

Dear Leader Schumer,

On behalf of our millions of members across the country, the undersigned organizations strongly urge you and the Senate Democratic leadership to demand a full debate and a roll call vote on the nomination of Governor Sonny Perdue to lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Perdue's strong ties to corporate agribusiness and pesticide companies present serious conflicts of interest that will undoubtedly effect his ability to lead the department to the detriment of independent farmers, our environment, workers and consumers. Furthermore, it is imperative that the ethics violations Perdue faced as governor of Georgia be fully examined. The American people deserve a Secretary of Agriculture who has been fully vetted, and this cannot happen if the Senate limits debate.

The Senate Agriculture committee's initial confirmation hearings for Governor Perdue were exceptionally brief, and a number of pressing concerns were not addressed. Not a single member of the committee asked Governor Perdue about the ethics charges brought against him while he was governor, about his ties to the industries that he would regulate or his history of denying climate change science and how they will affect his tenure as Secretary of Agriculture. Climate change will undoubtedly affect farmers in this country and across the world. A full debate on the floor of the Senate will give members the opportunity to raise these and other concerns.

We urge the Senate Democrats to insist on the full 30-hour debate on Governor Perdue, so that his appointment can be thoroughly discussed. Farmers, workers, consumers, and the American people deserve a full debate. It is important that we have transparency about Governor Perdue's financial ties to industries the USDA regulates to ensure he will not continue to prioritize profits of agribusiness over those of food safety, farmer livelihoods, worker safety and the environment. We are deeply concerned that Governor Perdue will slash incentives for conservation that keep our natural resources safe. Farm workers deserve to know if Governor Perdue will be a voice for them at the USDA, or if he will cut worker protections and ignore their concerns.

Millions of Americans poured into the streets and into town halls to protest the corruption and ineptitude of the Trump administration. How can they have faith that their elected officials are representing their interests if the full Senate does not take time to deliberate on an important nominee like the future leader of the Department of Agriculture. We strongly urge you to support a debate and roll call vote on this nominee, and to ensure that the Senate fulfills its Constitutional obligation to full vet Governor Perdue.

Sincerely,  
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