

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.

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## 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

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## 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.

○