



Our Founding Purpose
Preamble
A Bill of Rights

Our Founding Purpose:

America's promise has never been that prosperity belongs to a few. The promise of America is that every person deserves a fair opportunity to build a good life through hard work, responsibility, and service to others.

But opportunity cannot flourish when power is concentrated in the hands of monopolies, oligarchs and billionaires. Shared prosperity requires markets that actually work.

For decades, rural America has generated wealth for others while too little has been invested in rural America.

Rural America cannot flourish when power is concentrated in the hands of monopolies and oligarchs. Shared prosperity requires an economy that also works for working people. Markets work best when competition is real, rules are fair, and concentrated power is restrained. A market without competition isn't capitalism — it's exploitation.

We fight so that the next generation inherits a country where every person has a fair opportunity to prosper — one where we acknowledge that our own prosperity is strengthened when our rural counterparts can prosper as well.

Neither party in Washington has delivered it.

We fight for policies and legislation that support the rights, liberties and freedoms that unlock the entrepreneurial spirit and fuel the aspirations of working Americans, so that they too can share in opportunity's bounty. We seek to do it through open dialogue and civil discourse.

That is the America we long for today, and the America that the Rural Independence Initiative exists to restore.

Preamble:

A Bill of Rights for Farmers and Rural America

Something has gone profoundly wrong in rural America.

For more than four decades, the federal government — under both political parties — has allowed a handful of corporations to seize control of the nation's food system, its farms, and its rural communities.

The consequences have devastated rural America and the farmers who grow our food. They have driven the cost of groceries skyward for every American who eats.

Four companies now control 85 percent of the beef Americans eat. Five grocery retailers control half of all grocery sales nationwide — buying power that has squeezed independent grocers out of business and left countless small towns without a locally owned place to buy fresh food.

In rural America, the consequences are there for all to see. Family farms have disappeared. Main Streets have emptied. Schools have consolidated. Rural hospitals have been shuttered. Young people have left with little reason to return. And the communities that grow our food and raise our livestock have been forced to bear the staggering environmental and public health costs of industrial agriculture — polluted water, degraded land, and the illnesses that come with them.

Every American who shops for groceries pays more — not because farmers are prospering, but because the corporations standing between the farmer and the consumer have captured an ever-larger share of every food dollar.

This did not happen by accident.

It happened because the rules were written for corporations instead of people. It happened because lobbying money flowed freely while the political will to resist it withered. It happened because Washington looked the other way while consolidation quietly strangled competition, hollowed out rural communities, and rigged the markets that farmers, ranchers, and independent businesses depend upon to survive.

The men and women who grow America's food are among the hardest-working people in this nation. They deserve fair prices, honest markets, and the freedom to farm without corporations dictating their contracts, controlling their inputs, and setting the terms.

No one who works hard and plays by the rules should struggle to afford the basics. Rural communities deserve hospitals, schools, grocery stores, and local businesses that allow families to build prosperous lives and give young people a reason to stay.

Every American — regardless of where they live — deserves a food system that serves them rather than corporate monopolies.

A Bill of Rights does not ask for special treatment from our government.

It asks for fair treatment for the people who feed America and the places they call home. It asks for honest competition instead of corporate control. It asks for markets that reward hard work instead of monopoly power. And it asks that the people of rural America enjoy the same opportunity, prosperity, and quality of life as their suburban and urban counterparts.

It is neither a Republican nor Democratic document. It is an American document. The corporations that have captured our food supply don't write checks to just one party — they buy influence in both. And the people paying the price — farmers, ranchers, rural families, and every American who eats — span every party, every state, and every ZIP code.

We are the Rural Independence Initiative — A movement to lift our towns, bring back prosperous rural communities, save our rural schools and hospitals, and restore fair markets for the farmers who grow our food.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

1. The Liberty to Farm and Feed Our Communities

No family should lose its farm because the marketplace has been rigged against them. With that liberty comes the responsibility to help feed our communities — including the children in our local schools.

We Fight To:

- Guarantee fair prices, multiple buyers, and transparent contracts for every producer.
- Protect access to independent processing and freedom from retaliation by dominant corporations.
- Expand opportunity for family farms, beginning farmers, independent ranchers, and diversified, local food production.
- Diversify domestic agriculture and strengthen regional food systems.
- Require mandatory Country of Origin Labeling and transparent food labeling.
- Prioritize federal purchasing of American-grown food, and encourage production of fruits, vegetables, livestock, and specialty crops.

Freedom means choosing how to farm and what to grow.

2. The Right to Fair, Open, and Competitive Markets

Freedom cannot exist where monopolies decide who succeeds. Every farmer, rancher, worker, entrepreneur, and independent business deserves the opportunity to compete on a level playing field — and every generation deserves the chance to build a future without leaving home.

We Fight To:

- Restore aggressive antitrust enforcement and break up monopolies throughout agriculture and the rural economy.

- Enforce the Robinson-Patman Act to stop discriminatory pricing, and investigate price fixing and market manipulation.
- Modernize antitrust laws to protect competition — not simply low consumer prices.
- Prevent unnecessary farm bankruptcies and support independent rural businesses.
- Invest in rural entrepreneurship instead of corporate consolidation.

Liberty requires competition — and the opportunity to compete should be the right of every generation, as it has for generations past.

3. The Right to Fair Capital

Capital should build communities — not extract wealth from them. For generations, rural banking meant a banker who was also a neighbor — someone who understood the land and the family behind the loan. That relationship is disappearing, and rural communities are paying the price.

We Support:

- Expanding lending for independent farmers and small businesses.
- Restoring competition in agricultural finance.
- Local lending decisions.
- Financial tools that increase rural ownership instead of corporate dependence.

Economic freedom requires access to capital.

4. The Right and Freedom to Repair What We Own

Ownership means control. If you purchase a tractor, combine, wheelchair, or other equipment, you should have the right to repair it yourself or choose who repairs it. Our forefathers never imagined a day when the machines people bought and paid for could not be fixed by the owner, or by an independent shop of their choosing.

We support national Right to Repair protections that restore ownership rights and reduce unnecessary costs for farmers, businesses, and consumers.

Ownership without the right to repair isn't ownership at all.

5. The Right to Local Control and the Protection of Our Land and Natural Resources

Local control over land and water isn't a talking point — it's the only thing standing between rural communities and the corporations solely interested in profit.

We Fight To:

- Protect farmland from unchecked data center expansion and ensure responsible siting of large industrial developments.
- Ensure clean drinking water, uncontaminated by the overapplication of animal waste, overuse of fertilizers and pesticides that have poisoned rural wells and rivers with E. coli, elevated nitrate and phosphorus levels, and other pathogens.
- Preserve local control over land-use decisions.
- Require transparency in foreign farmland ownership and protect productive farmland from speculative investment.
- Stop federal and state governments from stripping local communities — counties, townships, and towns — of their authority over agriculture, animal health, food safety, environmental protections, and land use.

Communities — not Washington — should decide how their land and water are to be protected.

6. The Right to Affordable Energy and Responsible Innovation

Technology should strengthen rural America — not exploit it. As artificial intelligence and hyperscale data centers expand, communities deserve protection, not a higher energy bill.

We Fight To:

- Require developers — not rural families — to bear the costs of electric grid upgrades, water infrastructure, road improvements, and environmental mitigation.
- Promote responsible innovation — including agri-solar and wind development that preserves productive farmland — and energy technology that keeps energy affordable.
- Guarantee transparency in data center siting and prohibit forcing local officials into nondisclosure agreements that keep the public in the dark.

Innovation should work for communities — not at their expense.

7. The Right to Strong Rural Schools

Every child deserves opportunity regardless of their ZIP code. A generation ago, a family could sell a few head of livestock or a load of grain to help cover a semester of college tuition. That path has largely disappeared, and rural families have little to replace it.

We Fight To:

- Strengthen rural public schools, career, technical and agricultural education.
- Ensure that local communities have the resources required to keep schools open and teachers teaching five full days a week.
- Ensure that all children have access to high-speed internet and learning tools they need to complete their assignments.

Every child deserves a full week of school and a full shot at opportunity.

8. The Right to Healthy Communities

Freedom means more than surviving. It means having access to health care close to home. Too many rural communities are now without a hospital, without access to specialized care, and without mental health and psychiatric services.

We will fight to preserve rural hospitals, independent physicians, rural pharmacies, and emergency, maternal, and mental health care.

We Support:

- Changing the rules governing Pharmacy Benefit Managers to ensure that independent pharmacies can compete fairly and remain in business.
- Fixing Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rate structures to adequately compensate rural hospitals for services they provide.
- Updating restrictive federal regulations to fast-track Rural Emergency Hospital conversions where hospitals have closed.
- Rigorous enforcement of anti-trust laws to curtail mergers in the healthcare industry, including the Clayton Act, the Sherman Act and the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act.

No community should lose its hospital because a Private Equity Fund found it profitable to close it.

9. The Right and Liberty of Healthy Food Choices

Far too many rural communities have become food deserts despite being surrounded by farmland. Independent grocery stores have disappeared as discriminatory pricing and consolidation favored national chains, leaving countless rural communities without access to fresh fruit and vegetables.

We Support:

- Enforcing the Robinson-Patman Act and protecting independent grocers.
- Expanding food access and supporting local food retailers.
- Creating competitive grocery markets that give families more choices at fair prices.
- Ensuring farm programs support farmers who grow food for people, ensuring that farmers who grow fruits and vegetables receive the same risk-management support afforded those who grow animal feed.
- Ensuring that nutrition assistance programs serve all families in need.

No one living in rural America should be forced to drive more than an hour to buy fresh fruit and vegetables.

10. The Right and Freedom to Make and Grow Things in America

America cannot remain independent and self-sustaining if it becomes dangerously dependent on foreign nations for essential goods. We cannot allow ourselves to become dependent on foreign countries or potential adversaries for goods essential to national security — food, medicines, medical supplies, energy, computer chips, rare earth metals. Rural America has a role in making America self-sustaining.

We Support:

- Rewarding companies that manufacture in America.
- Negotiating trade deals that open real markets for American-grown food and grains — not trade wars that leave farmers holding the bag.
- Strengthening domestic supply chains and expanding value-added agriculture.
- Creating good-paying jobs in rural communities, where American manufacturing once flourished.

America should make more things in America again.

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