Viewpoint: Unusual bedfellows—Sen John Fetterman offers support for Alabama’s and Florida’s ban on cell-based lab-grown beef while fellow Democrats slam Republicans who-back such measures as fear-promoting

Last week, Florida became the first US state to ban the production and sale of lab-grown, or “cell-cultivated” meat.

“Take your fake lab-grown meat elsewhere,” Gov. Ron DeSantis said before signing SB 1084 into law.

“We’re not doing that in the state of Florida.”

...

US Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA) has expressed his support for Florida’s ban.

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Days later, a bipartisan group of farm-state members of Congress introduced legislation — also endorsed by a number of meat trade groups — in both chambers that would require any cell-cultivated or plant-based meat product to be labeled as “imitation” meat or poultry.

Such protectionism runs counter to the routine platitudes that elected officials — especially those on the right — typically espouse about competitive free markets, regulation, and innovation. DeSantis has boasted that Florida ranks first in the nation in entrepreneurship, yet he just signed a bill into law that will stifle entrepreneurship.

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The sad irony of all the chest-thumping over meat alternatives is that farmers do face many real threats, like a changing climate that makes harvests less predictable and corporate consolidation that has put the majority of America’s meat supply in the hands of a few massive companies that hollow out rural economies and treat some of the farmers who contract for them like serfs.

Addressing these would take serious political courage, but it’s much easier to rile up the base by banning a perceived threat than taking on a real one.

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