



# CONGRESS AND AGRICULTURE POLICY

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# How Agriculture Policy has changed

- Since 1949 we have multi-year authorizations for Agriculture
  - *Known as the farm bill*
- The last one in 2018 failed, was reconsidered and was passed
  - *So, we conclude that they are increasing difficult to pass*
  - *Why?*
  - *Let's try to answer that question*

# Reasons why Agriculture bills are difficult

- Budgeting is very complex
  - *Authorizations – create programs, set dollar amounts*
  - *Appropriations – provide the actual money*
  - *Budget reconciliation – can force changes to meet budget targets*
- So anything with money has to go through lots of hurdles
- There are lot more visible interest groups

# A few interests

- Big farmers
- Small farmers
- Separate commodity interests
- Dairy
- Ag-business
- Conservation
- Minority farmers
- All must be accommodated

# Historically

- Were fewer of these interests
- Agriculture committees brokered and brought forth a bill every 4 years or so

# Other factors

- Expenditures for Food Stamps complicated the passage
  - *Now SNAP*
- Transformation of the south from one-party Democratic control to Republican control
  - *Resulted in change of control of the controlling committees*
- Decline of regular order
  - *Leadership and caucuses exert more control on process*
- Increased polarization of Congress

# Food Stamps

- Agriculture had long had a surplus commodities program where schools would receive commodities
- And there were stamps early on
- President Kennedy proposed expansion
- So, when President Johnson proposed Food Stamps as a permanent program as part of the War on Poverty in 1964, the Agriculture Committee retained jurisdiction
- Most welfare programs were state programs – AFDC was the largest
- U.S. did not favor cash programs to the poor, but what were called in-kind programs – stamps to purchase food at the store

# Coalition politics

- What emerged were liberals usually off the committee that pushed for expansion of food stamp eligibility and amounts
- They provided the support for the Agriculture bills by supporting the agriculture elements in exchange for support for the food stamp funding
- This broke down when the conservatives in Congress pushed for limitations and more work requirements
- Making it harder to pass the bill
- In 2013 they actually broke into two bills



# One-party south changed

- South was a solid Democratic area
- Because of safeness of these seats in House and Senate and because of the seniority rule for committee chairs, southern members controlled many congressional committees.
- After he signed the Civil Rights Act Lyndon Johnson reportedly said “We have delivered the South to the Republican Party for some time to come”

# Institutional Changes

- New kinds of chairs with less power
- In 1970s House Democrats limited the seniority rule in picking committee chairs by requiring that they be ratified by the Democratic caucus
- Reagan brought in a new agenda in 1980s and more scrutiny of price supports
- Rep. Newt Gingrich brought about a revolution that created a Republican majority in the House for the first time in 40 years and a new agenda
- Chairs such as Roberts and Lugar (not traditional southerners) brought in new ideas on farm bill
- Liberal Democrats pushed for increased Food Stamp expenditures

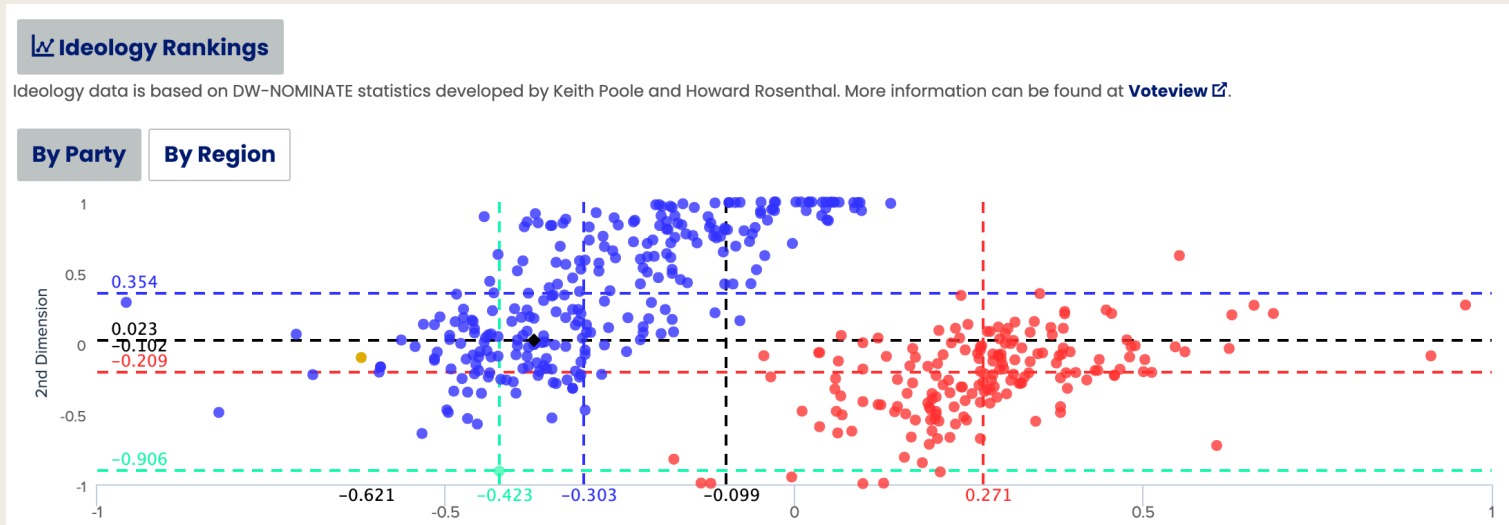
# Decline of Regular Order

- We all learned in school that bills were introduced, went to committee, then the full House, were taken up by the Senate committee, then the full Senate, could go to conference committee and finally were signed by the president
  - *This is known as regular order*
- The legislative process has changed
- Leadership may bring bills directly to House floor bypassing the committees
- The Senate majority leader may introduce a substitute amendment with an entire new bill
- Appropriations bills are harder to pass
- Omnibus bills can encompass lots of appropriations and programs in one bill
- Budget reconciliation can force changes in laws and spending and pass the Senate

# Congress is increasingly polarized

- Democrats and Republicans are
  - *further apart ideologically*
  - *And have fewer overlaps*

# House Ideology 1949



# House Ideology 2018

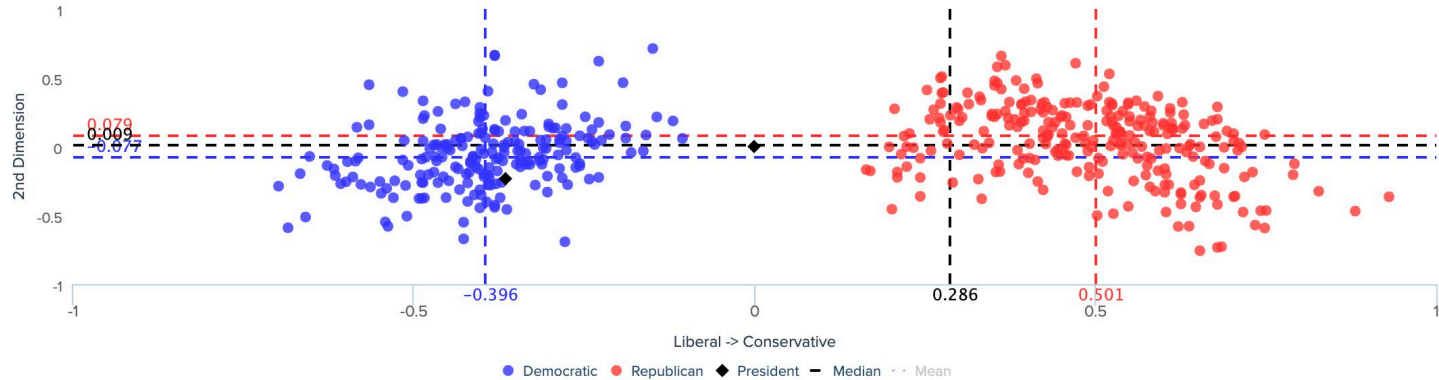
[Ideology Rankings](#)

[District Map](#)

Ideology data is based on DW-NOMINATE statistics developed by Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal. More information can be found at [Voteview](#).

**By Party**

**By Region**

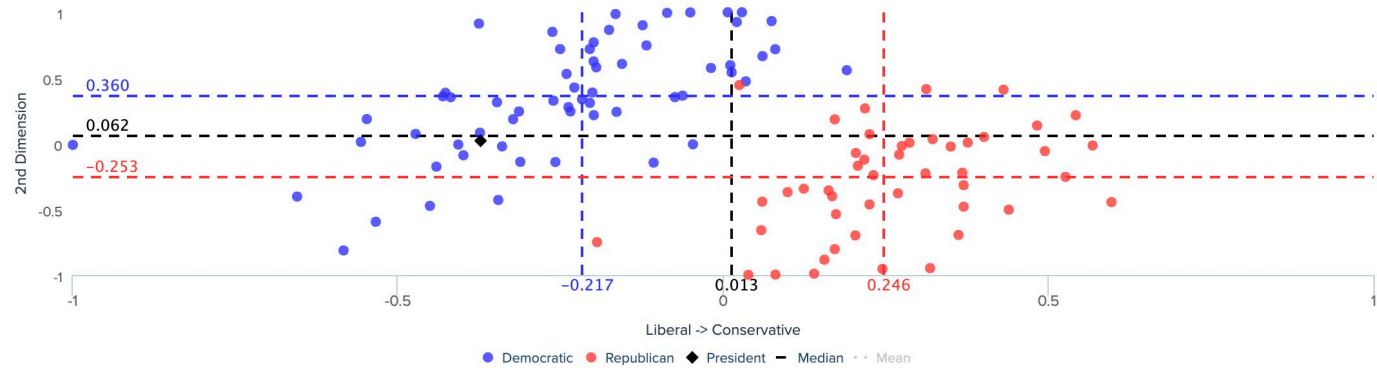


# Senate Ideology 1949

## 📊 Ideology Rankings

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**By Party** **By Region**



# Senate Ideology 2018

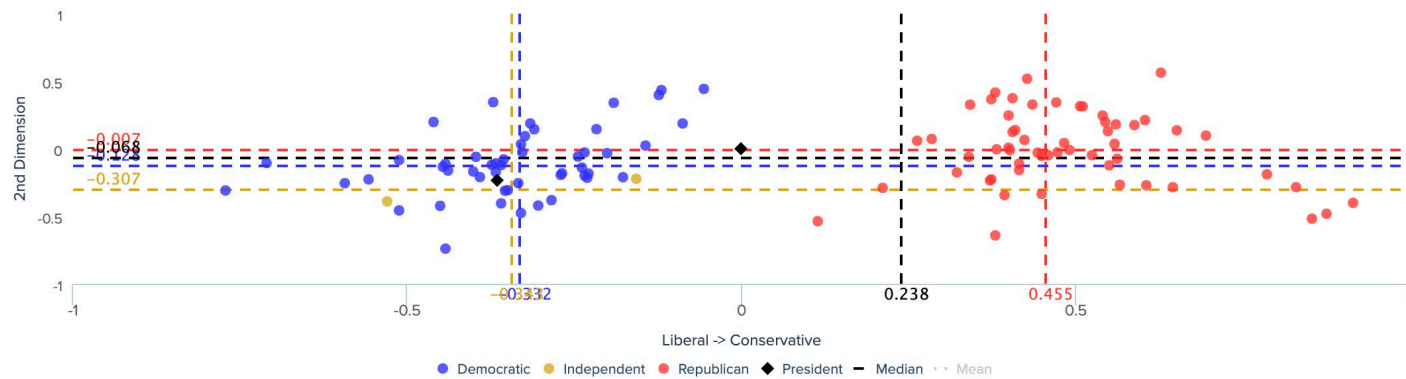
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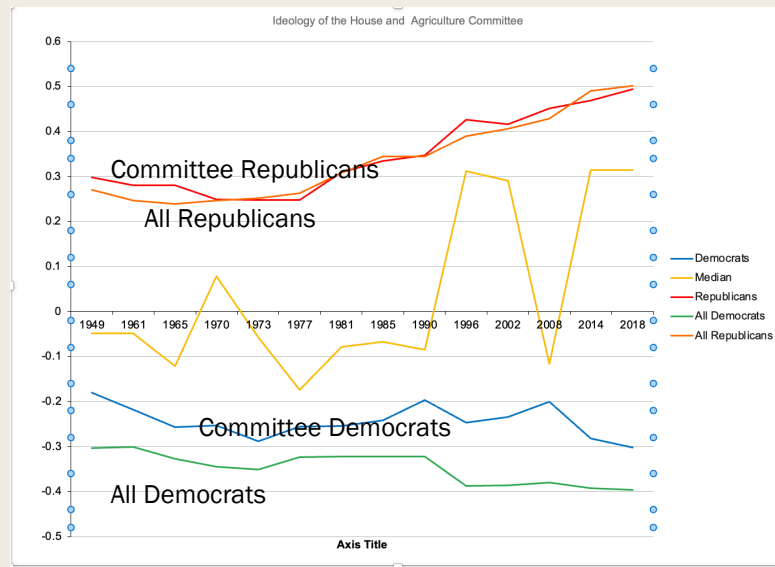
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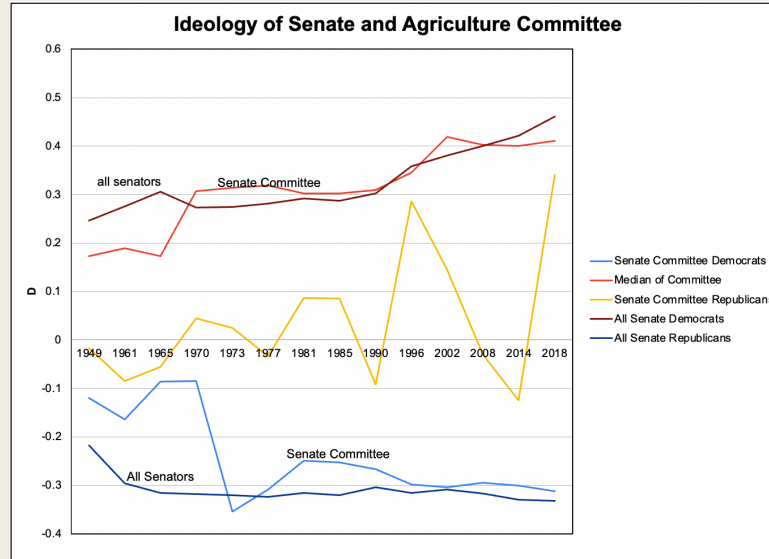




# House and House Agriculture Committee Ideology, 1949 - 2018



# Senate and Senate Agriculture Ideology, 1949-2018



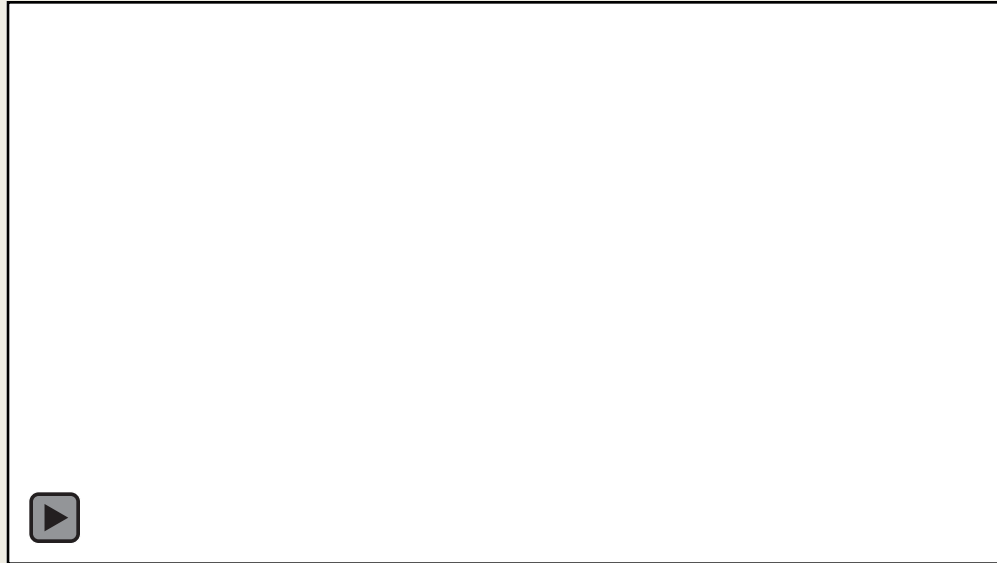
# What should a land grant university do?

- Have an obligation to be in the debate
- To raise the level of the debate
- Research, Education, Engagement – our missions
- We are advancing the knowledge of techniques at all levels
- Our students are learning about technology, GPS, yields, conservation
- Through our extension programs, we have outreach
- Through our faculty research and outreach, we we educate – farmers, citizens
- We contribute expertise to USDA

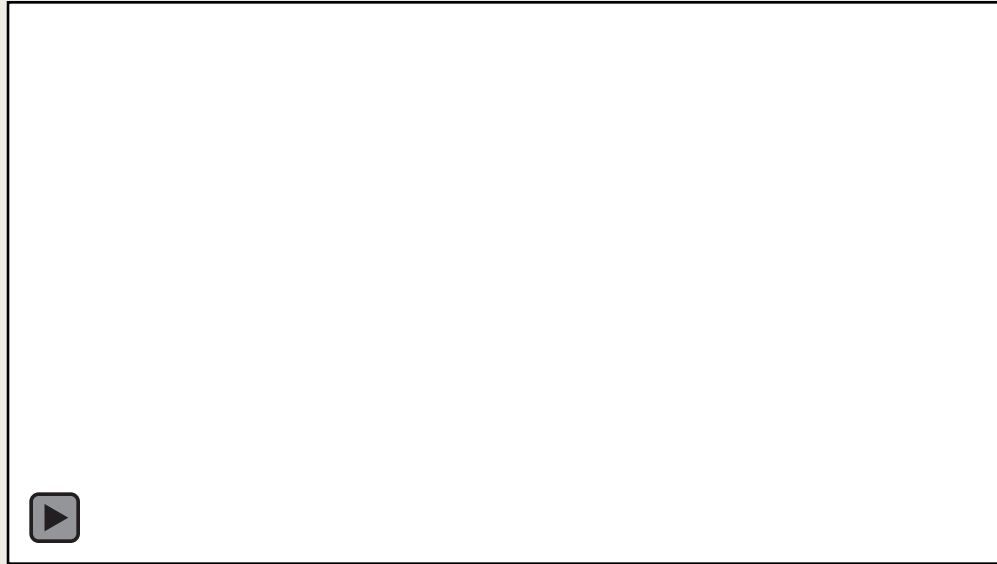
# Influencing Congress

- Indiana representatives and senators support agriculture
- They recognize the singular reputation of Purdue in this area
- Studies are still important and get cited
- Associations are important
- In our pluralistic government groups counter groups

# Rep. James Baird (R-IN)



# Sen. Todd Young (R-IN)




# Challenging Earmarks

- Targeted programs for organizations including universities
- Were banned by Congress because of abuses
- Are creeping back in because legislators want to help their districts
- Dr. Beerling took a strong position years ago against
- He felt the scientific process was to have peer review of proposals by researchers
- Hard to sit by and let competitors seek earmarks when you don't
- But it goes against a time-honored scientific process

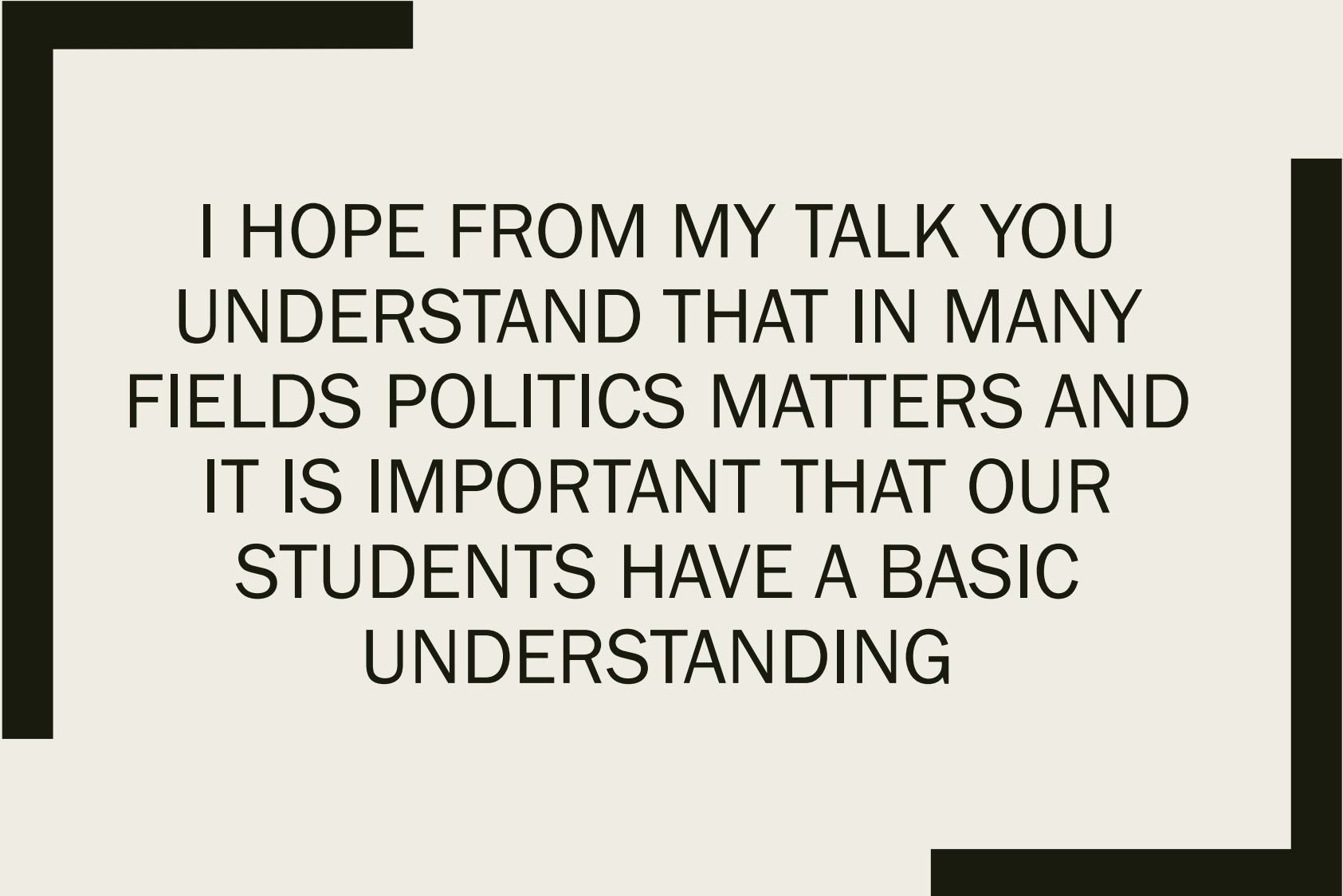
# Summary

- Agriculture policy has to be seen within the forces that drive Congress
- Once it was a “distributive committee” that took care of farmers
  - *Subcommittees were wheat, peanuts, corn*
- Priorities were affected by election of liberals and then conservatives to Congress
- Coalition and interest politics has grown especially as pie has shrunk
- Pressure from growth of food stamps affected the passage and size of portion going to agriculture
- Polarization of parties has made it difficult to compromise



The image features two large, thick black L-shaped corner brackets. One is positioned in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner. They are oriented towards each other, framing the central text.

SO NOW A WORD  
ABOUT CIVICS  
EDUCATION

The text is framed by two thick black L-shaped brackets. One bracket is in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner, both pointing towards the center of the text.

I HOPE FROM MY TALK YOU  
UNDERSTAND THAT IN MANY  
FIELDS POLITICS MATTERS AND  
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT OUR  
STUDENTS HAVE A BASIC  
UNDERSTANDING

President Daniels proposed a civics literacy graduation requirement

The trustees approved for incoming freshmen

# We call it test plus

- You must satisfy one of three options

1. *Take and pass an approved course*

You can also satisfy by taking an Advanced Placement Course

2. *You can listen and take a quiz on twelve podcasts created by the Center for C-SPAN Scholarship and Engagement of which I am the faculty director.*

These podcasts cover topics in American politics and use C-SPAN material

3. *You can attend and write reflective short essay of six approved civics activities on campus. These are speeches and presidential lecture series on politics.*

# Then you must pass a test

- We, with a test consultant, developed our own test
- It will have about 40 questions
- You can repeat the test as many times as you like to get 80% passing score.
- We are still working out the administrative details
- It will be administered in Brightspace