

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6500

To expand the availability of programs of the Department of Agriculture to veteran farmers and ranchers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 24, 2018

Mr. WALZ (for himself, Mr. DENHAM, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. BOST, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. O’ROURKE, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. KIND, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. KILMER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, and Mr. CARBAJAL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To expand the availability of programs of the Department of Agriculture to veteran farmers and ranchers, 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 “Veteran Empowerment
5 and Training to Facilitate Agricultural Revitalization and
6 Mobilization Act of 2018” or the “VET-2-FARM Act of
7 2018”.

1 **SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**
2 **PROGRAMS FOR VETERAN FARMERS AND**
3 **RANCHERS.**

4 (a) DEFINITION OF VETERAN FARMER OR RANCH-
5 ER.—Section 2501(e)(7) of the Food, Agriculture, Con-
6 servation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e)(7))
7 is amended—

8 (1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “or” at
9 the end;

10 (2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period
11 at the end and inserting “; or”; and

12 (3) by adding at the end the following:

13 “(C) is a veteran (as defined in section
14 101 of that title) who has first obtained status
15 as a veteran (as so defined) during the most re-
16 cent 10-year period.”.

17 (b) FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE.—

18 (1) DEFINITION OF VETERAN FARMER OR
19 RANCHER.—Section 502(b) of the Federal Crop In-
20 surance Act (7 U.S.C. 1502(b)) is amended by add-
21 ing at the end the following:

22 “(12) VETERAN FARMER OR RANCHER.—The
23 term ‘veteran farmer or rancher’ means a farmer or
24 rancher who—

1 “(A) has served in the Armed Forces (as
2 defined in section 101 of title 38, United States
3 Code); and

4 “(B)(i) has not operated a farm or ranch;

5 “(ii) has operated a farm or ranch for not
6 more than 10 years; or

7 “(iii) is a veteran (as defined in section
8 101 of that title) who has first obtained status
9 as a veteran (as so defined) during the most re-
10 cent 5-year period.”.

11 (2) CROP INSURANCE.—Section 508 of the Fed-
12 eral Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508) is amend-
13 ed—

14 (A) in subsection (b)(5)(E), by inserting “,
15 and veteran farmers or ranchers” before the pe-
16 riod at the end;

17 (B) in subsection (e)(8)—

18 (i) in the paragraph heading, by in-
19 serting “AND VETERAN” after “BEGIN-
20 NING”; and

21 (ii) by inserting “or veteran farmer or
22 rancher” after “beginning farmer or
23 rancher” each place it appears; and

24 (C) in subsection (g)—

1 (i) in paragraph (2)(B)(iii), in the
 2 matter preceding subclause (I), by insert-
 3 ing “or veteran farmer or rancher” after
 4 “beginning farmer or rancher” each place
 5 it appears; and

6 (ii) in paragraph (4)(B)(ii)(II), by in-
 7 serting “and veteran farmers or ranchers”
 8 after “beginning farmers or ranchers”.

9 (3) EDUCATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT AS-
 10 SISTANCE.—Section 524(a)(4) of the Federal Crop
 11 Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1524(a)(4)) is amended—

12 (A) in subparagraph (D)(ii), by striking
 13 “and” at the end;

14 (B) in subparagraph (E), by striking the
 15 period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

16 (C) by adding at the end the following:

17 “(F) veteran farmers or ranchers.”.

18 (c) DOWN PAYMENT LOAN PROGRAM.—Section
 19 310E of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development
 20 Act (7 U.S.C. 1935) is amended—

21 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “qualified
 22 beginning farmers or ranchers and socially disadvan-
 23 taged farmers or ranchers” and inserting “eligible
 24 farmers or ranchers”;

25 (2) in subsection (d)—

1 (A) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “re-
2 cipients of the loans” and inserting “farmers or
3 ranchers”;

4 (B) by striking paragraph (3) and insert-
5 ing the following:

6 “(3) encourage retiring farmers and ranchers to
7 assist in the sale of their farms and ranches to eligi-
8 ble farmers or ranchers by providing seller financ-
9 ing;”; and

10 (C) in paragraph (4), by striking “for be-
11 ginning farmers or ranchers or socially dis-
12 advantaged farmers or ranchers” and inserting
13 the following: “for—

14 “(A) beginning farmers or ranchers;

15 “(B) socially disadvantaged farmers or
16 ranchers, as defined in section 355(e); or

17 “(C) veteran farmers or ranchers, as de-
18 fined in section 2501(e) of the Food, Agri-
19 culture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
20 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e))”; and

21 (D) in paragraph (5), by striking “a quali-
22 fied beginning farmer or rancher or socially dis-
23 advantaged farmer or rancher” and inserting
24 “an eligible farmer or rancher”; and

1 (3) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the
 2 following:

3 “(e) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE FARMER OR RANCH-
 4 ER.—In this section, the term ‘eligible farmer or rancher’
 5 means—

6 “(1) a qualified beginning farmer or rancher;

7 “(2) a socially disadvantaged farmer or ranch-
 8 er, as defined in section 355(e); and

9 “(3) a veteran farmer or rancher, as defined in
 10 section 2501(e) of the Food, Agriculture, Conserva-
 11 tion, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e)).”.

12 (d) INTEREST RATE REDUCTION PROGRAM.—Sec-
 13 tion 351(e)(2)(B) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural
 14 Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1999(e)(2)(B)) is amended—

15 (1) in the subparagraph heading, by inserting
 16 “AND VETERAN” after “BEGINNING”;

17 (2) in clause (i), by inserting “or veteran farm-
 18 ers and ranchers (as defined in section 2501(e) of
 19 the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act
 20 of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e)))” before the period at
 21 the end; and

22 (3) in clause (ii), by striking “beginning”.

23 (e) NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY TRAINING, EDU-
 24 CATION, EXTENSION, OUTREACH, AND TECHNICAL AS-
 25 SISTANCE PROGRAM.—Section 405(c) of the Agricultural

1 Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998
 2 (7 U.S.C. 7625(c)) is amended by inserting “veteran
 3 farmers or ranchers (as defined in section 2501(e) of the
 4 Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
 5 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e))),” after “socially disadvantaged farm-
 6 ers,”.

7 (f) ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF NON-
 8 INSURED CROP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Section 196 of
 9 the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of
 10 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7333) is amended—

11 (1) in subsection (k)(2), by inserting “, or a
 12 veteran farmer or rancher (as defined in section
 13 2501(e) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and
 14 Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e)))” before the
 15 period at the end; and

16 (2) in subsection (l)(4)—

17 (A) in the paragraph heading, by inserting
 18 “VETERAN,” before “AND SOCIALLY”; and

19 (B) by inserting “and veteran farmers or
 20 ranchers (as defined in section 2501(e) of the
 21 Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act
 22 of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e)))” before “in ex-
 23 change”.

24 (g) FUNDING FOR TRANSITION OPTION FOR CER-
 25 TAIN FARMERS OR RANCHERS.—Section 1241(a)(1)(B) of

1 the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3841(a)(1)(B))
 2 is amended by striking “beginning farmers or ranchers
 3 and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers” and in-
 4 serting “covered farmers or ranchers, as defined in section
 5 1235(f)(1)”.

6 (h) SUPPLEMENTAL AGRICULTURAL DISASTER AS-
 7 SISTANCE.—

8 (1) DEFINITION OF COVERED PRODUCER.—Sec-
 9 tion 1501(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7
 10 U.S.C. 9081(a)) is amended—

11 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (1)
 12 through (4) as paragraphs (2) through (5), re-
 13 spectively; and

14 (B) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as
 15 so redesignated) the following:

16 “(1) COVERED PRODUCER.—The term ‘covered
 17 producer’ means an eligible producer on a farm that
 18 is—

19 “(A) as determined by the Secretary—

20 “(i) a beginning farmer or rancher;

21 “(ii) a socially disadvantaged farmer
 22 or rancher; or

23 “(iii) a limited resource farmer or
 24 rancher; or

1 “(B) a veteran farmer or rancher, as de-
 2 fined in section 2501(e) of the Food, Agri-
 3 culture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
 4 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e)).”.

5 (2) EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR LIVESTOCK,
 6 HONEY BEES, AND FARM-RAISED FISH.—Section
 7 1501(d) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C.
 8 9081(d)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
 9 lowing:

10 “(4) PAYMENT RATE FOR COVERED PRO-
 11 DUCERS.—In the case of a covered producer that is
 12 eligible to receive assistance under this subsection,
 13 the Secretary shall provide reimbursement of 90 per-
 14 cent of the cost of losses described in paragraph (1)
 15 or (2).”.

16 **SEC. 3. AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT AVAILABLE TO VET-**
 17 **ERANS.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 219 of the Department of
 19 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6919)
 20 is amended—

21 (1) in subsection (b)—

22 (A) in paragraph (3), by striking “and” at
 23 the end;

24 (B) in paragraph (4), by striking the pe-
 25 riod at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

1 (C) by adding at the end the following new
2 paragraphs:

3 “(5) provide information to veterans concerning
4 the availability of, and eligibility requirements for,
5 positions identified within the Department of Agri-
6 culture that are available to employ or train vet-
7 erans;

8 “(6) consult with the Secretary of Defense, the
9 Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of
10 Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business
11 Administration with respect to carrying out activities
12 that assist veterans with agriculture-related employ-
13 ment; and

14 “(7) establish and periodically update the
15 website described in subsection (d).”; and

16 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
17 sections:

18 “(d) WEBSITE REQUIRED.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The website required under
20 subsection (b)(7) shall include the following:

21 “(A) Positions identified within the De-
22 partment of Agriculture that are available to
23 veterans for apprenticeships.

24 “(B) Apprenticeships, programs of training
25 on the job, and programs of education that are

1 approved for purposes of chapter 36 of title 38,
2 United States Code.

3 “(C) Employment skills training programs
4 for members of the Armed Forces carried out
5 pursuant to section 1143(e) of title 10, United
6 States Code.

7 “(D) Information designed to assist busi-
8 nesses, nonprofit entities, educational institu-
9 tions, and farmers interested in developing ap-
10 prenticeships, on-the-job training, educational,
11 or entrepreneurial programs for veterans in
12 navigating the process of having a program ap-
13 proved by a State approving agency for pur-
14 poses of chapter 36 of title 38, United States
15 Code. Such information shall include each of
16 the following:

17 “(i) Contact information for relevant
18 offices in the Department of Defense, De-
19 partment of Veterans Affairs, Department
20 of Labor, and Small Business Administra-
21 tion.

22 “(ii) Basic requirements for approval
23 by each State approving agency.

24 “(iii) Recommendations with respect
25 to training and coursework to be used dur-

1 ing apprenticeships or on-the-job training
2 that will enable a veteran to be eligible for
3 agricultural programs.

4 “(iv) Examples of successful programs
5 and curriculums that have been approved
6 for purposes of chapter 36 of title 38,
7 United States Code (with consent of the
8 organization and without any personally
9 identifiable information).

10 “(2) REVIEW OF WEBSITE.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 years
12 after the date of the enactment of this para-
13 graph, and once every 5 years thereafter, the
14 Secretary shall conduct a study to determine if
15 the website required under subsection (b)(7) is
16 effective in providing veterans the information
17 required under paragraph (1).

18 “(B) INEFFECTIVE WEBSITE.—If the Sec-
19 retary determines that the website is not effec-
20 tive under subparagraph (A), the Secretary
21 shall—

22 “(i) notify the agriculture and vet-
23 erans committees of such determination;
24 and

1 “(ii) not earlier than 180 days after
2 the date on which the Secretary provides
3 notice under clause (i), terminate the
4 website.

5 “(C) AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS COM-
6 MITTEES DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the
7 term ‘agriculture and veterans committees’
8 means—

9 “(i) the Committee on Agriculture of
10 the House of Representatives;

11 “(ii) the Committee on Agriculture,
12 Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

13 “(iii) the Committee on Veterans’ Af-
14 fairs of the House of Representatives; and

15 “(iv) the Committee on Veterans’ Af-
16 fairs of the Senate.

17 “(e) CONSULTATION REQUIRED.—In carrying out
18 this section, the Secretary shall consult with organizations
19 that serve veterans.”.

20 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 296(b) of
21 the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of
22 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)) is amended by adding at the end
23 the following new paragraph:

24 “(9) The authority of the Secretary to carry out
25 amendments made to this title by the Veteran Em-

1 powerment and Training to Facilitate Agricultural
2 Revitalization and Mobilization Act of 2018.”.

3 **SEC. 4. REPORT ON VETERANS EMPLOYED IN AGRI-**
4 **CULTURE.**

5 (a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year after
6 the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually there-
7 after, the Secretary of Agriculture shall provide a report
8 to the agriculture and veterans committees that includes
9 the following:

10 (1) Positions identified within the Department
11 of Agriculture that are, on the date of such report,
12 available for apprenticeships by service members or
13 veterans.

14 (2) A summary of the information on such posi-
15 tions that has been provided to the Department of
16 Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and
17 the Department of Labor.

18 (3) A summary of measures taken to partner
19 with the Department of Defense to identify and de-
20 velop potential career skills programs for service
21 members who transition out of the armed services.

22 (4) The information the Department of Agri-
23 culture is disseminating to agricultural entities to
24 help such entities contact the Department of De-
25 fense to establish career skills programs.

1 (5) The information the Department of Agri-
2 culture has provided to the Department of Defense,
3 Department of Veterans Affairs, Small Business Ad-
4 ministration, and the Department of Labor on avail-
5 able apprenticeships or on-the-job training available
6 to veterans.

7 (6) Information on how agricultural entities can
8 contact the Department of Agriculture for technical
9 assistance in establishing Department of Labor ap-
10 proved apprenticeships and Department of Defense
11 approved on-the-job training opportunities.

12 (b) AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS COMMITTEES DE-
13 FINED.—In this section, the term “agriculture and vet-
14 erans committees” has the meaning given the term in sub-
15 section (d)(2)(C) of section 219 of the Department of Ag-
16 riculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6919), as
17 added by this Act.

○