

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6183

To establish an Office of Colonias and Farmworker Initiatives within the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

Mr. CUELLAR (for himself, Ms. ESCOBAR, and Ms. CROCKETT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To establish an Office of Colonias and Farmworker Initiatives within the Department of Agriculture, 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 “Office of Colonias and
5 Farmworker Initiatives Establishment Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF COLONIAS AND**
7 **FARMWORKER INITIATIVES.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Federal Crop In-
9 surance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorga-

1 nization Act of 1994 is amended by adding after section
2 309 (7 U.S.C. 6921) the following:

3 **“SEC. 310. OFFICE OF COLONIAS AND FARMWORKER INI-**
4 **TIATIVES.**

5 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
6 lish and maintain in the Department an Office of Colonias
7 and Farmworker Initiatives (referred to in this subsection
8 as the ‘Office’) to—

9 “(1) improve engagement with, and service to,
10 border colonias communities, farmworkers, and the
11 family members and children of farmworkers;

12 “(2) improve collaboration between the Depart-
13 ment and National, State, and local colonias and
14 farmworker programs and nonprofit organizations;
15 and

16 “(3) carry out other such functions as the Sec-
17 retary determines appropriate.

18 “(b) DUTIES.—The Office shall ensure that border
19 colonias communities, farmworkers, the family members
20 and children of farmworkers, and nonprofit organizations
21 representing or assisting such communities and individ-
22 uals have equitable access to, and equitable participation
23 in, programs and services of the Department by—

24 “(1) establishing and monitoring the goals and
25 objectives of the Department to increase participa-

1 tion of such communities, individuals, and nonprofit
2 organizations in Department programs;

3 “(2) assessing the effectiveness of Department
4 outreach programs to such communities, individuals,
5 and nonprofit organizations;

6 “(3) developing and implementing a plan to co-
7 ordinate outreach activities and services to such
8 communities, individuals, and nonprofit organiza-
9 tions provided by—

10 “(A) the Department; and

11 “(B) other Federal agencies, including
12 services related to housing, education, health
13 care, and infrastructure development;

14 “(4) providing input to the Department and
15 other Federal agencies on programmatic and policy
16 decisions relating to such communities, individuals,
17 and nonprofit organizations, including—

18 “(A) identifying obstacles for access to
19 programs and resources; and

20 “(B) elevating Federal, State, and local
21 best practices;

22 “(5) measuring outcomes of the programs and
23 activities of the Department to serve such commu-
24 nities and individuals;

1 “(6) recommending new initiatives and pro-
2 grams to the Secretary;

3 “(7) providing technical assistance to such or-
4 ganizations with respect to Departmental programs
5 and resources; and

6 “(8) carrying out any other related duties that
7 the Secretary determines appropriate.

8 “(c) COLONIAS COORDINATOR.—

9 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-
10 lish within the Office the position of Colonias Coor-
11 dinator (referred to in this subsection as the ‘Coor-
12 dinator’).

13 “(2) DUTIES.—The Secretary shall delegate to
14 the Coordinator responsibility for the following:

15 “(A) Serving as a liaison to nonprofit or-
16 ganizations that represent and have dem-
17 onstrated experience serving and working in
18 colonias communities.

19 “(B) Coordinating with the Department,
20 other Federal agencies, and State and local gov-
21 ernments to ensure that the needs of colonias
22 communities are assessed and met, including
23 during declared disasters and other emer-
24 gencies.

1 “(C) Consulting within the Office and with
2 other entities to better integrate perspectives,
3 concerns, and interest of colonias communities
4 into the ongoing programs of the Department.

5 **“SEC. 311. COLONIAS AND FARMWORKER INITIATIVES CO-**
6 **ORDINATING COMMITTEE.**

7 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE.—The Sec-
8 retary shall establish and convene a Federal coordinating
9 committee, to be known as the Colonias and Farmworker
10 Initiatives Coordinating Committee (referred to in this
11 subsection as the ‘Committee’) to provide advice and guid-
12 ance to the Secretary on matters relating to colonias and
13 farmworker affairs.

14 “(b) MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION.—The Com-
15 mittee shall be composed—

16 “(1) of such representatives not described in
17 subparagraph (B) as the Secretary determines ap-
18 propriate; and

19 “(2) of representatives from each of the fol-
20 lowing:

21 “(A) The Department of Housing and
22 Urban Development.

23 “(B) The Department of the Treasury.

24 “(C) The Environmental Protection Agen-
25 cy.

1 “(D) The Department of Health and
2 Human Services.

3 “(E) The Department of Education.

4 “(F) The Small Business Administration.

5 “(G) The Department of Labor.

6 “(H) The Federal Emergency Management
7 Agency.

8 “(c) DUTIES OF COMMITTEE.—The Committee
9 shall—

10 “(1) direct a working group composed of mem-
11 bers of the Committee (or designees of such mem-
12 bers) and representatives from other Federal agen-
13 cies and mission areas within the Department (such
14 as the Rural Housing Service, Rural Utilities Serv-
15 ice, Rural Business Service, Food and Nutrition
16 Service, and the Farm Service Agency);

17 “(2) engage stakeholders and identify State and
18 municipal best practices to assist colonias commu-
19 nities, farmworkers, and farmworkers’ family mem-
20 bers and children;

21 “(3) submit to the Secretary recommendations
22 or, and solutions to—

23 “(A) the issues identified raised under sub-
24 paragraph (B); and

1 “(B) issues raised at the local, regional, or
2 national level; and

3 “(4) identify and propose solutions to any inter-
4 departmental barrier between the Department and
5 other Federal agencies.

6 “(d) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT EXEMP-
7 TION.—Section 1013 of title V, United States Code, shall
8 not apply to the Committee.

9 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
10 is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary
11 \$2,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2024 through 2029
12 to carry out this section.”.

13 (b) TRANSFER OF POSITION OF FARMWORKER COOR-
14 DINATOR.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Farmworker Coordi-
16 nator position established under section 226B(f) of
17 the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act
18 of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6934(f)) is transferred to the Of-
19 fice of Colonias and Farmworker Initiatives under
20 section 310 of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform
21 and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act
22 of 1994, as added by this Act.

23 (2) TRANSFER OF LEGAL PROVISIONS.—Sub-
24 section (f) of section 226B of the Department of Ag-
25 riculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C.

1 6934) is transferred so as to read as subsection (d)
2 of section 310 of the Federal Crop Insurance Re-
3 form and Department of Agriculture Reorganization
4 Act of 1994, as added by this Act.

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