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We Are The Field

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One thing I love to do is simply drive through Southeast Missouri during harvest time. I liken it to those on the East Coast, where I once lived, who love to watch the leaves change during the fall. Just seeing the corn and wheat, beans and rice ripe and ready to be picked is a sight to see. Unfortunately, there are those who fly over us and live in the concrete jungles of America who will never get to experience or see what we have the opportunity of seeing up close each and every year. They don't know what it's like to be reliant on nature...to the rain...or lack of it. God tests us year after year, but when his bounty is plentiful, it is beautiful.

President Reagan once said, "If things are going to get better (in this economy) then things have to get better for the American Farmer." I believe this is true even now, especially for those of us in Southeast Missouri. Reagan understood that farmers are the backbone of a rural economy, and that in their weathered hands rests the livelihoods of the community as a whole.

I know that a farm family is a proud family with generations of history and tradition, and I know that a farm family lives it every day, with more knowledge and respect for land and livestock than many of us will never know.

And even though I can't start to understand the agony of a failed crop, or what that means to the families beholden to the land for their prosperity and sustenance, I do know the entrepreneurial spirit it takes to be a success in business. I know what it means to be an independent self-starter, and staying motivated to work towards a goal with only the "hope" of a positive outcome, but remain alert to the task even as the sand shifts, and the outcome changes.

I know what it's like to not have an audience or clients, and what that kind of "drought" means for business. I have had the weather determine my schedule. I, too, have suffered in the heat for my craft. I have tasted both success and defeat year after arduous year, yet remained resilient through all of God's daily challenges.

I admit there is a lot I need to learn about farming, because watching the crops grow is simply a beginner's course in the subject. As for policy, I look forward to listening to new ideas, but also standing firm and remaining true to what has made our farmer's thrive while seeking ways to improve their lives and their industry. I see the many similarities of economics that also exist in my field of expertise, and I look forward to learning...to build a common ground in order to find the best ways to promote policies and ideas that will allow us all to flourish and succeed in the future.

I write songs, one in particular is called "Missouri Anthem." In it I wrote the words, "Our families and fields bare the fruits of our labor," and they truly do. We are all a product of someone's hard work and sacrifice for a life we cannot even actualize or imagine yet. For now, our life is a magnificent gift and blessing with so many possibilities. We are the field...waiting for the farmer to plant whatever seeds he deems necessary to cultivate the land. And to that farmer...I salute you.

Neal E. Boyd

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