

Chapter 1 : Farm Bill Passes the Senate – Farm Policy News

The Senate farm bill also preserves a major conservation program gutted in the House bill, as well as a separate provision, unpopular in the House, that would limit farm-subsidy payments. The Post article added, "With House Republicans insisting they will fight for their version of the legislation, the discrepancies have fueled fears Congress.

Additionally, the bill modifies requirements relating to state university direct support organizations, establishes a process for the termination of separate accreditation for the St. Student Financial Aid and Tuition Assistance. The bill expands student financial aid and tuition assistance programs to help to address financial insecurity concerns of students and their families. Modifies Bright Futures Scholarship Program awards to: Increase the Florida Medallion Scholars FMS award amount to cover 75 percent of public postsecondary education institution tuition and specified fees, beginning in the fall semester. Provide summer funding for Florida Bright Futures Scholarship awards for FAS awards, beginning in the summer term, and for FMS awards, beginning in the summer term; and authorizes summer funding for other Bright Futures awards if funded by the Legislature. Remove the prohibition on the inclusion of the technology fee and tuition differential in a Bright Futures Scholarship award. Expands the Benacquisto Scholarship Program to attract qualified students from out-of-state who physically reside on or near the postsecondary education institution in which they enroll; who earn a high school diploma or the equivalent, comparable to Florida; who are accepted and enroll in a baccalaureate degree program in the academic year or thereafter; and who meet the specified requirement to qualify for the scholarship. Creates the Florida Farmworker Scholarship Program for farmworkers and the children of farmworkers, who meet the specified scholarship eligibility criteria. The bill requires the Department of Education DOE to award up to 50 scholarships annually and the recipient may receive an award for a maximum of percent of the credit hours or clock hours required to complete up to 90 credit hours of a program that terminates in a career certificate. The recipient is eligible for an award equal to percent of tuition and specified fees at a public postsecondary education institution in Florida. Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for the award. Expands the First Generation Matching Grant Program by revising the state to private match requirements from a 1: Specifies that a Florida Prepaid College Program plan, purchased prior to July 1, , is only obligated to pay for the credit hours taken by the qualified beneficiary at a state university. Renames the William L. Institutional Accountability The bill strengthens institutional accountability by modifying state university performance and accountability metrics and standards to promote on-time student graduation. Specify that the performance-based metric for graduation rate must be a 4-year graduation rate. Specify that the access metric is the access rate based on the percentage of undergraduate Pell Grant recipients who receive the award in the fall term; and require the access rate benchmarks and scores to be differentiated to reflect varying access rate levels among the universities, and provide that the scoring system may not include bonus points. Revise the metric related to the 6-year graduation rate of 70 percent or higher for full-time, first-time-in-college FTIC students to a 4-year rate of 60 percent or higher. Eliminate the authority for the preeminent state research universities to require FTIC students to take a six-credit set of unique courses. Revise funding for emerging preeminent state research universities from one-half to one-fourth of the total increased funding to preeminent state research universities. Change from an encouragement to a requirement that the BOG establish standards and measures for programs of excellence throughout the SUS and specify that the programs include undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs, and require the BOG to make recommendations to the Legislature by September 1, , regarding enhancing and promoting such programs. Modifies the duties of the state universities and the BOG to: Require, by June 1, , each state university board of trustees BOT to submit a proposal to improve undergraduate 4-year graduation rates to the BOG for implementation beginning in the fall semester. The proposal must identify academic, financial, policy, and curricular incentives and disincentives for timely graduation; outline the implementation of a proactive financial aid program to enable full-time students with financial need to take at least 15 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters; and include assurances that there will be no increased cost to students. Requires the BOG, in consultation with the state universities, to submit

to the Legislature, by October 1, , recommendations for future consideration on the most efficient process to achieve a complete performance-based continuous improvement model focused on outcomes that provides for the equitable distribution of performance funds. In addition to recommendations submitted by the BOG, the Legislature must review recommendations from an independent entity that consults with the BOG to receive input on behalf of the SUS. Implementation of any recommendations may not occur unless affirmatively enacted by the Legislature. Clarifies that developmental education instruction provided by eligible state universities must utilize the same instructional strategies that are specified in law. Establishes the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program to fund and support the efforts of state universities to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and research scholars. Authorizes state university investments in areas such as research-centric cluster hires, faculty research, and research commercialization efforts. The funds may not be used to construct buildings. Requires the BOG to provide, annually, by March 15, to the Governor and the Legislature a report summarizing the expenditures and the impact of such expenditures in elevating the national competitiveness of the universities. Establishes the State University Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program to fund as support the efforts of state universities to enhance the quality of professional and graduate schools and degree programs in medicine, law, and business, and expand the economic impact of state universities. Authorizes state university investments in quality improvement efforts, which may include, but are not limited to, targeted investment in faculty, students, research infrastructure and other strategic efforts to elevate the national and global prominence of state university medicine, law, and graduate level business programs. Requires the BOG to provide, annually, by March 15, to the Governor and the Legislature a report summarizing the expenditures and the impact of such expenditures in elevating the national and global prominence of the state university medicine, law, and graduate-level business programs. Require that the use of personal services by a state university DSO must comply with current law regarding limitation on compensation for state university administrators. Specify that the state university BOT may not permit the use of state funds for travel expenses by any university direct-support organization. Specify that records related to the expenditure of state funds, and financial records related to the expenditure of private funds for travel are not confidential. Require, rather than authorize, the chair of a university BOT to appoint at least one member of the DSO board of directors and executive committee, and requires the university BOT to approve all other appointments to the DSO. Prohibit a university DSO from giving to a political committee, without exception. Require BOT regulations for audit and oversight to include thresholds for approval of purchases, acquisitions, projects, and issuance of debt. Additionally, beginning July 1, , and annually thereafter, each university BOT must report to Legislature the amount of state appropriations transferred to any DSO in the previous fiscal year, the purpose for which the funds were transferred, and the remaining balance of any funds transferred. Prohibit the transfer of funds to a DSO that does not provide equal employment opportunities. University of South Florida The bill establishes a process for the termination of separate accreditation for the St. Establishes the USF Consolidation Planning Study and Implementation Task Force task force to develop recommendations to improve service to students by phasing out separate accreditation for the St. Establishes a timeline to terminate the separate accreditation for the St. Requires data reporting after July 1, , to be consolidated for all USF campuses, and requires the BOG to use the consolidated data for determining performance-based incentive and preeminent state research university program funding. Specifies that the following USF students may not be counted in the calculation of graduation rates or retention rates for performance-based incentive and preeminent state research university program funding determinations: Provides that the provisions related to the consolidation of accreditation of USF branch campuses, including the task force and the implementation plan, expires July 1, Free Expression on Campus The bill creates the "Campus Free Expression Act" Act , which addresses the issue of free speech on the campuses of public postsecondary institutions public institutions. Defines the following terms: Provides examples of protected expressive activities, which does not include commercial speech. Specifies that the outdoor areas of campus are traditional public forums and authorizes a public institution to create and enforce restrictions that are reasonable and content-neutral on time, place, and manner of expression and that are narrowly tailored to a significant institutional interest. Restrictions must be clear and published and must

provide for ample alternative means of expression. Specifies that a public institution may not designate any area of campus as a free-speech zone or otherwise create policies restricting expressive activities to a particular outdoor area of campus, except as authorized. Specifies that students, faculty, or staff of a public institution may not materially disrupt previously scheduled or reserved activities on campus occurring at the same time. Authorizes a person whose expressive rights are violated by an action prohibited under law to bring an action against a public institution in a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain declaratory and injunctive relief, reasonable court costs, and attorney fees. These provisions became law upon approval by the Governor on March 11, , except as otherwise provided. Senate ; House

Chapter 2 : Chicago Tribune - We are currently unavailable in your region

The U.S. Senate voted to approve a more than \$ billion "minibus" funding bill - H.R. - on Aug. 1 by a vote of 92 to 6; a bill that wrapped together four separate spending bills into a single package, including the fiscal year Transportation, Housing and Urban Development or THUD bill approved.

The Senate Agriculture Committee is aiming to move its long-awaited farm bill through the chamber in a speedy three-and-a-half weeks, hoping for a vote on the bipartisan measure that includes reauthorizing its Energy Title programs before the July 4 recess. Story Continued Below

Among the Energy Title programs that would be reauthorized are the Biorefinery Assistance Program, which provides loan guarantees to build facilities that make advanced biofuels and renewable chemicals; the Rural Energy for America Program, which gives grants for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements; and the Repowering Assistance Program, which reimburses biorefineries for dropping fossil fuels in favor of biomass like wood chips and perennial grasses. Ron Wyden held up his soil provision for its focus on improving soil health, in a way that would also address climate change. Read the draft bill here.

Judge Lisa Godbey Wood for U. Bush appointee, ruled that the states have a substantial likelihood of winning at least some of their claims against the rule, also called the Clean Water Rule. That puts the rule on hold in half the country, with a North Dakota district court judge having granted a preliminary injunction to 13 states shortly after the rule was finalized in

But does it matter? Not immediately, since the Trump administration has already finalized a rule delaying the effective date for WOTUS until But environmental groups and blue states are challenging that delay rule in court; if they win, that could kick the rule back into effect. But perhaps more important than the practical consequences is the signal the ruling sends: What is the oldest capital city in the United States? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino politico.

Pruitt in light of the growing questions about misuse of his authority. You can drive my car: The Senate Appropriations Committee will pick up a series of spending bills this week, beginning Tuesday with a subcommittee markup on its Interior-Environment appropriations bill for fiscal The full committee is expected to take up the bill on Thursday morning. But those filibuster-proof powers expire: The Senate must approve the bill by June 22 or be forced to recruit Democrats to the effort. I have instructed our U. Reps not to endorse the Communique as we look at Tariffs on automobiles flooding the U. Five bullet points of the agreement were devoted to "climate change, oceans and clean energy," although the U. While refineries say the increase in RINs is necessary to bring down their cost of compliance, the dozens of economic hardship waivers already issued by Pruitt to small oil processors has pushed the cost of those credits to their lowest levels in five years

and without a biofuels deal those waivers will stay in place for now, Eric reports. Brooke Coleman, executive director of the Advanced Biofuels Business Council, suggested Pruitt was pushing the limits of the program without concern that the changes could be cut down in court, as scandals mount around him. EPA on Friday told a federal court that it expects to decide by Aug. Lawsuits challenging the rule were put on hold in April , just days before oral arguments were scheduled, because the agency said it needed time to decide whether to roll the standard back. EPA has since been ordered by the courts to issue almost all the designations that make up the next implementation step for the rule. For those keeping track at home: Factor in either court review time or a reconsideration rulemaking

the next ozone standard is much closer than you think. Pope Francis addressed around 50 executives on Saturday, where he told them that energy access for all is necessary to eliminate poverty and hunger. The Islamic Republic announced last week that it has expanded its ability to enrich uranium, a key ingredient for nuclear weapons, just weeks after Trump quit the Obama-era Iran deal

and the North Koreans are certainly watching to see what happens next. By insisting the Iran deal should have been far more comprehensive and longer-lasting, Nahal writes, Trump has effectively set a higher

and potentially unattainable

standard for any deal with Kim. As Trump prepares for the summit in Singapore, he will do so without the help of a White House science adviser or senior counselor trained in nuclear physics, the Times reports , marking him as the first president since to not name one. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke appeared on Fox News this weekend to talk trade policy and national security ahead of the summit. The episode airs at 10

p. The National Wildlife Federation will today announce that Mike Saccone will serve as its associate vice president for communications. Saccone most recently was communications director for the Keystone Policy Center. Where are we now? In spring , Tamborrino graduated from the Pennsylvania State University, where she studied print journalism, English and international studies. She also studied British politics and English literature in Leeds, England, where she studied abroad at the University of Leeds.

Chapter 3 : NPR Choice page

The Senate farm bill also preserves a major conservation program gutted in the House bill, as well as a separate provision, unpopular in the House, that would limit farm-subsidy payments.

Strengthening the relationship between employers and SNAP employment and training; Strengthening program integrity; Modernizing and improving systems and technology; Making targeted SNAP improvements for certain populations; and Investing in other nutrition programs and initiatives to support healthy eating. An appendix table includes a list of the provisions described below, with section numbers. Current work requirements are as follows: SNAP limits eligibility for people aged 18 through 49 not raising minor children who are working less than 20 hours per week to just three months out of every three years with some exemptions. In , at least half a million unemployed individuals lost SNAP benefits due to this rule, many of them very poor individuals who receive no other form of basic assistance. With limited exceptions, SNAP requires all working-age adults to register for work and accept a job if offered. They can establish criteria and provide programming for appropriate services in local labor markets. It would also prioritize traditionally underserved populations: Each pilot is in the midst of a rigorous evaluation that will track employment and earnings for years after individuals participate. This was widely acknowledged as necessary to identify approaches to job training in SNAP that would lead to improved outcomes for participants. Improving Link Between SNAP Participants and Workforce Development Research shows that job training programs that target the employment needs of local employers and train individuals for in-demand jobs in their community successfully increase employment and earnings. The Senate bill would promote employer training and better connect SNAP participants to existing workforce development efforts. For example, it would create a process to connect SNAP participants to private employers and non-profit organizations that already provide substantial, high-quality training or work experience. Federal officials then re-review a subsample of the cases and USDA annually releases state and national payment error rates based on these reviews. States are subject to fiscal penalties if their error rates are persistently above the national average and can receive bonuses for high or improving performance. The Department of Justice has negotiated settlements with a handful of states that allegedly engaged in improper practices. Since , USDA has reviewed QC operations in all states, executed corrective action plan agreements, revised QC policy guidance and practices and procedures, and taken actions to improve federal oversight. Requiring USDA to update its regulations. The bill would require USDA to issue updated regulations within six months to ensure that the QC system produces accurate, statistically valid results. Expanding availability of state records for review to include eligibility systems. Eliminating most state performance bonuses. These modest, targeted payments reward states for high or improving performance related to program error rates, payment accuracy, and overall program access among SNAP-eligible individuals. The bill would allow the separate bonuses for timely state processing of applications to continue. This aspect of the QC improvement provisions goes too far. An evaluation of the NAC found that fewer than 0. Dual participation in multiple states is rare and, when it does occur, sometimes occurs when states are slow to act when households report a move rather than as a result of recipient fraud. Preventing dual participation can be a customer service enhancement to clients if the proposal provides for helping participants who move across jurisdictions to disenroll from their original home state. The bill also would limit the information that states would provide to the NAC to information that is needed and used for avoiding duplicate participation, and it would clarify that the information shall not be used for other purposes or retained for longer than is needed for that narrow purpose. Section Conducting Pilot on Earned Income Verification Federal law requires states to verify household income in order to determine eligibility and the level of SNAP benefits for which a household qualifies. Historically, states have asked clients to provide paper documentation such as copies of their pay using wage stubs, bank statements, or statements from their employers. Today, some companies aggregate employment and earnings data for millions of employers as a human resources service; the primary commercial data service to verify earned income is Equifax, which operates the Work Number. USDA would assess the cost-effectiveness of several approaches to contracting with a commercial data service that

consolidates earned income information before awarding the grants. Some matches contain recent and highly reliable information; others provide older information that may not be relevant for current eligibility. In some cases, states may need to follow up with SNAP households to gather more information to accurately determine whether the state needs to close the case or change the SNAP benefit level. The bill would clarify that the state must follow up and pursue further information from the household or other sources if the information from the match: In recent years, EBT systems have been criticized for being unreliable, providing poor customer service, and not keeping pace with the retail environment and emerging technology. This provision would sunset at the end of fiscal year. Require USDA to issue further guidance for SNAP retailers on how to select EBT equipment and service providers that provide sufficient transaction information to minimize the risk of fraudulent transactions and revise requirements for retailer applications. Section Requiring Computer Systems to Be Piloted in Live-Production Environments The bill would require major SNAP systems changes, for which the federal government provides matching funds, to be piloted in a live-production environment. Over the past several years, a few states have experienced serious disruptions in client service as they rolled out large-scale replacements of their eligibility and enrollment systems. This requirement would help ensure that state agencies prepare for and plan to identify and fix issues that could negatively affect SNAP operations before rolling out systems statewide. Over their certification periods, households must report certain changes to the state agency and states must adjust benefits in response to these changes. At the end of the certification period, households must reapply in order to continue receiving SNAP, which involves an interview with an eligibility worker in person or often by telephone and new documentation of income and certain expenses relevant to eligibility and benefit levels. The bill would extend these certification periods from two years to three for households with only elderly or disabled members who have no earned income. Such households tend to live on fixed income from sources such as Social Security, so the change would reduce paperwork and office visits for households that are unlikely to experience changes. The bill would require the state to have at least one contact with households each year. The bill would also allow states to establish up to three-year certification periods in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which provides USDA commodity food packages to low-income elderly individuals. About 40 percent of participating ITOs have waivers of all or part of their match, so the total federal share of FDPIR administration is approximately 80 percent. The bill would enhance the minimum federal administrative match, requiring USDA to cover no less than 80 percent of operational costs for each ITO. It also would newly allow ITOs to use other federal funding streams to meet their administrative match requirement. The bill also would require the Secretary to issue guidance outlining best practices to minimize food waste of commodities donated to state agencies and emergency feeding organizations. The federal government would pay half the costs. Finally, the bill would require state TEFAP plans to include a process for emergency feeding organizations and other eligible recipient agencies to provide input on community preferences and needs. Currently, retailers who wish, using their own resources, to offer SNAP participants discounts or incentives for healthy foods like those provided through FINI must seek a waiver. Not all retailers know about the option or can navigate a federal waiver process. This provision would make the approach potentially available to all authorized SNAP retailers. Incentives would be for healthy foods only; incentive programs could not limit the use of SNAP benefits by participating households. Section Authorizing Pilot Projects to Improve Healthy Fluid Milk Consumption The bill would authorize appropriations for pilot projects to test incentives to increase the purchase of fluid milk among SNAP households that do not consume sufficient fluid milk, based on the most recent dietary guidelines. Section Establishing Harvesting Health Pilot Projects The bill would provide new federal funding to establish a pilot project to allow a state or non-profit organization to work with a health care organization, such as a hospital, to provide fruits and vegetables as well as nutrition education to low-income patients who suffer from or are at risk of developing a diet-related health condition. Section Maintaining Nutrition Education The bill would continue state-level nutrition education efforts, require states to electronically report project evaluations, and expand the stakeholders involved in delivery, oversight, and evaluation to include the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and expanded food and nutrition education programs. It would not change funding levels.

Chapter 4 : B scrutinized in Senate, targeted by Trump | Healthcare Dive

Senate Democrats on Thursday railed against reported plans that the Trump administration is looking at using federal funding to let school districts buy guns for teachers, saying the news.

Save for later The Senate agreed by voice vote Tuesday to go conference with the House to negotiate a new version of the farm bill before the current legislation expires, even if that means working through the summer recess. The Senate is expected to name nine negotiators, five Republicans and four Democrats. The House named 47 conferees on July 18, 29 Republicans and 18 Democrats. The current farm bill expires Sept. The four lawmakers met in a closed-door session July 27 to begin initial discussions. Conaway has said he will return to Washington, if necessary. Roberts and Stabenow said earlier Tuesday that they are expecting a meeting of the full conference in late August. House conferees have been told they are on call for a possible meeting during their recess. The most sharply contested difference between the House and Senate farm bills is the treatment of work requirements under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the food stamp program. The Senate bill would keep the current hour work requirements for able-bodied adults and would incorporate findings from 10 state pilot projects that approach work and education for work-age adults. The bill would fund an additional eight state demonstration projects that focus on SNAP recipients with problems finding work. The legislation would make it easier for state agencies to work with the private sector in training SNAP recipients for jobs. It would also end a bonus program that rewarded states with low error rates in benefit payments because of Justice Department concerns that several states manipulated data to collect rewards. The House bill would expand work mandates to able-bodied adults aged 18 to 59 that they must meet in order to keep their food benefits. The hour weekly requirement would gradually be increased to 25 hours. The legislation also would tighten eligibility requirements, change the way monthly benefits are calculated, and shift billions of dollars from food benefits into funding for state SNAP job-training and education programs. On farm programs, the House bill tweaks the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs to improve the likelihood of payments to participating farmers if market prices or revenues continue a multi-year decline. The Senate bill does not make an overall cut to conservation funding. The House bill also would merge the Conservation Stewardship Program into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program while the Senate bill would keep them as separate programs. The two programs are the largest Agriculture Department conservation efforts to protect soil, reduce runoff and improve wildlife habitat. They are classified as working land programs because farmers and ranchers who participate can continue to grow crops and raise livestock on the enrolled acres. The Senate bill would continue the Conservation Stewardship Program as a stand-alone program. The bills also differ in how they treat the Conservation Reserve Program, which provides and year contracts to farmers who take environmentally sensitive land out of production. The House would raise the cap on acres enrolled in the program from the current 24 million acres to 29 million acres while the Senate would raise it to 26 million acres. In years of good market prices, farmers are less interested in idling productive land. Interest in the program runs higher in times of low or fluctuating prices like the past four years because farmers are paid an annual stipend to keep their land in the program. But the rates paid have drawn concerns that they are helping to inflate land values in some areas. Higher land values make it more difficult for beginning farmers to buy or rent acres for their operations.

Chapter 5 : Senate Democrats rail against reported guns-in-schools idea - Washington Times

Retain EQIP and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) as separate programs Conservation Title Funding Compared to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) baseline which was released on April 9, CBO estimates this proposed farm bill will keep level funding over the entire year CBO budget window.

Chapter 6 : Senate Passes THUD Bill as Part of Minibus Funding Package – AASHTO Journal

Ten separate Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports have called for the wasteful and duplicative program to be repealed, estimating its cost at \$30 million to start and \$14 million annually to operate, as compared with \$, a year for the original FDA inspection program.

Chapter 7 : What's inside the Senate farm bill? - POLITICO

Separate bills work their way through the House and Senate before lawmakers reconcile them in conference. The compromise bill must then pass each chamber again before heading to the president's desk.

Chapter 8 : Sen. McConnell: GOP Senate Could Take Up a Supreme Court Nomination in

A separate legislative push by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee focuses on changes to other government agencies not in the Senate Finance Committee's jurisdiction.

Chapter 9 : Bill Summaries - The Florida Senate

The Senate Armed Services Committee's version of an annual defense policy bill has three provisions targeting Turkey, a NATO ally with which the United States has had increasing tensions.