



JIMMY PARNELL
PRESIDENT

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Mo Brooks
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Brooks:

I write to address several points you made in reference to the Alabama Farmers Federation during a radio interview on the Dale Jackson Show on Newstalk 92.5, May 7, 2020. Your assertion that our support for market access for American agricultural products in China results in the Alabama Farmers Federation being “on the opposite side of America and on the side of the Chinese” is not only unfair, it is untrue. It is also an insult to the Alabama farmers who’ve endured punitive tariffs and low commodity prices while standing with President Donald Trump to hold China more accountable.

The Alabama Farmers Federation is charged with carrying out the policies adopted by our members at the local level, many of whom are also your constituents. The comments you directed at the “lobbying organization” were not factual and reflected poorly on our farm families who you described as the “salt of the earth.” How can you in one breath call farmers the “salt of the earth,” and in the next, imply their interest in global trade is treasonous?

The Alabama Farmers Federation is a grassroots organization. Our policy positions begin at the county level — in the fields, pastures and forests of your district. When you attack Alfa or the Federation, your words injure the very farmers you claim to hold in high regard. Every position we take is based on policy approved by these same members. Not only does our policy start at the local level, so does our endorsement process. Your constituents sought new leadership for Alabama’s 5th Congressional district, not the “lobbying organization.” You govern in a representative democracy, and your job is to represent the views and interests of your constituents. Our members no longer believe this is your primary focus and, it is the reason they looked for change in leadership.

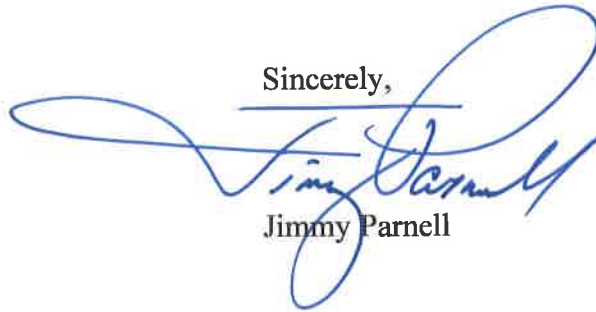
The Alabama Farmers Federation unapologetically supports fair trade with other countries, including China, because this is the position our members have embraced. Alabama farmers have stood shoulder to shoulder with President Trump in his pursuit of leveling the playing field with China. When the Chinese government responded with the first round of retaliatory tariffs on the U.S., it was the farmer who suffered most. We believe American agriculture was targeted by China for two reasons. One, agriculture is a bright spot in our nation’s trade balance because we export more ag products than we import. This has been the case for more than two decades. Two, it was rural America that elected President Trump, and China wanted to separate the President from his base. China’s leaders were not successful. Our farmers continue to patriotically support the President’s work to hold China accountable.



You also referenced the trade imbalance with China during the interview. However, you did not bother to share with the listeners that agricultural exports from the U.S. to China help reduce that deficit. The Chinese people purchase more agricultural products from the U.S. than they export to the U.S. If you are truly concerned about addressing the overall trade deficit with China, you should be on the frontline advocating for more access for U.S. agricultural goods in China, rather than continuing this self-serving, divisive rhetoric which does nothing to advance the cause of liberty.

While I could not let these attacks on the Alabama Farmers Federation and the farm families we represent go without a response, our commitment to work with you and your staff for a better Alabama and a better America stands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jimmy Parnell", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the left.

Jimmy Parnell