WHY THE U.S. SHOULD IMMEDIATELY PASS M-COOL FOR BEEF

- In 2017, President Trump issued his *Buy American Hire American* Executive Order to stimulate America's economy. In 2021, then-President Biden issued his *Buy American* Executive Order to accomplish the same goal. President Trump is now back in office with his *America First* policy.

- Citizens, however, still cannot choose to buy American-born and -raised beef because Congress repealed Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (M-COOL) for beef in 2015. Since that time, consumers have been deprived of their right to choose beef produced by America's cattle farmers and ranchers.

- Recognizing that lower-cost imports can reduce the demand for domestic meat animals, current U.S. labeling law requires M-COOL labels on chicken, lamb, goat meat, fish and shellfish, and venison. Beef and pork are now outliers and consumers cannot distinguish beef produced exclusively in America versus beef produced in whole or in part in a foreign country.

- The U.S. is the world's second largest beef importer. During the past five years, importers shipped about 1.9 million cattle and about 3.7 billion pounds of beef into America each year from about 20 countries. These imports are direct substitutes for U.S. cattle and beef and now represent about 22% of domestic beef consumption. These imports reduce the demand and price for domestic cattle because demand and price are sensitive to changes in supplies, particularly imported supplies.

- Not only is beef being sold in the U.S. without an origin label; but also, the "Product of USA" label is being applied to imported beef that undergoes only minor processing in the U.S., such as being unpackaged and repackaged, and to beef derived exclusively from imported cattle from Canada and Mexico. *(Update: The USDA issued a final rule to correct this deceptive practice, but it won't be enforced until January 1, 2026, and any labeling will be voluntary and not applicable to imports.)*

- When M-COOL for beef was in effect in 2013-2015, cattle prices paid to American cattle farmers and ranchers reached historic highs. In 2016, the year after COOL for beef was repealed, U.S. cash receipts from the sale of cattle fell $17 billion when compared to 2014.

- When M-COOL for beef was in effect, the rural economy was significantly stimulated by the resulting higher cattle prices. This was because:
  - The U.S. cattle industry has the greatest impact on Rural America as it is the largest segment of American agriculture, generating about $86 billion in average annual cash receipts.
  - America has 932,000 farms/ranches with cattle and calves, representing nearly 40% of the nation's total of 1.9 million farms and ranches.

- Reinstating M-COOL for beef by passing the American Beef Labeling Act, S.421 would:
  - Empower consumers to decide from which country they want their beef sourced, not the four global packers that control over 80% of the fed cattle market.
  - Strengthen the domestic cattle industry by enabling consumers to support America's live cattle supply chain, which will strengthen national security.
  - Prevent ongoing industry consolidation by promoting competition at the retail counter.
  - Prevent consumer deception caused by affixing the USA label on beef derived from foreign cattle.
  - Provide consumers with more choices and more pricing options.
  - Allow consumers to express their nationalism/patriotism.
  - Allow consumers to selectively avoid beef from countries that may have food safety problems.
  - Create new opportunities to rebuild America's cattle herd and to attract new entrants into the ranching sector as undifferentiated imports could no longer be used to fill domestic supply gaps.