

To the office of U.S. Representative Ronny Jackson

Re: HR 7466 (119th Congress), SAFE CATTLE Act • Latest action (2026-07-21): Subcommittee Hearings Held
VFA SI Solution #193 • published 2026-07-23 • <https://www.valuesforamerica.com/solutions/193>
Office of record (Congress.gov): 125 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC • (202) 225-3706

Cattle Safety Incentive and State Partnership Act

The measure, as described from the official record: To improve the safety of cattle products by establishing federal standards for cattle handling, health, and traceability to reduce foodborne illness and animal disease outbreaks.

THE PROPOSAL

This Act establishes a voluntary grant program administered by the Secretary of Agriculture to support state-led cattle safety initiatives. States may apply for funds to implement or enhance programs for cattle disease surveillance, traceability systems, and humane handling standards. To qualify, a state must submit a plan that meets minimum federal guidelines for data sharing and outbreak response, but retains flexibility in enforcement methods. No federal mandate is imposed on any cattle producer; participation is entirely voluntary at the state level. Grants are awarded competitively based on public health impact and cost-effectiveness. The program is funded by a user fee on cattle sold in interstate commerce, set at a rate sufficient to cover program costs without exceeding \$50 million annually. The program sunsets after 5 years, with a mandatory evaluation by the Government Accountability Office. The Secretary may withhold future grants from states that fail to comply with agreed-upon data reporting, but no criminal or civil penalties apply to producers. The effective date is 180 days after enactment.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	User fee on cattle sold in interstate commerce, deposited into a dedicated Cattle Safety Fund.
Funding Amount	Up to \$50 million per fiscal year, adjusted for inflation.
Sunset Years	5 years
Oversight Body	Government Accountability Office, with annual reports to Congress on program effectiveness and state compliance.
Enforcement Mechanism	Withholding of future grant funds from non-compliant states; no direct federal enforcement against producers.
Effective Date	180 days after enactment.

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (Spending Clause – Congress may tax and spend for the general welfare)
- Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (Commerce Clause – user fee on interstate cattle sales is within federal power)

- Tenth Amendment (powers not delegated to the United States are reserved to the states; this program is voluntary and respects state autonomy)

Concerns with the measure as written:

- The original bill may exceed Congress's enumerated powers by imposing direct federal mandates on intrastate cattle operations that do not substantially affect interstate commerce, violating the Tenth Amendment.
- If the bill creates a federal regulatory scheme without clear connection to interstate commerce, it may infringe on states' traditional police powers over agriculture and animal health.

WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

Honors Democratic priorities by providing federal funding to improve public health and animal disease prevention, and by setting baseline safety standards. Honors Republican priorities by respecting state sovereignty through a voluntary, non-mandatory program, limiting federal spending with a user fee and sunset, and avoiding direct regulation of farmers and ranchers.

Values for America is a nonpartisan, constitution-first SI think tank. This brief is informational. It is a policy proposal, not law, and it does not support or oppose any candidate or party. Full analysis and sources: <https://www.valuesforamerica.com/solutions/193> · Methodology: <https://www.valuesforamerica.com/methodology>