

Adams on Agriculture
Interview with Collin Peterson
March 26, 2018

Note: This is an unofficial transcript of a discussion with Mike Adams and Rep. Collin Peterson (D., Minn.) from the *Adams on Agriculture (AOA)* radio program.

Adams: Welcome back. About two and a half weeks ago the Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee, Congressman Collin Peterson, told us here on *AOA* about differences between Republicans and Democrats over the nutrition title, the food stamps, that could hold up the farm bill [*transcript of that discussion available here, <https://goo.gl/McLghf>*]. Well, that impasse continues, although Chairman Conaway says he's pushing forward with the farm bill. Joining us again today Ranking Member Collin Peterson. Thanks for joining us. Can you give us an update? Any signs of an agreement on this issue?

Peterson: Not that I've seen. I really haven't had any conversation with the chairman or the majority since last, you know, the last letter we sent.

Adams: But Chairman Conaway is going to move forward with the farm bill. What's your reaction to that and the chances of being able to get it done with this division still there?

Peterson: Well, he's the chairman, and it's his call. I don't think it's a good idea, and I've told him that. But it's up to him. I think there's no question he can get a bill out of committee, you know, with whatever he wants in it, probably. But how you're going to get that bill across the floor is a mystery to me.

Having talked to the leadership of the Freedom Caucus, who says even with what is being proposed being in the bill they're still not going to be in favor of it. That's about, according to them, about 30 of them. And I've talked to a number of moderates, and I think there's 15 to 20 moderates that won't vote [with] Republicans and won't vote for this bill if the SNAP stuff is in there as it currently is. So if that's true, that's 50 people, and I don't know how you pass a bill.

And then on top of that, you know, Senator Roberts has said that they're going to do a bipartisan bill. They're not going near any of the SNAP stuff in the Senate. Senator Grassley came out last week and said that they're only going to consider a bipartisan bill, so... And what's in, you know, in our bill in the SNAP area is not being considered in the Senate at all. We had 23 hearings on SNAP and not one single thing that's in this bill was actually called for in any of those 23 hearings, and stuff came out of the blue. And I know it's stuff that's wanted in the Republican caucus. I understand that. Some people. But I don't know how you get this done.

Adams: What's in there that you especially oppose, that you do not like?

Peterson: Well, it's not me. It's not me. This is my members. And my members, you know, initially were upset because I was trying to actually protect the committee and the chairman by not letting this information out because I knew what the reaction was going to be, trying to see if we could soften it, which we weren't able to do. And finally I had to let them know what the language was, what the score was, and that just made them all the more adamant that they weren't going to support any bill that had this stuff in it.

So these are my members that are opposing this. It's not me. And they're opposed to the work requirement, the training that's in there. They're opposed to the elimination of LIHEAP. They're opposed to the elimination of broad-based categorical eligibility. They're opposed to the food stamp system being used as a child support collection system, which I think is kind of a crazy idea, but... So they're just, you know...

I don't even know where to start on this, you know, Mike. The last time I talked to him he said, well, maybe we can drop those other things—LIHEAP, broad-based cat el and the child support, but we have to have work requirements. I told my members that. It didn't make any difference. So, you know, it's not something I can do. I can't lead people that don't want to be led—so we are where we are, you know.

Adams: Do you think a bill will get done this year?

Peterson: I would say if you're a betting person you'd bet on an extension.

Adams: An extension of the current bill.

Peterson: Yeah.

Adams: So that pushes it into 2019. Doesn't it get even harder? I mean, there's some—

Peterson: Yeah. Yeah. I—

Adams: —saying your party would want to wait and see what—

Peterson: I'm not looking for—

Adams: —happens with the midterms.

Peterson: No, that's not true at all.

Adams: No?

Peterson: And there have been some people that have put this stuff out like Wiesemeyer, other people. That is absolutely not true. I have said publicly a

number of times that this is not something I'm looking forward to, if we do get in the majority, that I would then be in charge of trying to get a farm bill done because I'm not sure it could get done if we're in charge because of the divisions that have been created here.

Part of this goes back to 2013 and what was done to us on the floor. And that's part of why some of our members, the ones that were around at the time, don't trust the majority on this, because of what they did there. These things are not exactly the same, the work requirements, but it's enough the same that they... You know, so that's involved in this. And this is not helping the situation.

So I don't know. I mean, it's, you know, people said last time, after the 2014 bill, that this might be the last farm bill, because they're getting so hard to do. I'm not ready to say that yet, but I would say that, you know, there's no question that they are getting very hard to do no matter who's in charge.

Adams: Real quick before I let you go, we've got a minute left, your thoughts on the spending bill. It did have the 199A fix in there and some other things for agriculture. Your overall thoughts real quick.

Peterson: Well, it's too much spending. I mean, we're spending money like drunken sailors. I didn't vote for it. And by the way, the 199 fix created an imbalance between the co-ops and the privates, only this time the privates have an advantage over the co-ops. Not in all cases, but in limited cases if you're a farm that has W2 wages, you're going to have your 20% pass through that everybody gets reduced because of this fix. So it's not a complete fix. And I pointed this out before it passed, but it is what it is, so...

People are going to find out before this tax bill all gets done how big of a problem there is. It's not just 199. This whole pass through thing is going to be a nightmare before they get done with it. And I predict in two or three years they're going to have to have a revision just like they did with the '81 tax cuts in '86 because of the problems.

Adams: Well, Congressman, thank you so much for your time. We've got much more to talk about. I look forward to having you on again real soon. Thank you, Congressman.

Peterson: Okay, good enough. Thanks.

Adams: Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee, Collin Peterson. Some interesting thoughts there. We'll get more reaction as the week goes along. Thanks for being with us. This is *AOA, Adams on Agriculture*.

[*End of recording.*]