

U.S. Rep. Sensenbrenner: House passes Sensenbrenner-backed bill to help family farmers unanimously

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Washington, D.C. - Today, the House passed the Family Farmer Relief Act unanimously. Congressmen Jim Sensenbrenner (WI-05) and Antonio Delgado (NY-19) sponsored this legislation, which would update the bankruptcy code to account for modern challenges in the agricultural industry. Congressman Sensenbrenner delivered the following remarks on the House floor:

“The “Family Farmer Relief Act of 2019” brings urgently needed help to a critical link in America’s economy and a vital part of American community life □ the family farmer.

In 2005, Congress permanently enacted chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code. Chapter 12 is specially designed to help family farmers reorganize their debts in time of need and keep their farms going. In the years since, chapter 12 and its streamlined procedures have worked well.

There has, however, been one problem. As time has passed, and the costs of running a family farm have rapidly increased, the ceiling in chapter 12 on how much debt a family farm can reorganize has lagged behind. Especially with the advent of modern, high-tech farming equipment, the chapter-12 ceiling is no longer high enough to let many farms with typical amounts of debt into chapter 12.

The Family Farmer Relief Act of 2019 fixes this problem. It raises the ceiling from the old, roughly four-and-one-half million dollar limit to a more reasonable \$10 million. This means that more family farmers will be able successfully to reorganize when they need to—to the benefit of the economy and local communities across this land.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the bill. I encourage all my colleagues to support the bill and reserve the balance of my time.”