop insurance and the impacts of an adjusted gross income limitation that this is going to impose.

All of my colleagues who will speak in favor of this are generally much more rational and logical about how they want to do things. Creating this new test would be like the fellow who dove into some unknown waters. As his feet left the bank he's saying, Wow, I wonder how deep it is going to be, and I wonder how cold it is going to be.

We don't know, they don't know exactly what impact this is going to have. So I would argue that, until we can fix a number on the AGI—and again, let me make sure that everybody understands. I am not saying anything whatsoever in opposition to the fundamental tax reform work that is going on. That has nothing to do with my comments.

They are going to change the number that they want to use. That, they cannot argue against. They cannot tell us yet where that is going to be. They are going to raise it, I know, because you can't lower and limit deductions and not raise folks' AGIs because business deductions will be involved in this. So they can't tell us where that is going to be for normal farmers.

So you can't look at a farmer today who might be making $500,000 AGI—lowering the rates the way they are going to do may raise that farmer's AGI to something in excess of 750.

That person is in the exact economic circumstances they are now with respect to crop insurance and the risk management tool that that has provided, and yet they are going to be fundamentally impacted by this.

So I think this is ahead of its time. Wait on the study that the Senate bill calls for. I suspect my chairman will agree on that study that is going on.

But do not put this economic limit on crop insurance at this point in time. We have won this fight once with our colleagues. I would expect us to win it again. And I would urge my colleagues to vote against the Ryan-Price amendment that would have the impact they don't know yet on crop insurance.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the courtesy of my friend from Wisconsin, and I am pleased to join with him on the floor this evening debating this issue. It is something we have done over the years, working with Mr. KIND, with now Senator FLAKE, trying to inject a little more rationality and fiscal responsibility into this debate.

Madam Speaker, it is true that the House rejected a proposal during the debate on the farm bill, but 208 of our colleagues voted for a much more ambitious proposal. In fact, I believe that there were more votes for that crop insurance reform than were available for the first iteration of the farm bill itself.

This is a very modest step, and I appreciate it being brought forward, not because I think it is where we need to go ultimately, but I think that this is the sort of thing we ought to be doing on the floor of the House because there are, in fact, areas of agreement to do a better job for the taxpayer, do a better job for more farmers and ranchers, protect the environment. The farm bill is replete with these opportunities.

I find the rhetoric about somehow picking winners and losers and shutting down the richest farmers ironic. The proposal that is offered by my friend, Mr. RYAN, does not deny the richest 1 percent of the farmers crop insurance. It just says, your subsidy is going to be about 50 percent. You have a 15 percent reduction.

That's not picking winners and losers. That's not denying them the use of this tool. But what we should be doing is actually doing a deeper dive.

Crop insurance right now is so lucrative that it, in many instances, actually pays farmers to plant ground that they know is going to fail. They can make money off of it because of how lavishly the crop insurance program is subsidized.

The premiums, the people who sell it, insure it against loss—I mean, study after study from independent, outside agencies suggests that there is a lot that we could do.

In fact, it is ironic that there has been this attack on food stamps, the SNAP benefit, which has a lower percentage of abuse than the crop insurance program. We are on board now, the next 10 years, to have crop insurance likely to be pushing up against $100 billion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. But the fact is that this is an expensive entitlement in need of reform, with more areas of identified abuse than the food stamp program, which gets whacked, and we have a farm bill that is going to provide more lavish benefits for the wealthiest farmers.

I appreciate this discussion this evening. I hope it is the beginning of a more ambitious effort to do what needs to be done with crop insurance. But I think it is healthy to have it here.

I am pleased to join with my friend, Mr. RYAN, to agree with everything TOM PRICE said. Now that hasn't happened, I think, in any speech that he has given on the floor to this point. I am sure I am making him nervous agreeing with him.

But it illustrates the opportunity that we could have if we would take the time to work together on areas where there is bipartisan agreement and there is a clear need.

I appreciate the gentleman giving me the time. I appreciate him bringing it forward, and I urge support.

□ 1800

Mr. LUCAS. Madam Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma has 19 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Wisconsin has 21 minutes remaining.

Mr. LUCAS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER).

Mr. CRAMER. I thank the chairman for yielding the time and for his long-suffering and persistent leadership on this important issue.

I rise to ask my colleagues to please oppose efforts in this House to punish success and vote ''no'' on the Ryan resolution.

The viability of any insurance instrument requires broad participation. To maintain and foster improvement to our farm base and the stable food supply it provides, proper risk mitigation is essential. Although attacking the ''wealthy'' may appear to be noble, AGI limits for crop insurance will drive out large-risk pool participants, making the program less affordable for the farmers least able to do without it.

In North Dakota, the average farm is markedly different than the farm in Wisconsin. North Dakota family farms are thousands of acres involving multiple generations. The proposed AGI limits ignore this reality. They not only include income from farm operations, but other wholly unrelated earnings. USDA research shows average off-farm income greatly exceeds on-farm income, making the targets of this provision more collateral than intentional.

American farmers largely support the major policy shift that eliminates direct payments, relying solely on this cost-sharing arrangement with the Federal Government, resulting in 10 percent taxpayer savings. Unlike previous subsidies, farmers pay for this protection by contributing around 40 percent of the premium. The other 60 percent is not even expended by the government unless a claim is made.

The increasing role of Federal crop insurance as the foundation of the family farm safety net in recent years has diminished the need for crisis appropriations. Absent the stability of an actuarially sound program, future catastrophic disasters will result in greater ad hoc disaster payments. Let's not lose the momentum to shift from direct payments to crop insurance by compromising the financial soundness of this important program.

As the world population grows, the demand for food will increase. We should herald efficiency and increased productivity. Neither is achieved by punishing our most successful farmers.

Please oppose the Ryan sense of the House resolution.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I thank Chairman RYAN for putting this resolution together. I also want to take time to recognize and thank Chairman LUCAS. In his tone and tenacity in putting together a farm bill, I think he has served as an example in this House of how to be a chairman and bring together divergent groups. I was very

supportive of what we have done, but I am also very supportive of this resolution here today.

Implementing a 15-percentage point reduction in crop insurance for producers with an adjusted gross income exceeding $750,000, or $1.5 million for joint filers, just like the Senate amendment, seems to be common sense, in my mind. However, this resolution calls for the elimination of delayed implementation in the Senate amendment. The Senate amendment delays this. We are simply getting rid of the delay of this implementation. This means test proposal would save roughly $1 billion over 10 years, something I think is very worthy for this body to consider.

On average, taxpayers are covering about 62 percent of crop insurance premiums. This proposal would reduce that to be about 47 percent, roughly, for high-income producers. It is still a very generous deal for very profitable producers. We encourage profitability. We want them to be as prosperous as they possibly can be. That does not mean that we have an unlimited amount of money that we can continue, as taxpayers, to cover some of those risks.

This reduction impacts roughly the top 1 percent of producers. There are other government assistance programs, such as Pell Grants and food stamps and earned income tax credits, that have some sort of means test to them. The least we can do is implement a modest means test for crop insurance subsidies for those making more than $750,000 or, again, $1.5 million for joint filers.

To be clear, nobody is kicked out of this program. Nobody is eliminated from this program. Contrary to the opponents' claim, this will not harm the insurance poll by driving out low-risk producers. Even with a 15-percent point reduction, the subsidy would still be huge and would be a good deal for high-income producers, since about half of the premium would still be subsidized.

I encourage passage.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the good gentleman from Indiana (Mr. STUTZMAN).

Mr. STUTZMAN. I thank the chairman. I want to also commend him for his hard work on the farm bill.

Mr. Speaker, I know this has been a long and drawn-out process. Obviously, there are a lot of changes in agriculture, and also with the food stamp policy and with the economy. I know that this has been very difficult.

But I do want to rise in opposition to this sense of the House. As a farmer from Indiana who uses the crop insurance program, I understand a little bit about how this does affect farmers.

First of all, I would say that I think it is the right thing for us to do to eliminate the direct payment program. I think that is the right policy. That is in the bill, and I would continue to support it. I do think that we have some work to do on the crop insurance program, but this is not the answer. If we are trying to limit or put a means test on those whom you would define as the wealthiest farmers in the country, I don't believe this is the correct way to do it.

Look at agriculture across the country. You have corn farmers in the Midwest, soybean farmers in the Midwest. You have specialty crops, whether it is green beans, strawberries, carrots, or potatoes. All of these have different variables in the amount of income that comes in per acre. So whether it is 10 acres or whether it is 10,000 acres, I believe that the risk is still great to American farmers and producers.

Let's also remember that the premium support is not a cash subsidy to farmers. Farmers don't all of a sudden open the mailbox and get a check in the mail, with premium support, which I think is an appropriate system for our insurance programs that the Federal Government can participate in; but I don't believe that using the AGI is the correct way to measure whether farmers should be participating at certain levels or not.

If we really wanted to means test, we would use taxable income, where farmers would be reporting certain incomes. AGI can vary from crop to crop, from farm to farm, and so taxable income would make much more sense if we are going to talk about any sort of means testing.

Also, I believe that it undermines the important landlord-tenant relationship. I have specifically been involved in this. Whether it comes to direct payments, obviously, with the increased cost of farmland over the past several years, those relationships are very, very important and very valuable.

Almost half of the farmland in this country is rented. I know that on our farm we rent almost three-quarters of the land that we farm. If land owners can no longer afford crop insurance, they can simply transfer that risk to tenants through cash leases. You end up hurting the smaller farmers that rely on rented farmland.

So I don't believe that this particular idea is ready for us to move forward on. I think that it needs more work. I think that the intentions by the author are sincere in trying to lessen the burden on the American taxpayer; but, at the same time, let's not hurt the American farmer and create, basically, a system that can treat a farmer in the South differently than a farmer in the Midwest or a farmer in the North.

Let's go back and reevaluate the system. I think that if you talk to the farming industry, you talk to farmers, they will come to the table and will try to find a reasonable way.

At this time, I would oppose this sense of the House.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HANNA).

Mr. HANNA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Ryan sense of the House resolution which would improve the 2013 farm bill by reducing insurance subsidies for the wealthiest producers, saving taxpayers almost $1 billion.

The Senate bill includes a provision authorized by Senator Richard Durbin and TOM COBURN to reduce the level of crop insurance premium subsidies for participants with an adjusted gross income over $750,000 by 15 percent. The amendment was approved in the Senate on a bipartisan basis, 59–33. During the House consideration of the farm bill, I offered a companion amendment which was, unfortunately, not made in order.

By supporting this sense of the House, our Chamber now has an opportunity to go on record to support this modest, very commonsense reform. The limitation is expected to impact only 1 percent of the wealthiest farmers in the entire country. The vast majority of farmers in our district will see no change in the level of premium provided by the Federal Government.

Last year, the Federal Government spent $7 billion to cover 62 percent of crop insurance premiums. A 2012 GAO study found that 4 percent of the most profitable farmers accounted for nearly one-third of all Federal premium support. Now is the time to include modest means testing to reforms in crop insurance programs.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the Ryan sense of the House to protect taxpayers in the new farm bill.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Maine (Ms. PINGREE).

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Thank you, Chairman RYAN, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be on the floor on this bipartisan issue, which we certainly don't have enough of today, and I am happy to be here as well with the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, whom I have had the privilege to work with, even though we possibly don't agree on this issue.

I, too, was pleased to offer a similar amendment during the farm bill process and was glad to see Mr. HANNA speak on that earlier. That amendment was actually called the Hanna-Pingree amendment. I digress for a minute because I was particularly sentimental about that amendment since my daughter is named Hannah Pingree. Unfortunately, that amendment met its demise. I am just pleased to see we are back here discussing this topic.

The sense of Congress is a very small step toward a basic, commonsense reform: modestly reducing premium payments for the most successful farm businesses in America. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise—99 percent of crop insurance holders will see absolutely no change in their premium payments; but for a very few, the absolute richest, they will see a very small increase in their premiums. We are just

asking those few to pay something a little closer to their fair share.

To put this in perspective, crop insurance is the only farm income support program that is not subject to some form of payment limitation or means testing. Honestly, I would like to see a much stronger crop insurance reform; but for now, for this farm bill, for today, this is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this commonsense reform.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This debate is coming to a conclusion. I appreciate that greatly. The civil tone, the nature of the discussion, is something that we should do more of in this body; but I would note a couple of quick thoughts to my colleagues.

There have been many references made to the historic crop insurance payments made in the 2012 crop year. One of those amazing circumstances was huge amounts of the Midwest, some of the most productive corn land in America, simply didn't produce a crop—or not much of a crop. That is no fault of the farmer involved. That is Mother Nature's decision not to provide the right amount of moisture or, in other places, too much moisture.

□ 1815

But, you see, that is what crop insurance is all about. When I first came here, we had a system that worked around—not crop insurance, which didn't work very well and wasn't subscribed to by a lot of people. We had a system of ad hoc disasters. If you had a problem here or a problem there, then you would have a special appropriations bill to fund that disaster. Those special bills tended to grow and expand; and over time, they became a huge drain on the Treasury.

That is why, starting aggressively in the '96 farm bill—pushed even harder by then-Chairman PETERSON in the 2008 farm bill—the focus became: no more ad hoc disasters bills. Have a crop insurance program that works. Make it clear to producers that, if you have a problem, you have to have insurance, that you have to participate, that you have to pay the premiums.

Now, over the course of approximately the last decade, setting the 2012 year aside, this has become an amazingly orderly system. Many Members in this room don't remember ad hoc agricultural disaster bills because this has worked that well. I would challenge you in most—in more than in the majority of the years—that the resources coming into the program have been greater than the payments going out, but that is the way insurance is supposed to work—you pay in in good years, and you hope you never use the product; but in bad years, the assistance is there. Call it crop insurance. Call it life insurance. Call it fire insurance on your house. It is the principle behind the concept.

Now, the specific language we address here.

There has been much discussion about the draft that the United States Senate has adopted in its farm bill. It is the same 750 number, and he does include a study; but one of the main differences between what we are addressing today and what the Senate has in its language in going to conference is that the study, in effect, requires the USDA look at the effect of this limitation on the participation in the program and determine if that affects the viability of the program. Does it change the dynamics? Does it suddenly become a greater expense as you shrink the pool? It gives the Secretary the authority, if that study determines that this will be negative to crop insurance, to suspend the provision. That is not in this sense of Congress. It says, ''You shall.'' ''You will.''

One other passing thought: there has been a lot of discussion about reducing the numbers, the percentages, from 65 to 50. I will just simply note to you that in many cases that, in effect, is not just a 15 percent move; that is a 40 percent move. Think about that. If you are a farmer—who is a businessperson—assessing the cost of your inputs and trying to match that up with a potential return on your outputs, you are going to make those hard business decisions.

Again, I think the world of my colleague, the chairman of the Budget Committee. I know he has a lot of things on his plate, and I know he has had a great many challenges in his tenure as chairman of the House Budget Committee; but I will tell you that I think the Ag Committee has worked very diligently to craft language that we are now about to send to conference in order to work out the ultimate bill that reflects a lot of open process—in committee, on the floor, in a lot of input with motions to instruct today, and in another sense of the House resolution. We have acknowledged and responded to that input.

You have battled as Members of this body—and debated and discussed and voted—on all of these issues before. I would just ask my colleagues to remember what this body decided not all that long ago and that, also, as we go to conference with the Senate, it is going to be a very difficult thing to protect our $60 billion in mandatory spending reform that you have directed us to do. Give the committee, give me, give the ranking member as many tools and as much flexibility as you can so that we may prevail from the House's point of view in accomplishing common policy with the Senate that meets not only the goals of this Chamber, but the needs of this country.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask for a ''no'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Agriculture Committee for a very civil debate. He and I have talked about so many of these issues. We have worked so well together, and he has done the yeoman's work on moving these bills to the floor. On this particular issue, we don't agree. He may not think that I am helping, but I think I am helping by passing this. The reason is that this passed 59–33 in the Senate. If we pass it here, that just takes off the table one contentious issue that they don't have to negotiate in conference, making it easier to focus on the other things that you have yet to reconcile in conference. So we are actually trying to help the Ag Committee out here. That is one way you can put it.

On a more serious note, I want to talk about a few of the criticisms.

Pooling. My friend from North Dakota mentioned that it is important to have crop insurance with these people with very, very high adjusted gross incomes in the pool to make the cash flow. That is an actuarial argument that works with health insurance—healthy people subsidize sick people—but that is really not an argument that, I think, flows with this kind of insurance.

Point number two: no one is saying that a person who has a high net worth, who has a high adjusted gross income can't get crop insurance. All we are saying is just don't subsidize him as much as everybody else. That is really not asking a lot. What we are saying is, if you are a farmer and if you make $750,000 of adjusted gross income or higher, you don't get subsidized by the taxpayer for your crop insurance as much as everybody else. Your subsidy is 15 percentage points lower than that of the people who make less than $750,000. You still get crop insurance. You can still buy it. You will still get a subsidy, just not as much as everybody else.

Look, if you buy insurance on 50 percent of your acres, instead of the government paying for 67 percent of that insurance, it will pay for 52 percent of your insurance. If you buy insurance to cover 65 percent of your acres, instead of the government paying 59 percent of the cost, it would pay 44 percent of the cost. If you buy insurance on 85 percent of your acres, instead of the government subsidizing 38 percent of the cost of that coverage, it will subsidize 23 percent of the cost of that coverage. So there is still a subsidy.

You are not penalizing or punishing success by not subsidizing people as much. If we were having a tax debate—if we were talking about raising taxes—then you are penalizing success. If we are talking about taxing and taking money from producers—from successful people, from businesses making any amount of money—then you are penalizing success. What we are saying is just don't subsidize people as much because this subsidy is taking money from hardworking taxpayers—from their taxes—to give to somebody else. What we are saying is let's not take

money from hardworking taxpayers to give as much to farmers who are making more than $750,000. We just don't want to subsidize them as much. That is not punishing success.

The other point is that this is one of those rare moments in which I think there is bipartisan agreement that a farm bill really ought to be for family farmers. The purpose of the farm program is to make sure that individual families can stay farming, and that means the safety net needs to be there for that family farm. I know in Wisconsin most of our farmers don't make $750,000, so it probably doesn't affect many of the corn and bean or dairy farmers whom I represent. Maybe in North Dakota and in other States there are people with thousands of acres who make that kind of money. I think that is great—I think that is wonderful—but I still think that our taxpayers shouldn't have to subsidize them as much as the family farmer.

This is one of those opportunities in which I think Congress can speak with a bipartisan voice. I really believe, if the Hanna-Pingree amendment or the Blumenauer-Mulvaney amendment had been made in order, it probably would have passed. So this is our chance here in the House to speak with one voice on a bipartisan basis. Let's not subsidize folks at the high end as much, and let's protect that family farmer. Let's agree with the Senate and take this issue off the table as one of those contentious issues because we are agreeing bipartisanly and bicamerally that we ought to have a farm program for the family farmer and somewhere limit these subsidies. That is all we are asking for.

With that, I ask for its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MULLIN). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 380, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MORE DEMOCRAT VOICES MUST BE HEARD

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, more Democrat leaders are finding their voices and courage to speak out against the continued shutdown of government services by Senate Majority Leader REID. This was evident on Wednesday as District of Columbia Mayor Vincent Gray crashed a Senate Democratic press conference near the Capitol.

Mayor Gray took the opportunity to ask a simple and logical question of the Senate: Would the Senate vote on the House-passed measure to permit the District of Columbia to utilize tax revenues it collects to fund municipal services during this shutdown?

This measure, H.J. Res. 71, passed the House more than a week ago with support from Washington Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON and other Democrats in the House. This targeted appropriations bill, like the many others the House has passed with bipartisan support, still languishes in the Senate.

When the Mayor approached Senator REID to discuss the funding for the District of Columbia, the Senate Majority Leader replied: I am on your side, okay? Don't screw it up.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whose side the Senate Majority Leader is on, but it has not been on the side of the American people.

A WEEK IN REVIEW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield to my friend from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS).

OBAMACARE

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words about accountability.

Normally, the way it works is that Congress can consider a piece of legislation. Maybe it passes. Maybe the President signs it. You implement it. Then the voters can decide whether they like it, whether it lived up to its billing, so to speak.

With ObamaCare, it was interesting because this was rammed through Congress at the beginning of 2010; yet it is just now really being implemented. I am starting to get a lot of people in my district contacting my office who are really shocked at some of the stiff premium increases they are seeing. So I think it is useful just to review some of the promises that were made and whether any of those promises have been kept. I think what you will find is that this is a law not only that the public opposed, not only that was rammed through with no bipartisan support, but a law that in many ways is resting on false pretenses.

Promise one, the President made this: it will lower premiums by up to $2,500 for a typical family per year.

I have not seen that true anyplace. In fact, people are seeing $2,500 increases. There was a family in California, it was reported, who saw an increase of $10,000. So I think, right here, as this is being implemented, we know that that is just not going to be the case.

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Promise number two, the President said this: ''If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor. If you like your health care plan, you will be able to keep your health care plan.'' Period.

Well, we know that that is not true. We see spouses losing spousal coverage. We see people with major companies losing their employer-provided insurance, getting pushed into some of these exchanges.

So the idea that ''if you like your plan, you can keep it'' is absolutely not proving to be true for thousands of people throughout the country.

This is just beginning. People who have looked at this from the Congressional Budget Office to other groups say you could have anywhere from 7 to 30 million Americans who actually lose their employer plans because of ObamaCare.

Of course, if you are losing your plan and you are getting pushed into an exchange, you may not be able to keep your doctor because that doctor may not be in the network, may not be available based on the plan that you are having to take because you have lost your original plan.

Promise number three—this is the President: ''I can make a firm pledge: under my plan no family making less than $250,000 will see any form of tax increase.''

Well, we know that the individual mandate he said wasn't a tax. Then when it got challenged in the Supreme Court, his administration was saying, yeah, uphold it because it is a tax. That is eventually what the court did, saying that it is a tax. That is a tax that hits blue collar ''salt of the Earth'' people, forcing them to buy a product that essentially they may not even be physically able to obtain because the Web sites don't work, and if not, they are going to tax you. That certainly hasn't been true.

But there are a whole bunch of other things in the law that hit middle-income and lower-income people. There is a cap on flexible spending accounts. It is actually harder under ObamaCare to deduct medical expenses from your income taxes. Even a tax on indoor tanning salons. I think there are a lot of people who make less than $250,000 a year who are doing the tanning salons.

Then, of course, there are a whole bunch of other taxes—over a trillion dollars—that may not be directly levied on somebody making less than $250,000, but the costs will end up being passed on. For example, the employer mandate, the tax on health insurance plans, the medical device tax. Those taxes are on companies, but those costs are going to get pushed to individuals, and they are going to have to bear the cost of that. And, oh, by the way, certain good health care plans that a lot of union members have who are not making $250,000 a year, those are considered Cadillac plans, and those will be taxed extra going forward.

Finally, the President said: ''I will sign a universal health care bill into law by the end of my first term as President that will cover every American.'' It is interesting—people on the other side of the aisle will say, oh, you