

Booker 1st Degree # 10

AMENDMENT NO. _____ Calendar No. _____

Purpose: To establish an Office of Small Farms.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—119th Cong., 2d Sess.

S. _____

To provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2031, and for other purposes.

Referred to the Committee on _____ and ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT intended to be proposed by Mr. BOOKER

Viz:

1 After section 12605, insert the following:

2 **SEC. 12606. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

3 Subtitle B of the Department of Agriculture Reorga-
4 nization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6931 et seq.) is amended
5 by adding at the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 229. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

7 “(a) DEFINITION OF SMALL FARM, RANCH, OR FOR-
8 EST OPERATION.—In this section, the term ‘small farm,
9 ranch, or forest operation’ means a farm, ranch, or forest
10 operation that—

11 “(1)(A) is less than 180 acres; or

1 “(B) meets another acreage-based definition of
2 ‘small’, as determined by the Secretary, that takes
3 into consideration—

4 “(i) the State or region in which the farm,
5 ranch, or forest operation is located;

6 “(ii) the production system of the farm,
7 ranch, or forest operation; or

8 “(iii) both; and

9 “(2) has an annual gross cash farm income of
10 less than \$350,000.

11 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
12 lish within the farm production and conservation mission
13 area the Office of Small Farms.

14 “(c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Office of Small Farms
15 shall—

16 “(1) coordinate efforts to improve support for
17 small farms, ranches, and forest operations across
18 all Department agencies and offices;

19 “(2) review Department programs and policies
20 and identify statutory, regulatory, and administra-
21 tive provisions, policies, and guidance that disadvan-
22 tage small farm, ranch, or forest operation participa-
23 tion, and recommend changes to ensure that those
24 programs and policies adequately serve small farms,
25 ranches, and forest operations;

1 “(3) develop recommendations for new initia-
2 tives, including financing mechanisms and technical
3 assistance opportunities, to specifically serve small
4 farms, ranches, and forest operations relating to
5 production, conservation, business planning, land ac-
6 cess, and other issues, as determined by the Sec-
7 retary;

8 “(4) make recommendations to Department
9 agencies and offices and other Federal agencies on
10 tracking small farm, ranch, or forest operation data,
11 including demographics and program participation
12 rates;

13 “(5) propose research agendas on topics that
14 are of special interest to small farms, ranches, and
15 forest operations;

16 “(6) provide or coordinate technical assistance
17 through the Department or through cooperative
18 agreements with other entities to operators of small
19 farms, ranches, and forest operations to assist those
20 operators—

21 “(A) to access the full complement of
22 available Department grant, cost-share, and
23 loan programs;

24 “(B) to implement activities using assist-
25 ance received under those programs; and

1 “(C) with farmland preservation, including
2 through succession planning;

3 “(7) implement a program directly or through
4 cooperative agreements with other entities to provide
5 grants of not more than \$25,000 to operators of
6 small farms, ranches, and forest operations for—

7 “(A) equipment and infrastructure repairs
8 and upgrades;

9 “(B) uninsured losses;

10 “(C) business planning and market devel-
11 opment assistance;

12 “(D) conservation practice adoption;

13 “(E) down payments for land acquisition;
14 and

15 “(F) such other purposes as the Secretary
16 determines to be appropriate;

17 “(8) operate a hotline through which operators
18 of small farms, ranches, and forest operations can
19 anonymously report problems that the operators en-
20 counter in attempts to access Department programs;
21 and

22 “(9) collaborate with other Federal agencies
23 and State agencies on how to effectively reach and
24 serve small farms, ranches, and forest operations.

1 “(d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Annually, the Sec-
2 retary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of
3 the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agri-
4 culture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report
5 describing—

6 “(1) the efforts of the Secretary to enhance
7 participation by small farms, ranches, and forest op-
8 erations in agricultural programs; and

9 “(2) the results achieved to enhance such par-
10 ticipation for each such agricultural program.

11 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
12 are authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years
13 2027 through 2031—

14 “(1) \$15,000,000 for the administration of the
15 Office of Small Farms; and

16 “(2) \$10,000,000 to provide technical assist-
17 ance and grants authorized by this section.”.