



2026 South Dakota Legislature

House Concurrent Resolution 6016

Introduced by: **Representative Auch**

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION supporting reform of the beef checkoff program.**

2 WHEREAS, the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985, commonly known as the beef
3 checkoff, mandated a fee of one dollar per head on cattle sales to fund research, promotion,
4 and education, replacing a successful voluntary program; and

5 WHEREAS, since its inception, the beef checkoff has coincided with industry challenges,
6 including a decline in the number of United States beef cows from 35.4 million in 1985 to 27.9
7 million in 2025, the lowest number in multiple decades; and

8 WHEREAS, per capita beef consumption decreased from seventy-seven pounds in 1985 to
9 between fifty-six and fifty-eight pounds today; and

10 WHEREAS, United States beef imports as a percent of domestic consumption have
11 increased from ten percent in 1985 to twenty-two percent today, making the United States
12 the second-largest beef importer globally, and contributing to a fifty percent loss in cow-calf
13 producers and a seventy percent loss in independent feedlots; and

14 WHEREAS, meatpacking concentration has increased from fifty percent in 1985 to eighty-
15 five percent today; and

16 WHEREAS, the beef checkoff program has been criticized for conflicts of interest, lack of
17 transparency, and providing moneys to organizations such as the National Cattlemen's Beef
18 Association, which supports policies that many producers view as harmful, including free trade
19 and opposition to mandatory country of origin labeling; and

20 WHEREAS, the checkoff structure undermines independent decision-making, with
21 meatpackers influencing checkoff matters through the National Cattlemen's Beef Association
22 and the Federation of State Beef Councils;

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the One Hundred
2 First Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the South
3 Dakota congressional delegation is urged to support the bipartisan Opportunities for Fairness
4 in Farming Act of 2025, S. 1848 and H.R. 3516, as a first step in reforming checkoff programs,
5 including the beef checkoff program; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature supports the intent of the Opportunities
7 for Fairness in Farming Act to ensure transparency and accountability by prohibiting contracts
8 with entities that influence government policy, with the exception of higher education;
9 preventing conflicts of interest, anticompetitive practices, and deceptive activities; requiring
10 transparent budgets and detailed contract records; and mandating periodic audits by the
11 United States Department of Agriculture inspector general and comptroller general; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature affirms that future amendments to the
13 Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act should prioritize promoting United States beef and
14 cattle markets, ensuring that America First policies guide checkoff activities, and ending
15 generic promotion; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that periodic votes by the producers who fund the beef
17 checkoff should be required to ensure accountability and alignment of the program with the
18 interests of American farmers, ranchers, and producers.