

## 2024 NATIONAL GRANGE PRESIDENT'S EXTERNAL ADDRESS

Officers and Members of the National Grange, state and local Grange members across the country, and all committed to strengthening rural America and our hometowns,

As I stand before you today, speaking as president of the nation's oldest farm and rural advocacy organization, I am filled with a profound sense of pride and purpose. Like the 23 presidents who have come before me, I stand with a duty to provide you with a look at some of the most pressing and urgent issues of the day for those living in America's hometowns, and how the Grange can be a driving force in improving conditions in communities nationwide and for those involved in agriculture as producers and consumers.

The Grange teaches us that "to love the country is to take interest in all that belongs to it – its occupations, its sports, its culture, and its improvement," and for this reason, our policy interests and service activities are as broad as our commitment to the "greatest good for the greatest number" is deep. Regardless of where we hail from, what we do for a living, or how deeply connected we are to the land or to the food system, everyone in this room and from every corner of the Grange is striving for one thing – the vitality and increased vibrancy of our hometowns.

### Elections

First, let us start with love of country and our unity as a people; of democracy and our guarantee of personal liberties; and of decency and charity necessary to advance this nation and our world for generations to come.

This past week, for the 60<sup>th</sup> time in our nation's history, we, as citizens of the United States of America, the greatest country in the world, went to the polls and expressed our values and our views through our vote. It is concerning that of the eligible population, so few took seriously this amazing responsibility of citizenship and cast their ballot.

From this election we now have a new President and Congress selected, and regardless of our personal preference, we must come together and work cooperatively as a nation for ourselves, our communities, our future generations, and our world. We must afford others charity in our dealings. We must act with civility and with common sense. We must be united in these United States.

To President Biden, we say thank you for your more than 50 years of public service to our nation, and to those who worked as part of your administration, we thank you, too.

To President Trump, on behalf of every Grange member across the country, I extend to you our desire to work together for the common good, for the best interest of every American, and ask you to make good on your promise, made many times on the campaign trail this year, to "bring back the American Dream."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See clip at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EPkrQ5WZ2g>

We cannot move forward in factions, unwilling to work across the aisle and across the land for the good of our nation and its people. Compromise and collaboration must be viewed as a strength, not as weakness.

At no time since the Civil War has our country seemed so divided. From that tumultuous period, the Grange was born, envisioned as a unifier, a peacemaker, a beacon of hope. Our founders believed, and I do still today, that a fraternal organization – originally built for farm families and today for all of good moral character interested in food, agriculture, family, and community – would then and can now – bring together a fractured nation. No organization is better situated than the Grange to bring together people whose personal beliefs are not always aligned, to work together for the betterment of their community, by tamping down the heated rhetoric and demanding civil discourse, and by calling on policymakers and the powerful for “proper equality and fairness, protection for the weak; restraint upon the strong; in short, justly distributed power.” The early members of our Order called these “American ideals, the very essence of American independence,” and said that “to advocate the contrary is unworthy of the sons and daughters of our Republic.”

The power in those words is palpable and resonates these many years later. Now, we must embody it – not just as Grange members, but as Americans – and stand as role models for the rest of our neighbors and countrymen. In the Grange, we do that not by talking politics, but by talking issues; not by taking up partisan platforms, but by committing to nonpartisan advocacy. We do this with eyes forward, focused on a prosperous future for our nation, through a common sense lens.

### **Federal Debt and Taxes**

Common sense, though, seems uncommon today, especially as we see our country drowning in federal debt which as of a week ago was \$35,953,937,000,000 [35 trillion, 953 billion, 937 million dollars] an almost incomprehensible number, and increasing every second.<sup>2</sup>

While in 2024 federal income was projected at about \$4.4 trillion, we were budgeted to spend \$8.7 trillion. To break it down: every person living in the United States today, every single person – babies, great-grandmothers, undocumented immigrants, migrant workers, the disabled, the homeless – every single living person would receive a bill for more than \$13,000 to make up the difference between our revenue and our spending in 2024. This would only ensure no further debt was added to the nearly \$36 trillion we have already. To pay off this nearly \$36 trillion debt would cost each person in America an additional \$110,000.

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<sup>2</sup> Information from the Peter G. Peterson Foundation website, accessed at <https://www.pgpf.org/national-debt-clock#the-national-debt>

Raising taxes on the general population will not be popular and not many people are equipped to pay an unexpected \$13,000, let alone \$110,000, because our spending has far exceeded our means.

The challenge is this: how do we use common sense to identify where and how we cut our federal spending to live within our means? So many of our neighbors in rural America – which has consistently been sicker, poorer, and older than their urban and suburban counterparts – are the people most likely to suffer from a pull-back in federal services and assistance programs.

Our seniors would be especially affected since one-third of all federal spending in 2024 will go to Social Security (16%) and Medicare (17%). Twelve percent (12%) goes to Medicaid and the Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Nearly 8% percent of our spending goes to a category labeled “Income Security,” which consists of programs like general retirement and disability insurance, federal employee retirement and disability including military retirement, unemployment compensation, housing assistance, nutrition assistance, foster care, Supplemental Security Income, and the earned income and child tax credits. Now add 16% for “National Defense” and 4% for veterans’ benefits.

Agriculture, some community and regional development, and conservation programs that fall under the USDA together make up only about 3% of all federal spending. Education, training, student financial assistance, research, transportation, and the administration of justice, the postal service, small business administration and many other programs essential to allowing people to establish themselves and chase their American dream come in just shy of 8%. Less than 1% goes to international affairs, and about 4.5% to general government administration. Another 12% of the federal budget goes to debt services – that’s \$2.4 billion dollars a day in interest.

We have a spending problem folks, but we also have a problem of need by our people, our small businesses, and our communities; and we have a problem of a “get everything you’re entitled to” mentality – without concern for what is best for the generations coming next.

I get it. It’s hard to see a need and not advocate for a fix. The Grange has long advocated that there should be no cuts to Social Security, and as the average age of Americans increases, more funding will be needed to support these programs, as well as retirement and disability services for both our military and civil servants. In the last several years, at the urging of our members and with our understanding of the needs of our communities and citizens, the Grange has asked for Congress to ensure several new medical technologies and pharmaceutical drugs are covered by Medicare. We want the best for our people – but we need to think in terms of us now as well as our future generations.

Reality is common sense and the common good are not always inextricably intertwined. We must move, though, in a common direction – must urge our leaders to have real and tough conversations and make some serious changes so we can ensure the America we love, and the American dream we cherish, is alive for generations to come.

### **What of the American Dream?**

The American dream at the time of the Grange's founding was to be self-made, to chase opportunity, and to conquer new frontiers. It was independence and rugged individualism. Today, that dream may mean home ownership or career and economic advancement to ensure general prosperity. Whatever it has come to mean, it is under threat. I challenge each of us to ask and to answer, "What am I doing to ensure the American dream remains alive?"

Our nation has always had as part of its allure a better way of life for the next generation, but young people are struggling to find their footing. They are living at home longer than any generation before them. Housing has become unaffordable. College tuition is soaring – nearly 1,500% since the early 1970s, when working through college meant a steady part-time job with income to spare. The debt burdens our young adults are under are increasing.

These same young adults are hitting milestones later in life. Many wanted, but have chosen not, to have children because of financial constraints, housing instability, and other challenges. For nearly 90 years, Social Security has been a bright beacon, a birthright, for Americans as they age. Our declining birth rate puts this and other social programs like Medicare in jeopardy. If we care about the economic vitality of our seniors and rural communities, we must care about what it takes to make parenthood attractive and feasible for our young adults. We must live and speak in a world that is, not that once was. If we are to continue to fund Social Security, we must have a sensible conversation about immigration and a path to citizenship. We must also have as one of our foremost concerns what it takes to make rural life attractive – something the Grange has been concerned with since its earliest days.

So, what is it that we propose? How do we make America self-sustaining? Today we ask for the creation of a Presidential Blue-Ribbon Commission on the Preservation of the American Dream. As we prepare for the United States' semiquincentennial, its 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, in 2026, it is a fitting tribute to our nation – its history and its future – that such a commission be formed and work to ensure, like we are for the Grange, that our country is stronger tomorrow than it is today.

### **Farm Bill is a 'Must Pass'**

Our country, a land of opportunity and enormous potential, with some of the world's most fertile soil from which we grow and feed a vast multitude of crops and livestock, is truly the breadbasket of the world. Modern technology has helped us increase the production of food and fiber to levels the world has never known, allowing our farmers

and ranchers to produce enough food to feed our people and a large portion of the world's population. Our infrastructure supply chain allows us to rapidly move inputs for production to our farms and ranches and the food we produce to our fellow citizens.

We are blessed most of all with farmers and ranchers who don't just work a job, but who have created a coveted lifestyle over many generations. These icons of American legacy, living out the American dream, are proud of and deeply engaged in the good stewardship of the soil, water, air, vegetation, animals, and environment they love; you might say they are the stewards of rural America's heart and soul.

These hard-working food producers are not satisfied with the status quo. Just like the Grange, they are looking forward to the next generation building on the legacy they and their forefathers have built. If they could look 50, 100 years into the future, they'd want to see higher production, more fertile soils, cleaner water and air, a better return on their investment, the freedom to use their expertise and experience to manage their resources properly without undue regulatory interference, and the family farm tradition going strong.

Today, like the American dream, the family farm is threatened by many forces. Not the least of which is an ever-growing world population out of touch with what it takes to bring food from the farm to the forks of more than 8 billion people, and a body of political leaders unwilling or unable to prioritize the most basic of human necessities – food – and the needs of those who produce it. For this reason, and in what is becoming customary, the farm bill has expired and is stuck in political limbo.

Since the end of 2023, there has been a season of planting, of harvest, of drought, of floods, of farmers working every day to feed the American population and much of the world. But in Congress, the season to pass a new piece of critical omnibus legislation has not yet come. Instead, a one-year extension was passed last November that expired again at the end of September without extension. Just as farmers are planning out their 2025 operations, the uncertainty of farm loans, crop insurance, dairy subsidies, various programs to improve health and safety of farmers, and incentives for stewardship methods are hanging precariously.

The provisions of the farm bill have some impact on how and what food is grown and where it is sold, what risks producers are willing to take, and what rewards or at least safety net they may be provided based on the priorities of the legislation. Farm bill provisions also impact who may be part of production with farm ownership loans and various other programs to help veterans, young and first-time farmers through finance, education and more.

It is not just producers to whom the farm bill is important, or to the worldwide consumers of American agricultural goods. It is fishers and hunters who look to the farm bill to secure access and preservation of land through conservation titles. It is universities and

researchers working to improve the science of agriculture, the methods of conservation, and the facilities and, thereby, education at land-grant colleges. It is the local school and the regional food bank that rely on funds for lunches and food boxes. It is consumers – low-income women, infants and children enrolled in WIC and families whose Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars help them meet their nutritional needs. It is communities, our rural communities, who see dollars flowing in through funded USDA programs to expand credit for all sorts of various things; for creating public-private partnerships and advancing economic well-being; for supporting and creating local jobs; for opening or improving healthcare and childcare facilities and services; for expanding broadband to the last mile; and for fixing crumbling infrastructure such as water systems and wastewater facilities. In general, the farm bill supports a prosperous rural America, so the Grange supports the farm bill.

We also support bold and committed leaders, willing to work hard, listen harder, cross the aisle, sit down at the table, and find common ground to get the work done that they were sent to Capitol Hill to do. We commit to working with members of Congress on the farm bill and other legislation, regulatory proposals, or administrative action where the grassroots voice of America's hometowns and agricultural producers should be present. We welcome you to our halls and our meetings, to read our policy book and visit with our members, to work toward progress while enjoying a potluck with individuals committed to a better nation and world.

### **Farm Labor and Immigration**

As an organization interested in agriculture, we cannot talk about farming without talking about foreign-born workers, migrant laborers, and immigration. The agriculture industry and foreign labor are inextricably tied. Today, almost 70% of all farmworkers in the U.S. are foreign-born and according to the American Immigration Council, nearly half are undocumented with no work permit.

Approximately ten percent of all farmworkers hold H-2A visas that allow them to work legally in the country for six months. However, the H-2A program is expensive. The paperwork is so cumbersome many farmers and ranchers cannot complete the requirements. The workers are often in limbo and by the time they are cleared to work, the season for which they were needed is half over. Imagine going through mounds of paperwork, paying lawyers, constructing housing, and preparing to host a workforce that will likely require training and interpretation services, just to find out the workers you need have been approved but are delayed in processing and much of the work to bring in help legally has been done in vain. That is the current reality for many farms and ranches, which in much of the country have needed to “get big” or “get out.” While 97% of all farms are family-owned, it's understandable, with the size required for many to make a living in today's market, that they cannot be all-family operated.

Over and over, we have called for it, and we will continue to do so in the hope that there is someone listening in Congress who has the conviction and perseverance to make it happen: we need a simpler, legal route to employing guest workers, which will permit

them to enter the country, work for a specific time in a specific location, and then return home. This is essential for our farms and our entire food system.

### **Food Security and Nutrition**

From farm to fork – sometimes it sounds simple. We, of course, know it is not. And while we have often focused on farm issues, Grange has also been active in the sphere of food security for nearly its entire existence. Most often when we think of food security, we think of hunger. And this is certainly a good place to start, especially considering annual reports from the USDA show that food insecurity among Americans hovers between 10 and 15% and one in six children in America live in environments where food security is a challenge.

Food security has several dimensions – the obvious being the physical availability or access to food, and secondly, the affordability of food. Rolled in is nutrition – the types of food one consumes and how it is prepared – and the stability of one's food supply. With higher poverty rates in rural communities, food insecurity is widespread – 9 out of 10 counties with the highest food insecurity rates are rural<sup>3</sup>.

Why is this the case? Many people assume that rural communities, nearby or where our food is grown, have abundant options for food access. This is untrue. In 2020, a report showed that 20% of rural communities are classified as food deserts – places where food markets, food pantries or food-sharing places are more than 10 miles from home.<sup>4</sup> As grocery stores and food retailers leave small communities, the problem is worsening.

People make decisions based on many factors, but a great number of them are economic. People must be able to access healthy food within a reasonable distance from their home, and at a reasonable price. This is where SNAP and WIC programs – provisions under that expired farm bill – come in.

So, too, does the school lunch program, which Grange was an early proponent of establishing. As needs have risen, the program has expanded to include other meals as well to ensure children can focus on learning, not their hunger. While this is doing much good, it is also reinforcing a culture of fast food made outside the home rather than encouraging families to come together for meals, to teach children cooking skills, to share family recipes, to have conversations, and enjoy all the other wonderful things that can happen in a home kitchen.

Additionally, as the school lunch program has been regulated, there have been some changes that we believe do not serve these children well, such as the removal of whole milk and the limitation of nutritional calories on the plate. Students need balanced diets that include some very specific nutrients only found easily and affordably in certain products, like whole milk, and they need enough calories to meet the demands of their

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<sup>3</sup> From Feeding America. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/rural-hunger-facts>

<sup>4</sup> From PolicyLink. <https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/FINALGroceryGap.pdf>

bodies that can vary by age, gender, and activity levels. While there are valid concerns about the childhood obesity epidemic, we believe nutrition mandates should align with expert guidance on healthy diets. The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023 passed the House last December but was never taken up by the Senate. Today we urge Congress to get the job done – the children of our nation are counting on you.

We also ask the USDA to reevaluate the income threshold for free and reduced lunches, and we remind decision-makers that many students' only meals come from school cafeterias.

It is a good reminder for us, too, that deeds matter more than words, like those we say to close each Grange meeting when we promise to help feed those in need. We must remember that as we may enjoy abundance, our neighbors young and old may not. Backpack programs and food pantries are part of many Granges' outreach and service portfolios, but each and every Grange should be looking to make food security and nutrition priority areas. Additionally, it is imperative that individuals are empowered to chase down, capture, and live their American dream. To do this, they must have the skills and knowledge that makes them more self-sufficient and increases their personal sustainability. These are two areas where Granges can make the most meaningful impact on individuals, families, communities, and our nation. Work in these areas is a common sense approach to weaving and reinforcing the personal safety nets that will be necessary if we indeed see a Congress and administration dedicated to the nation living within its means.

To act on the issue of food security and nutrition, the Grange will launch Project Sustenance – a focused effort for which we will be seeking partners nationally and preparing programming and resources that can be used by our members for the benefit of all. We are uniquely positioned to make a significant difference because we are an organization where each member, upon joining, agrees they are concerned about agriculture, food, personal growth, and sharing our talents within our fraternal circle and beyond. We are strong because of the nearly 1,400 local chapters across the country, many with the amazing resource of a Grange hall in which programs, activities, and services may be found. We are the right fit because for nearly 160 years we have been in the game as a trusted voice both in our hometowns and on Capitol Hill. We are agile in our grassroots approach to solving problems. We are situated for growth.

## **Healthcare**

Food and nutrition are significant parts of a person's overall health. But so, too, is access to healthcare – something we find a challenge in nearly every way in our rural and remote communities.

The Grange strongly advocates for the availability of new and lifesaving treatment options, such as diagnostic tests and vaccines. We must also find ways to encourage practicing medicine in smaller communities because as we look at statistics, we know



just how challenging it can be to live and maintain our health or to treat our ailments in rural America. The list of healthcare inequities faced by rural Americans is startling and growing.

- More than 40% of rural counties have no cardiologist<sup>5</sup>, while rural residents are 40% more likely to develop heart disease<sup>6</sup>.
- Almost half of rural Americans suffer from obesity, which is a leading cause of Type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- Multiple studies have shown that common environmental exposures rural Americans have with road dust, herbicides, and fossil fuel combustion, to name a few, contribute to higher rates of chronic illness, including kidney disease.
- Cancer deaths are 14% higher among rural residents and increasing, while the survival rate of all cancers is 8% lower overall in rural communities. This makes the approval, rollout, and coverage by private insurers and Medicare of multi-cancer early detection screening tests, regardless of age, even more important.
- Our friends, the National Farmers Union and American Farm Bureau Federation, have released a report suggesting that nearly 3 out of 4 farmers have been directly impacted by the opioid crisis that is gripping our nation, and is particularly wreaking havoc on rural communities. Advances in non-opioid pain medicine cannot come soon enough, and policymakers must ensure opioid medications are not incentivized through insurance coverage and reimbursement over non-opioid pain management options.
- Rural communities are 80% less likely to have a single neurologist practicing in their county<sup>7</sup>. For Alzheimer's patients, who are required to participate in clinical studies carried out by neurologists to gain treatment coverage, this poses an immense challenge. It has meant that people living in rural areas are twice as likely to die from Alzheimer's disease as those in urban and suburban settings.
- All the while, in the past 15 years, nearly 200 rural hospitals have closed.

Health is essential, and there is a health crisis in rural America that cannot be ignored.

The Grange has been a leading voice in raising awareness about these disparities and inequities for rural residents related to healthcare access, affordability, and more. Alongside our partner organizations, we have worked, and we will continue to work, to educate our members and the public about ways in which this gap can be closed.

Our work has included providing healthcare information and options. As an example, for a second year, the Grange hosted a vaccine clinic at the Eastern States Exposition, the

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<sup>5</sup> According to a recent study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/nearly-half-us-counties-dont-single-cardiologist-rcna160229>

<sup>6</sup> According to a 2016 study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association.  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5015359/>

<sup>7</sup> According to a Cleveland Clinic study.  
<https://consultqd.clevelandclinic.org/u-s-suffers-significant-geographic-disparities-in-access-to-neurologist-s-and-multiple-sclerosis-care>

Big E, to provide no-cost flu and COVID shots to those interested. While more than 4,000 vaccinations were delivered at this pop-up clinic this year, there were some who expressed their disinterest in vaccines as they passed by our booth.

To those people we say: we stand firmly with you, too. It is your right to choose your own course of care, and it is not essential that we all make the same decisions. In this land of the free, liberty is guaranteed and charity toward those whose choices diverge from our own is paramount for a civil society.

We call on all interested in improving the healthcare system, in making it more equitable, to join with us in our work on this issue. From legislators to drug manufacturers, healthcare system executives to healthcare practitioners, to ensure high-quality healthcare is accessible and affordable for all Americans, we must be well-informed and united.

### **Build Out of Broadband Continues; Services Still Needed**

To be well-informed today, to access quality healthcare in some of America's most rural places, broadband is not just a desirable thing, not just a leg up – it, too, is essential. It is a lifeline and a way forward. It is the way in which we do business, the way we connect with others, how children and adults access information, learn, and go to school, and the way each of us plays an active part in our world.

Approximately \$100 billion has been allocated from government funding sources to deploy high-speed broadband to unserved and underserved areas across the country. This includes a congressional mandate and a commitment by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to stretch that connectivity to the last mile of country road. This has been more than a two-decade-long priority for the National Grange. Our continuing challenge will be to scrutinize the accuracy of broadband coverage maps, to monitor coordination and cooperation among broadband-funding agencies, to advocate for decisions that break down barriers to build out, and to encourage efficient deployment of broadband infrastructure.

While many new areas and individuals are getting online, there are still large portions of this country without adequate – or any – cell phone service. How many of you now only have a cell phone – no landline at home? In many rural spaces, this is simply not an option and puts rural residents at a disadvantage, paying for both a home phone and cell phone, many of whom do not have the financial means to do both.

We urge the FCC to continue robust efforts to ensure every American household has adequate access to basic cellular service and that they work to act quickly when local jurisdictions have failed to provide reasonable evidence that a permit should not be issued for new towers. Broadband and cellular connectivity must be priorities – marching forward together to ensure every American equitable connectivity so they may best chase and capture their American dream.

## **Rural Forward**

From our inception to our current advocacy on equity and access issues, time and time again, the Grange is where solutions start. In 2024, we launched a pilot program to provide Granges with grants to complete projects that would be transformative to the lives of their neighbors and to the sustainability and resilience of their communities. The Rural Life Initiative, and the dozens of projects in seven states that have been a part of this pilot, is living proof that even small groups can make great change; that small projects can make a huge difference; that small communities can thrive if DO-ers are there with resources to see their efforts become reality.

The start-up dollars for the Rural Life Initiative came from Pfizer, which is celebrating its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in business. Their choice to give back as part of that celebration has led to many unique and successful local events and programs: from providing resources for an archery team in rural Montana, to zucchini races in suburban California; from an increased presence at community events in Colorado, Illinois, and Ohio to youth programs in Pennsylvania; and to disaster relief in North Carolina. The Rural Life Initiative has effectively addressed the real needs of these communities, truly combining key elements that Granges across the country embody – fellowship, community support and service, and a focus on the values and strengths of rural America.

We are grateful for Pfizer's generosity in providing start-up funding for this initiative, and we want to expand our reach and partner circle to ensure that every local Grange can bring valuable programs, projects, and resources to their community, not just this year but in the future as well.

## **Returning Home**

When I started, I told you that across the nation, Granges and our members are striving for one thing: the vitality and increased vibrancy of our hometowns. But why? Why fight for rural towns struggling to survive? Why is it we fight so hard to ensure their future?

Let me tell you something I know to be true – there is a power that lives in rural America, and it burns within each and every one of us. It's a power born of hard work, of integrity, of community. It's the power of generations who have tilled the soil, raised their families, and built their futures with their own hands. It's the power of people who understand that nothing is given, but everything is earned – and that the strength of one is multiplied when we stand together – in essentials, unity.

The future belongs to those who understand the land, who cherish their community, who rise every morning with purpose and integrity – this is where the real power lies. While we most often talk about the values and the work ethic that live in rural America, the

needs and challenges of our rural communities – because that is where we cut our teeth and what we know best – we also, as is the Grange way, stand with those who call home to suburban and urban America. A stronger rural America does not mean a less stable urban America; indeed, they work hand-in-hand – strengthening one sector of our population strengthens us all.

We do not believe there must be haves and have-nots. Instead, we believe in strengthening rural communities and improving the quality of life for producers. We know the American agriculture industry strengthens the nation and benefits every consumer across the globe. Grange members across the nation are stepping up to create spaces where people from all backgrounds can come together, share experiences, and solve problems that benefit everyone. Let us use these connections to reduce the divide and remind our nation that rural and urban communities are not adversaries but partners. A nation that is united cannot fail.

At this convention, in our community Grange halls and meetings, or as small groups of members joined for fellowship, each and every time we gather, we come together not just as members of an organization, but as a movement – a movement bound by the shared belief that strength comes from unity, that progress is forged through community, and that the values we hold dear are more relevant today than ever before.

Today, the Grange is more than just a gathering place; it is a force for good, a platform for advocacy, and a community where every voice matters. We stand Grange Strong – not because of any one person, but because of all of us. Every member, every Grange. Each of us contributes to this incredible legacy.

In the Grange, there is work for all, and every American I know believes there is work to be done to secure and improve our nation. Why not do that work with us? For those of you not yet a member, find your local Grange and tell them you're ready to join. Or contact us and bring the Grange to your hometown or revive one of the more than 40,000 chapters that have been established over our long history. Now is the time to bring Grange values to every community and every home. Now is the time to meet together, talk together, work together, and in general, act together for our mutual advancement as neighbors and as a nation. To restore and strengthen the American dream. Our American dream.

Fraternally submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine E. Hamp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine E. Hamp, President  
National Grange

## APPENDIX

## You are viewing FY 2024 spending by Budget Function

FY 2024 OBLIGATED AMOUNT

**\$8.7 Trillion**

Data as of August 30, 2024

Choose a budget function below to start your exploration.

See the breakdown by: <span>📊</span> Budget Function <span>▼</span>			<span>📊</span>	<span>📅</span>
Name <span>⬆️</span>	Obligated Amount <span>⬆️</span>	Percent of Total <span>⬆️</span>		
Medicare	\$1,516,886,936,828	17.34%		
Social Security	\$1,415,668,834,806	16.18%		
National Defense	\$1,396,332,365,087	15.96%		
Net Interest	\$1,065,207,106,615	12.17%		
Health	\$1,032,945,978,896	11.81%		
Income Security	\$677,028,421,398	7.74%		
General Government	\$400,911,110,897	4.58%		
Veterans Benefits and Services	\$331,679,583,355	3.79%		
Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services	\$228,844,915,664	2.62%		
Commerce and Housing Credit	\$149,582,383,661	1.71%		
Transportation	\$132,843,571,785	1.52%		
Natural Resources and Environment	\$121,098,478,951	1.38%		
Community and Regional Development	\$98,365,588,922	1.12%		
Administration of Justice	\$92,389,181,479	1.06%		
International Affairs	\$75,084,758,841	0.86%		
Agriculture	\$47,205,388,370	0.54%		
General Science, Space, and Technology	\$39,492,756,679	0.45%		
Energy	\$28,957,052,914	0.33%		
Governmental Receipts	\$0	Less than 0.01%		
Unreported Data*	-\$101,143,518,927	-1.16%		

All dollar amounts shown here represent agency reported obligated amounts

**Unreported Data\*:** Unreported amounts are calculated using the difference in the total obligated amount from the [Report on Budget Execution and Budgetary Resources](#) (excluding financing accounts) and the total obligated amount reported by agencies to USAspending.gov in 'Account Breakdown by Program Activity & Object Class' data (also called 'File B' data).