

DATE

Ohio State Rep. or Senator NAME

Address

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Dear Rep. or Sen. \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a farmer in [Your LOCATION HERE]. My family produces [CROPS, LIVESTOCK HERE]. As you may know, all of these commodities are covered by so-called agricultural checkoff programs which allow industry groups to siphon money from farmers for promoting these commodities.

While these checkoffs were thought to be helpful in the past, over the course of the past several years, their state and national boards have been dominated by the interests of huge, multinational corporations and their efforts no longer represent the family farmers and ranchers they were meant to promote.

In 2018 alone, all farmers – large and small – paid around \$900 million into these programs. The Ohio Farmers Union has set out highlight this issue in 2020. With the money involved and powerful corporate interests behind these checkoffs, you can imagine that ending them or reforming them has been difficult.

Our policy states, in part:

“... We propose that federal and state checkoff funds be paid directly to the appropriate federal or state treasury and then be audited by the corresponding federal or state auditing agency to assure that the actions of checkoff groups comply with the intentions of the Congress, in support of the interests of domestic agricultural producers. The Ohio Farmers Union urges that the Ohio Governor in conjunction with the Ohio State Auditor to take seriously the governance of these multi-million-dollar public-private entities and ensure that farmers’ hard-earned, coerced contributions are being used according to state and federal laws and not directly for political lobbying activities.”

I urge you to take up this good government issue and help us convince state leaders to exercise the power and responsibility that they already have under state and federal law. I also offer to bring to you for further discussion folks from OFU and other family groups. Farming is hard work for modest returns. We farmers cannot much longer afford to continue to pay into these government-sanctioned programs that no longer benefit most of us.

Sincerely,