

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4425

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish the position of Women Farmers and Ranchers Liaison, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 30, 2023

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ (for herself, Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia, Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, and Ms. PINGREE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

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## A BILL

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish the position of Women Farmers and Ranchers Liaison, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Women in Agriculture  
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. WOMEN FARMERS AND RANCHERS LIAISON.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Department of Agriculture  
8 Reorganization Act of 1994 is amended by inserting after  
9 section 222 (7 U.S.C. 6923) the following:

1 **“SEC. 223. WOMEN FARMERS AND RANCHERS LIAISON.**

2 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 120 days  
3 after the date of the enactment of the Women in Agri-  
4 culture Act, the Secretary shall establish in the Depart-  
5 ment the position of Women Farmers and Ranchers Liai-  
6 son (in this section referred to as the ‘Liaison’).

7 “(b) DUTIES.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Liaison shall carry out  
9 the following duties:

10 “(A) With respect to agricultural programs  
11 available to women who are farmers and ranch-  
12 ers—

13 “(i) provide information to such  
14 women about the availability of such pro-  
15 grams and the eligibility requirements for  
16 such programs; and

17 “(ii) assist such women, and women  
18 who are potential farmers or ranchers, in  
19 applying for such programs.

20 “(B) Advocate on behalf of women who are  
21 farmers and ranchers in interactions with em-  
22 ployees of the Department.

23 “(C) Promote the advancement of women  
24 in leadership roles within the Department.

25 “(D) Submit and make publicly available  
26 the report required under paragraph (2)(A).

1           “(E) Consult and provide technical assist-  
2           ance to the Equity Commission of the Depart-  
3           ment.

4           “(F) Consult with and provide technical  
5           assistance to any Federal agency that requests  
6           such assistance with respect to the duties de-  
7           scribed in subparagraphs (A) through (E).

8           “(2) REPORT.—

9           “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year  
10          after the date of the enactment of the Women  
11          in Agriculture Act, and annually thereafter, the  
12          Liaison shall submit to Congress and make  
13          publicly available a report on the grants, loans,  
14          loan guarantees, and cost share programs made  
15          by the Secretary to woman-owned agriculture  
16          operations.

17          “(B) CONTENTS.—Each report required  
18          under subparagraph (A) shall include, with re-  
19          spect to the fiscal year preceding such report—

20                 “(i) the total number of grants, loans,  
21                 loan guarantees, and cost share programs  
22                 made by each of the Farm Service Agency  
23                 and the Natural Resources Conservation  
24                 Service to agriculture operations;

1           “(ii) the percentage of such grants,  
2           loans, loan guarantees, and cost share pro-  
3           grams made to woman-owned agriculture  
4           operations;

5           “(iii) the percentage of total funding  
6           directed to woman-owned agriculture oper-  
7           ations, disaggregated by program;

8           “(iv) the percentage of applications  
9           made by women-owned agricultural oper-  
10          ations; and

11          “(v) the percentage of women at dif-  
12          ferent GS levels at the Department,  
13          disaggregated by office.

14          “(3) CONTRACT OR COOPERATIVE AGREE-  
15          MENT.—The Liaison may enter into a contract or  
16          cooperative agreement with a research center of the  
17          Agricultural Research Service, an institution of high-  
18          er education (as such term is defined in section 101  
19          of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
20          1001)), or a nonprofit organization to carry out 1 or  
21          more of the following activities with respect to  
22          women who are farmers and ranchers:

23                 “(A) Conducting research on the profit-  
24                 ability of small farms run by such women.

1           “(B) Developing educational materials for  
2 such women.

3           “(C) Conducting workshops, courses, and  
4 certified vocational training for such women.

5           “(D) Conducting mentoring activities for  
6 such women.

7           “(E) Providing internship opportunities for  
8 such women.

9           “(c) STAFF SUPPORT.—The Secretary may appoint  
10 staff of the Department of Agriculture to support the Liai-  
11 son.”.

12           (b) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—Section 296(b)  
13 of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of  
14 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)) is amended by adding at the end  
15 the following:

16           “(11) The authority of the Secretary to carry  
17 out the amendment made to this title by the Women  
18 in Agriculture Act.”.

19 **SEC. 3. HIGH-PRIORITY RESEARCH AND EXTENSION AREAS.**

20           Section 1672(d) of the Food, Agriculture, Conserva-  
21 tion, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925(d)) is amend-  
22 ed by adding at the end the following:

23           “(21) ERGONOMICALLY DESIGNED AGRI-  
24 CULTURE EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY.—Research  
25 and extension grants may be made under this sec-

1       tion for the purposes of developing and making  
2       widely available agriculture equipment and machin-  
3       ery that is ergonomically designed for use by  
4       women.”.

5       **SEC. 4. CHILD CARE PRIORITY.**

6       Section 306(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural  
7       Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)) is amended by add-  
8       ing at the end the following:

9       “(27) CHILD CARE PRIORITY.—In selecting recipi-  
10      ents of loans and grants under this subsection, the Sec-  
11      retary shall give priority to any qualified applicant that  
12      proposes to use the loan or grant to address the avail-  
13      ability, quality, or cost of childcare in an agricultural or  
14      rural community.”.

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