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February 2, 2023

The Honorable Cory Booker
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jim McGovern
370 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Booker and Representative McGovern:

We are writing in support of the Industrial Agriculture Accountability Act and thank you for your leadership to ensure safety for consumers and workers. The Industrial Agriculture Act will authorize increased funding for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and require alternatives to dangerously high line speeds. AFGE has endorsed this legislation and our locals wholeheartedly support this bill.

Specifically, AFGE supports Section 322 prohibiting certain harmful drugs from being administered to the animals prior to slaughter. Food inspectors dedicate their lives to protecting consumers; allowing them to test for hazardous drugs given to animals before slaughter will enable them to ensure American families stay safe.

Section 332 ends dangerous high-speed slaughter lines and so called “self-inspection systems” and is another important provision to keep families safe. There is currently minimal oversight at “self-inspecting” sites, and employees who are paid by the plant are focused primarily on ensuring mass production is swift and expedient. In addition, recent beef plant specific waivers remove traditional FSIS inspection.

FSIS is drastically understaffed, and we support Section 334 to provide additional funding for inspectors. It is time to put the safety of American consumers above the profits of the big food processing companies. Additional inspectors, combined with better training and giving food inspectors the tools they need, will help ensure that the food on American tables is safe for consumption.

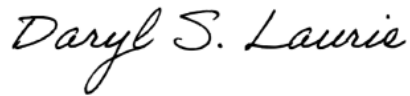
Finally, AFGE strongly supports the pilot program in Title II, Section 203. It is critical that inspection personnel have the expertise and knowledge to adequately protect consumers and keep themselves safe on the job, but FSIS has failed to provide the training needed on an ongoing basis. Implementing this Pilot Program would be an important first step to improving our FSIS workforce.

Thank you for your work in introducing the Industrial Agriculture Accountability Act. Should you have any questions, please contact Jeff Cruz, jeff.cruz@afge.org or Fiona Kohrman, Fiona.Kohrman@afge.org.

Sincerely,



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National Joint Council Chair
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Daryl Laurie
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