

this is a good start. It is good for farmers, good for taxpayers. It continues to move our Nation's food and agriculture policy in a positive direction.

The farm bill is a jobs and innovation bill. Every \$1 billion in exports supports 8,400 American jobs that cannot be shipped overseas, according to the USDA. In 2011, U.S. agriculture enjoyed a trade surplus of \$42 billion, \$42 billion we sold more than we brought in from abroad in farm products, the highest annual surplus on record. Contrast that with the billions and billions, tens of billions, hundreds of billions of dollars in trade deficit we have in manufacturing in other parts of our economy.

There is so much room for growth, not only overseas but also at home. Bio-based manufacturing and renewable energy are two examples of the potential that American agriculture holds for U.S. economic growth and for job creation. Alongside food production, farm-based and renewable energy production, such as advanced biomass energy, can serve as the engine of the rural economy for decades to come. It is investments in agriculture such as this, such as the ones this bill maintains in research and energy and bio-based products and food production, that will enable continued creation of good-paying jobs, again that will not, that cannot be shipped overseas.

The farm bill provides economic relief to millions of Americans. Although we call it a farm bill, this bill is fundamentally an economic relief bill. For farmers, the bill provides financial assistance to weather tough times or adopt conservation practices that protect clean water and healthy soils and wildlife habitat. For millions of Americans, this bill helps put dinner on the table when wages are tight and families are struggling to make ends meet and keeps children from going hungry. That is why this bill is so important. I add, the Presiding Officer from New Jersey has always been such a strong advocate of these nutrition programs. We both understand that more than one-third of people who are getting SNAP, who are receiving what we used to call food stamps, are working families, people who are only making \$9, \$10, \$11 an hour, sometimes working two jobs, and still cannot make it without some food assistance.

The bill includes resources for SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is one of the Nation's most essential antipoverty programs. In addition to supporting people who are struggling to feed their families, SNAP supports retailers and businesses and the farmers and ranchers who grow the food.

At a time of high unemployment, SNAP participation now exceeds 44 million Americans, half of whom are children. Many of these families are working families. Half the people served by SNAP are children.

SNAP participation is expected to fall as the economy recovers. The bill continues to support SNAP with mini-

mal modifications. It continues and increases support for commodity distribution to food banks at a time when food pantry shelves in Ohio and across the Nation are bare. But I want to be clear. I have serious concerns with the cuts, not large cuts such as the House Agriculture Committee wants to do and that Senator PAUL tried to do—very unsuccessfully—and that Congressman RYAN made with his budget from the House of Representatives—nothing even close to the tens and tens of billions of dollars they want to cut from nutrition. But I am concerned about this \$4 billion cut. When compared to the \$130 billion in cuts to SNAP in the Ryan budget, the modification in this bill was done carefully.

The farm bill is a deficit reduction bill, a jobs bill, an economic relief bill. It affects every American every day. I commend, again, Chairwoman STABENOW and Ranking Member ROBERTS. Their joint effort to work across party lines is to be commended.

These months of work and deliberation are at risk because some insist on debating dozens of unrelated amendments and others seek to score political points at the expense of American families and at the expense of American farmers. This is not the time to debate conceal-and-carry laws or American aid to Pakistan or the future of the Labor Relations Board. Not that any of those are not debatable or any of those aren't a place where people can have reasonable differences on public policy. But conceal and carry, American aid to Pakistan, the future of the Labor Relations Board should not be part of the farm bill.

I urge my colleagues to work together and halt the impasse that keeps us from making progress on this bill.

I am the first Ohio Senator who is a member of the Agriculture Committee in 40 years. In my first month in the Senate, I made a request to Senator REID to join the Agriculture Committee, along with other duties, because of the importance of agriculture in my State. One out of seven jobs in Ohio is related to agriculture. It is the largest business, largest industry in my State. It matters so much to Ohio.

My position on the Agriculture Committee has helped as I have done roundtables around Ohio and met with literally hundreds of farmers, including grain farmers, dairy farmers, specialty crop farmers, nursery farmers, tree farmers, experts at Ohio State in the agriculture school, and I have come prepared to help write this farm bill both back in 2007 and this year. This is a major step forward. It is something of which we can be proud.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MARCIA HERZOG

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge a dedicated public servant who will be retiring this month after 37 years of service to the General Services Administration. Marcia Herzog started her career with GSA in 1973, working for the Federal Supply Service. From 1982 to 1987, she moved to GSA headquarters to work with the Office of the Comptroller, then on to the Public Buildings Service and then to work for the Executive Secretariat. In 1987, Marcia joined the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs. In 1997, she assumed the role of national director for the Congressional Support Program, which she continues to hold. For these last 16 years, Marcia has worked in unison with the Senate Sergeant at Arms, the Committee on House Administration, and the House Chief Administrative Officer to oversee and ensure that district offices of both Senate and House Members are located and equipped to each Member's specification and desire. Her poise, professionalism, wisdom, and support have successfully guided the congressional service representatives of GSA, who operate in each of the 10 GSA regions of the United States, to provide the highest level of customer service when responding to congressional office needs in Member home State offices across the country. We congratulate Marcia on her diligent service to this body and offer her our heartfelt well wishes as she transitions to her next endeavor.

TRIBUTE TO MCCREARY COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a very special part of my home State, the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I am speaking of McCreary County, in the southeastern region of the State. This year, McCreary County celebrates its centennial; according to the McCreary County Museum located in the heart of historic downtown Stearns, KY, the county's birthday was on March 12, 2012. One hundred years ago, Kentucky Governor James B. McCreary signed the legislation creating the county, named after himself, as the 120th and last county of the Bluegrass State, formed out of portions of Wayne, Pulaski and Whitley counties.

The people of McCreary County today have upheld the rich traditions and legacy of the hardy Kentuckians who were there for that county's founding 100 years ago. They have exemplified the very best of what southeastern Kentucky has to offer, they have kept Kentucky's history alive, and they represent the future of Kentucky and our Nation. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in wishing the people of McCreary County the very best as they celebrate their centennial.