

January 21, 2020

Dear Candidates,

We urge you, and anyone else, who cares about the demise of rural America to read the attached report, *The Supreme Court Has Undermined Iowa's Small Farms and Rural Communities*.

Throughout the United States, and particularly in the Midwest, small farms and rural communities have been devastated in recent years. Technological advances, corporate consolidation, and government policy have led to the demise of rural America.

There has been less attention, however, to the role that federal courts, including the Supreme Court, have played in rural America's demise, particularly in Iowa. The attached report is a "must-read" because it explains what has happened.

Almost a century ago, Congress passed laws to protect small farmers and rural communities and to break up agricultural monopolies that large corporations had established. These laws worked well as long as federal courts allowed them to operate as Congress intended, and small farmers thrived until the 1980's.

Starting a generation ago, however, the Supreme Court and lower federal courts started to chip away at the laws that had protected small farmers since the Depression, allowing large corporations to engage in unfair trade practices. As a result, agribusiness conglomerates re-established monopoly control over agricultural markets.

Agriculture is not the only industry in which the Supreme Court has sided, time and again, with big business against the interests of workers and everyday Americans, but it is a particularly glaring example of what happens when courts favor the rich and powerful over everyday citizens.

Rural America is badly in need of revitalization, and some of your campaigns have proposed rural plans to deconsolidate agricultural markets and strengthen small farmers and local communities. The same trends that characterized the past generation, however, are likely to continue. As this report explains, the Supreme Court is likely to strike down rural revitalization plans, consistent with its record of voting in the direction favored by large corporations.

Thank you for giving this report your attention. We urge you to have a plan to protect your agenda from the Court, because we believe that the Supreme Court will continue to side with the interests of big business unless you, and everyday Americans, speak up and ensure that their voices are heard.

Sincerely,

Aaron Lehman
President, Iowa Farmers Union

John Norris
Partner, State Public Policy Group

Tim Gannon
2018 Democratic Candidate
for Secretary of Agriculture

Kurt Meyer
Chair of the Tri-County Democrats of Iowa