



AMERICANS FOR LIMITED GOVERNMENT

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Feb. 10, 2016

Dear Republican U.S. Senators and Representatives:

While “hot button” issues will generate headlines as the current session of Congress continues, important issues related to U.S. farm policy should not be overlooked, especially reforms to the nation’s sugar program.

A major challenge on this issue is that it has split conservatives.

One side wants to immediately and unilaterally end the current program of tariffs and quotas on imported market-distorting/government-subsidized foreign sugar even if it means increasing dependence on unreliable foreign food supplies.

The other side wants to end the current sugar program, as well, but not without simultaneously ending the market-distorting foreign government subsidies that unfairly place American farmers at a competitive disadvantage.

It’s a subtle but critical difference of opinion on strategy, not philosophy.

One side wants the United States to operate in a free market manner even if the rest of the world doesn’t play by the same rules. The other side insists that the only true free market is a global free market.

Ending the U.S. sugar program unilaterally without verifiable and enforceable protections to prevent foreign nations from “dumping” artificially cheap, government-subsidized sugar on our market could cripple, if not destroy, our domestic industry.

That is decidedly not in our nation’s national security interest.

Instead, it would be more responsible to pursue a strategic “zero-for-zero” policy in which the U.S. will agree to end our sugar program in return for foreign competitors agreeing to simultaneously end their government subsidy programs.

“We’ll end ours if you end yours.” A win-win for everybody and perfectly consistent with conservative, free-market principles.

Critics of such a zero-for-zero strategic policy maintain that foreign governments will never agree to such reform and, as such, reform will never happen.

But those criticisms ring hollow in light of the global deal struck on agricultural subsidies at December’s World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Nairobi.

While it’s true that the Nairobi reforms only included export subsidies and didn’t extend to direct production subsidies or other trade-distorting programs such as currency manipulation, debt forgiveness and government-run monopolies, it nevertheless proves that such negotiations and agreements are plausible and possible.

As such, we the undersigned free-market conservatives urge Members to reject calls for

immediate “unilateral disarmament” as it relates to the U.S. sugar program and instead embrace the more measured and reasoned strategic approach of a negotiated “zero-for-zero” reform proposal among global competitors.

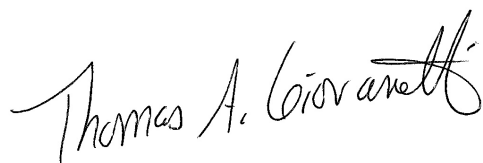
Sincerely,



Rick Manning
President, Americans for Limited Government



Mario Lopez
President, Hispanic Leadership Fund

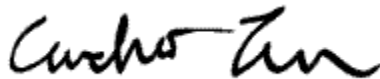


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