



NASCOE Annual Convention

College Station, TX – August 2023



The NASCOE Advocacy Team



- Clint Bain – Tennessee
- David McBryde – North Carolina





Political Landscape – House

- Republican control – 222 to 211 with 1 vacancy
- Tight majority = difficult to pass bills that become law
- Committee on Agriculture – G.T. Thompson (R-PA) / David Scott (D-GA)
 - ✓ 232 Members since the 2018 Farm Bill
- Committee Farm Bill Priorities
 - ✓ Commodity Programs
 - ✓ Conservation and Climate Change
 - ✓ Domestic Nutrition
 - ✓ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Committee on Appropriations – Kay Granger (R-TX) / Rosa Delauro (D-CT)
 - ✓ Debt limit debate finalized
 - ✓ 1% across the board cut should bills fail to become law
 - ✓ House remains focused on cutting spending



Political Landscape – Senate

- Democratic Control 51 / 49 Senate
- Committee on Agriculture – Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) / John Boozman (R-AR)
- Tight majority makes it difficult to legislate – 60 vote threshold
- Senate Ag Committee
 - ✓ 25 newly elected Senators since the 2018 Farm Bill
- Committee Farm Bill Priorities
 - ✓ Commodity Programs
 - ✓ Conservation and Climate Change
 - ✓ Domestic Nutrition – little if any cuts
 - ✓ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Committee on Appropriations – Patty Murray (D-WA) / Susan Collins (R-ME)
 - ✓ Increasing spending above the debt limit deal
 - ✓ Creating a clash with House Conservatives/Freedom Caucus



President Biden's Agenda

- Rolling back President Trump's regulations
- Amending the current tax code / \$400,000 and Corporate Rates
- Enacting Climate Change Programs
- Immigration improvements
- Racial Equity across government programs
- Economy / Bidenomics



Biden-Harris USDA Priorities

- Advancing Racial Justice, Equity, Opportunity, and Rural Prosperity
- Addressing Climate Change via Climate-Smart Agriculture, Forestry, and Clean Energy
- Tackling Food and Nutrition Insecurity
- Creating More, Better, and New Market Opportunities

Our Industry

- \$1.264 Trillion contributed to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021
5.4 percent share
- America's farms contributed \$164 Billion in 2021 – up \$28 billion compared to 2019
- 21.1 Million full and part-time jobs – down 1.1 million compared to 2019



NASCOE's 2022 Priorities

- ✓ Protect employee benefits and increase pay
- ✓ Protect FSA's commodity and conservation programs
- ✓ Secure additional salaries and expenses funding
- ✓ Advocate before the leadership of USDA
- ⌚ Hire new FSA County Office staff based on workload data
- ⌚ Reauthorize the Farm Bill



Debt Limit Deal

- Debt limit deal approved
- Protects our country's full faith and credit
- Rescinds \$28 billion from previous COVID-19 funds
- Rescinds \$1.4 billion from IRS funds
- No budget caps for 2025 and beyond
- Appropriations trigger – calendar year begins 1% across the board cut



FY 2024 House Appropriations

- House Committee approved the Agriculture appropriations bill

| 2023 Funding | President's Budget | 2024 Committee Funding | Final vs 2023 Enacted |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| \$1.521 B | \$1.583 B | \$1.521 B | - 0 - |

- FSA Salaries and Expenses held steady for FY 2024
- Includes our office closure language
- Fully funds county committee meetings
- Full House debate scheduled and postponed



FY 2024 Senate Appropriations

- Senate Committee has approved their draft bill and report

| 2023 Funding | President's Budget | 2024 Committee Funding | Final vs 2023 Enacted |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| \$1.521 B | \$1.583 B | \$1.536 B | +\$15.8 M |

- FSA Salaries and Expenses increased by \$15.8 million
- Includes our office closure language
- Fully funds county committee meetings



Farm Bill Reauthorization

- Farm Bill expiration coming soon – September 30
- House and Senate Committees preparing for September action
- Funding needs across all titles of the bill
- Increasing reference prices for commodities
- Conservation / Climate funding across current and improved programs
- Research initiatives for 1890 Institutions



Farm Bill – Best Outcome

- Farm Bill expiration coming soon – September 30
- House and Senate Committee approvals during September
- House bill remains bipartisan
- House and Senate floor action and passage during October or November
- New bill signed by the end of 2023



Farm Bill – Road Blocks

- Farm Bill expiration coming soon – September 30
- House and Senate Committee approvals during September
- House bill becomes partisan
 - ✓ All House Dems vote no based on insufficient funding
 - ✓ All House Dems vote no based on domestic nutrition cuts
- House Freedom Caucus votes no and the bill is partisan
 - ✓ 10 – 25 Republicans and all Dems vote no
 - ✓ Bill doesn't cut overall funding enough
 - ✓ Bill doesn't cut nutrition enough
- February / March arrives with no resolution
- One-year extension



NASCOE's 2023 Priorities

- Employee Pay and Retention – our top priority
- September 2022 NASCOE letter calling on FSA to increase pay
- Administrator's letter dated July 2023
 - ✓ Student loan repayment program
 - ✓ PTs with one year qualify for Grade 9
 - ✓ Grade 5 CEDs promoted within six-months
 - ✓ One-year supervisory experience qualify for Grade 9
 - ✓ 6% group retention incentive for 1101 and 1105 series position
- FSA's Pay Strategy
 - ✓ 2023 – compile data
 - ✓ 2024/2025 – OPM to assess data by position/grade
 - ✓ 2025/2026 – Rollout pay initiatives



NASCOE's 2023 Priorities

- 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization
 - ✓ Protect County Committee structure
 - ✓ Protect our employee's current authorities
 - ✓ Workable commodity programs
 - ✓ Livestock Forage Program
 - ✓ Adequate funding for implementation

- Federal Retirement Fairness Act (Reps Derek Kilmer and Tom Cole) / not yet introduced
 - ✓ This bill modifies the federal civilian service that is creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Currently, nondeduction service performed before January 1, 1989, is creditable under FERS so long as a deposit is made into the retirement fund to cover the period of nondeduction service. This bill allows nondeduction service performed on or after January 1, 1989, to be creditable under FERS so long as a deposit is made into the retirement fund.

- Possible action by USDA



NASCOE's 2022 Priorities

- HR 866 Equal COLA Act (Rep Gerald Connolly / 35 Cosponsors / Oversight and Reform)
 - ✓ This legislation would improve and balance FERS retirement benefits.

- HR 82 Social Security Fairness Act (Rep Garrett Graves / 288 Cosponsors / Ways and Means)
 - ✓ This bill repeals provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government. The bill also eliminates the *windfall elimination provision*, which in some instances reduces Social Security benefits for individuals who also receive a pension or disability benefit from an employer that did not withhold Social Security taxes.



Conclusion

- NASCOE's advocacy efforts
 - ✓ Federal appropriations
 - ✓ Farm Bill negotiations
 - ✓ Improving employee pay and benefits

- Political Action Committee – NASCOE PAC
 - ✓ Effectively utilizing NASCOE's PAC to build relationships and identify Capitol Hill advocates

- Our membership needs to build on current efforts to add new association members. With new members, we are expanding our footprint and identifying future NASCOE leaders.

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