

Adams on Agriculture

Interview with Rep. Collin Peterson

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

Adams: All right, welcome back. So this is...we're trying to kind of lay this debate out for you for the farm bill. The proposal came out yesterday from the House Ag Committee. And basically you just heard Congressman Roger Marshall point out the Republicans feel that they are actually strengthening the SNAP program, and the Democrats feel that they're kicking people off the food stamp rolls, and that the people are going to be harmed by this, that they'll not have access to the food that they need.

So that's basically the key issue that has to be resolved here for this farm bill to move forward and to get passed in the House. You have a really big difference of opinion here on a key issue. And we talk about this a lot, the nutrition title makes up 80% of the farm bill. So all the rest of it, the crop insurance, and the ARC and PLC payments, and the conservation programs, that 20% which is critical to farmers, it's all being held at risk here till they work out this nutrition title issue.

Joining us now, the Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee, Minnesota Congressman Collin Peterson. Thank you so much for joining us. I know you're very, very busy. We just heard, again, we just talked with Congressman Marshall. And the Republicans feel that they are strengthening the SNAP program. Obviously your party feels differently about it. Do you see some common ground? How optimistic are you that something can get worked out to resolve this issue?

Peterson: I'm at about zero percent optimism.

Adams: Is it a deal-breaker? Can it pass without resolving this?

Peterson: I don't know if they can do it or not. These are a bunch of ideological zealots, is what they are, and I've had it. You know, there's half of this SNAP stuff I actually supported, and could have supported, but they put this poison pill in there. They're going to spend \$13 billion on programs that are not going to work. It's a complete waste of money. And this is the people that are supposedly against more government. And then they're claiming that this how they're, now they're strengthening the program. I mean, give me a break. You might as well take that money and burn it.

Adams: Do you expect a lot of amendments next week in markup?

Peterson: No.

Adams: You think it'll just go through and go to the House floor for the vote then?

Peterson: Yes.

Adams: And you don't think there'll be the votes to pass it?

Peterson: I don't know. It's up to them. The Speaker is already calling people into his office. I talked to somebody this morning that, one of the moderates. They had a bunch of them in there yesterday putting the heat on them, trying to get them to vote for this. And this particular guy told them to go to heck.

Now whether he's going to be able to [whip saw] the Freedom Caucus and the moderates enough to pass this, I don't know. It's up to them. But this is not going anyplace in the Senate, so I don't understand what they're up to here. It's just not any kind of strategy that makes any sense to me. But they're in charge, and good luck, is all I can say.

Adams: Beyond the nutrition title, is there bipartisan support for the rest of the bill?

Peterson: Well, there was. But, you know, nothing is settled until everything is settled. So they're running around saying that this is bipartisan. Well, what I did is that I went along with things that I didn't necessarily agree with, trying to help them be bipartisan, until they blew this thing up.

So, I mean, now I'm saying what I really think, and that is that I don't think the safety net is adequate. And I don't know where we get the money to fix it. But I can tell you that if we get a below average crop this year, we are going to be in big trouble. And this bill is not going to be what's needed to help people get out of it.

Adams: So how will you talk to farmers, and how will your members talk to farmers about if they lose crop insurance and all the other things in the farm bill because of this nutrition issue? What will your message be to them over that?

Peterson: They're not going to lose crop insurance because of what's in the bill. The crop insurance is permanently authorized. It doesn't even need to be in the farm bill. It's permanently authorized. So there's nothing that we're doing that's jeopardizing the crop insurance.

It's what they're doing that's jeopardizing it, you know, so they'll have to explain to people if they screw it up by putting this thing on the floor. You know, I'll vote to save crop insurance. There will be a few others that will vote to save crop insurance. But there will be a lot of people that won't because they don't have any farmers in their district. And this is why we've

had a SNAP farm coalition together all these years, so we could get a bill through.

Adams: So you're willing...your party will be willing to not pass a farm bill, they feel that strongly about the nutrition title?

Peterson: Well, that's...yeah, that's my read on it. I've got...our members are unanimous in opposition to this because they have delved into it and they know that this is a joke, it's a sham, and it doesn't work. And they're not going to vote for it.

Adams: So next week is the markup. You feel it'll go through fairly quickly in the markup?

Peterson: I think there will be a lot of questions, but there won't [many] amendments, I don't think. But I don't know, maybe there will be, but there will be a lot of questions. And so I don't know how long it will drag on.

Adams: Any idea when it might go to the floor for a vote?

Peterson: I have no idea. That's up to them. They run the show.

Adams: How much conversation, discussion are you having with Chairman Conaway? Are you two talking on this?

Peterson: No.

Adams: Have you reached out to him at all?

Peterson: I haven't talked to him for four weeks.

Adams: Four weeks.

Peterson: Yes.

Adams: So you're out of the loop as far as how this is going to...how they're wanting to push this forward. They haven't reached out to you to say let's find a way to make this work?

Peterson: [*Unintelligible-Static in Audio at 6:54*]...is going to the floor to see if he can find Democrats that support what he's doing, which is ridiculous. That's what he's doing.

Adams: Wow. We...it'll be an interesting week ahead. Well, thank you for your very candid comments. We appreciate it, as always. And we'll talk again after it gets through the markup, okay?

Peterson: All right, good enough.

Adams: Thank you, Congressman. Appreciate it. Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee Collin Peterson. Strong words. Calls this farm bill proposal a joke and a sham. He says there probably won't be many amendments, but he thinks it's going to be tough for them to find the votes to get it passed. We will see. Two very different opinions on this farm bill. You've heard them right here today on *AOA*. Thanks for being with us.

[End of recording.]