

2022 NYFB Congressional Candidate Questionnaire



New York Farm Bureau 159 Wolf Rd., Suite 300, Albany, NY 12205 1-800-342-4143 <http://www.nyfb.org>

Election Day is rapidly approaching, and as New York's largest farm advocacy organization, New York Farm Bureau invites you to complete the enclosed agricultural issues survey and share your opinions regarding a number of farm and rural issues impacting the New York agricultural industry. As you are well aware, there are a number of important public policy issues confronting farmers and our members need a clear understanding of how candidates plan to address these issues.

Your responses to the survey questions will be printed in the October 2022 edition of our newspaper, *Grassroots*, a Farm Bureau publication sent to our membership, industry leaders, and local libraries, with a circulation of close to 21,000. In order to ensure that your survey response is included in the October issue, please respond by Friday, **September 9, 2022** and please keep your responses to a maximum of 150 words per question as space is limited. Anything beyond the 150-word limit will not be printed. As always, it should be noted that a failure to respond, by any of the candidates, will be noted in *Grassroots* as well.

Please return your responses along with a headshot to: lwilliams@nyfb.org

Should you have any questions regarding the survey or farm issues in general, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Williams at (518) 588-6338 or lwilliams@nyfb.org.

1. What do you think is the largest issue facing farmers in this district? What solutions would you seek?

Rising energy costs and inflation are crippling family farms throughout New York State and the country. The rising fuel costs have increased the price for farmers to operate their machinery and transport their products to market, as a result many farmers are struggling to break even. Our country needs to unshackle our energy industry and allow for further exploration of energy resources right here in the United States. There is no reason we should not be an energy independent country, I will push for policies to do that. As a Member of Congress, my top priority will be to restore fiscal sanity to Washington and put an end to the out-of-control spending that has given us out-of-control inflation.

2. One of the biggest challenges for New York agriculture is having access to reliable, skilled labor when domestic workers cannot meet this need. Delays in the H-2A program have frustrated farmers and led to loss of crops and unknown legal status of current workers are all concerns that farmers have when it comes to a dependable workforce. How do you see Congress moving forward to address agricultural immigration in a bipartisan manner?

As you know, the economy of the 23rd Congressional District relies heavily on its farmers and its rural communities. I grew up in rural Cattaraugus County and worked for two Members of Congress who represented very rural districts, so I'm aware of the labor concerns of New York's farmers. As a Member of Congress, I'll work towards enacting sensible immigration policies that benefit our farmers while also ensuring America's borders are safe and secure.

I would also add on the topic of labor that I am opposed to New York's change to the labor law as it relates to farm workers and I believe lowering the overtime threshold from 60 to 40 hours would be devastating to our farms. If there is an avenue at the federal level to combat this I will explore it.

3. **Despite growing and raising diverse agricultural products in New York, farmers still face challenges in getting food from the rural areas of our farms to the suburban and urban locations of so many consumers. What would you do to help bridge this divide? What efforts would you take to ensure farmers are able to have reliable markets for their goods?**

Too often, high energy costs and insufficient and outdated infrastructure stand in the way of New York's farmers being able to transport food and other products to suburban and urban markets. As a Member of Congress, I'll work with my colleagues in the House and also with our partners at the local and state level to make sure rural New York gets its fair share of infrastructure dollars. Just as downstate politicians fight for their region's interests, I'll fight for the interests of Western New York and the Southern Tier.

I also believe we need to look at policies that help our truck drivers and incentivize people to seek employment as a trucker. The shortage of truck drivers is only increasing the cost to get food to markets.

4. **Farmers are known as stewards of the land, and agriculture plays a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through conservation practices and renewable energy. As Congress works to address climate change, how will you ensure that agriculture is part of the conversation?**

As a Member of Congress, I'll oppose proposals like the Green New Deal. America's farmers are our country's original and truest conservationists. In Congress, I'll oppose "green" proposals that put America, America's farmers, and America's workers at a disadvantage to our competitors around the world. I hope that the farmers and farm communities of the 23rd District will join me in this effort.