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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Fighting for the Farm

APRIL 04TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Fighting for the Farm
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As a fourth-generation family farm owner, I know just how important agricultural operations are to Missouri's economy and our rural communities. Missouri farmers are some of the hardest working people around, and it's a privilege to represent them in the United States Congress. Whether you grow corn or cotton, raise cattle or pigs or run one of the many other ag operations across our great state, your hard work not only feeds and clothes Americans, but millions of other families around the world. This week, through National Agriculture Week, we recognize the dedication, strength and perseverance of the American farmer.

In the summer of 2016, when visiting the countless farm operations which call southern Missouri home, the number one concern I heard from folks was about how the aggressive regulatory agenda from the Obama Administration was hurting the ability to farm one's land, to provide for their family and to continue family operations which had been in practice for generations. Whether it be trying to prevent their own kids from working on their farm, keeping farm equipment off of rural roads, trying to regulate every bucket of water on a farm or treating spilled cow's milk like the '89 Exxon Valdez accident – Missouri farmers were being crushed under a regulatory agenda which severely tied their hands and hampered their ability to operate.

Before he was even inaugurated, President Trump and his team took an interest in hearing how they could provide regulatory relief to rural America. I sat down with his team and explained the regulations that were most harming Missouri farming operations. Within his first months of office President Trump repealed many of those regulations and has continued to remove more each and every day. As a matter of fact, he has removed over 1000 regulations, saving our economy over \$8 billion in regulatory costs. Missouri farmers deserve to work day in and day out on their land, not worrying about some regulation written by an out of touch Washington bureaucrat who has never set foot in our home state or on a farm.

But more than just regulations, many of our farmers are faced with some of the highest tax burdens found anywhere in the world. Last year, I traveled with the President twice to Missouri to talk about how we could deliver real tax cuts and real tax relief to the thousands of Missouri farm families who make a living off the land. I talked to the President about how our farmers needed expensing relief to know they could deduct that next piece of equipment right away, how we needed to make sure our farmers could continue to use a cash basis accounting and how the unfair death tax was punishing farming families who were simply trying to keep their operation going from one generation to the next. We talked about how we needed to lower rates on farmers and simplify the filing process so they could spend more time in their fields and with their families than worry about calculating every receipt. After making frequent trips to the White House, going to hundreds of meetings with my colleagues on the tax-writing committee and making countless late night phone calls to get the President's opinion on the tax cuts bill, we were able to deliver real tax relief to Missouri families and farmers with the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, signed into law last December.

By reducing regulations, cutting taxes, and creating a fair playing field for farmers, we've made it possible for rural America to come roaring back to life. For only the second time in the last century, the number of farmers under 35 has actually gone up

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and in 2017, rural job creation accounted for a larger share of overall job creation than ever before. With the President's leadership, we have been able to deliver tax cuts for American farmers, put duce federal regulations, drive down g jobs back to rural America.

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During National Agriculture Week, and every other week of the year, it is a real privilege for me to support Missouri's biggest industry and serve as their voice in Congress. As we continue to work on behalf of rural America, I know we can deliver on even more policy wins for the hardest working folks in America, our farmers, and make it easier for them to do what they do best... feed and clothe the world.

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