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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

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”.

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

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

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

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

11 “(b) DUTIES.—

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

14 “(A) With respect to agricultural programs
15 available to women who are farmers and ranch-
16 ers—

17 “(i) provide information to such
18 women about the availability of such pro-
19 grams and the eligibility requirements for
20 such programs; and

21 “(ii) assist such women, and women
22 who are potential farmers or ranchers, in
23 applying for such programs.

24 “(B) Advocate on behalf of women who are
25 farmers and ranchers in interactions with em-
26 ployees of the Department.

1 “(C) Promote the advancement of women
2 in leadership roles within the Department.

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

5 “(E) Consult and provide technical assist-
6 ance to the Equity Commission of the Depart-
7 ment.

8 “(F) Consult with and provide technical
9 assistance to any Federal agency that requests
10 such assistance with respect to the duties de-
11 scribed in subparagraphs (A) through (E).

12 “(2) REPORT.—

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

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

24 “(i) the total number of grants, loans,
25 loan guarantees, and cost share programs

1 made by each of the Farm Service Agency
2 and the Natural Resources Conservation
3 Service to agriculture operations;

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

8 “(iii) the percentage of total funding
9 directed to woman-owned agriculture oper-
10 ations, disaggregated by program;

11 “(iv) the percentage of applications
12 made by women-owned agricultural oper-
13 ations; and

14 “(v) the percentage of women at dif-
15 ferent GS levels at the Department,
16 disaggregated by office.

17 “(3) CONTRACT OR COOPERATIVE AGREE-
18 MENT.—The Liaison may enter into a contract or
19 cooperative agreement with a research center of the
20 Agricultural Research Service, an institution of high-
21 er education (as such term is defined in section 101
22 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
23 1001)), or a nonprofit organization to carry out 1 or
24 more of the following activities with respect to
25 women who are farmers and ranchers:

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

3 “(B) Developing educational materials for
4 such women.

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

7 “(D) Conducting mentoring activities for
8 such women.

9 “(E) Providing internship opportunities for
10 such women.

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

14 (b) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—Section 296(b)
15 of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of
16 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)) is amended by adding at the end
17 the following:

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

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

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

1 “(21) ERGONOMICALLY DESIGNED AGRI-
2 CULTURE EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY.—Research
3 and extension grants may be made under this sec-
4 tion for the purposes of developing and making
5 widely available agriculture equipment and machin-
6 ery that is ergonomically designed for use by
7 women.”.

8 **SEC. 4. CHILD CARE PRIORITY.**

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

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