

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4552

To establish a Department of Agriculture loan program to support mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities for veterans of the Armed Forces to become farmers or ranchers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 20, 2021

Mr. BOST (for himself, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. RYAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. DELGADO, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mrs. AXNE, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish a Department of Agriculture loan program to support mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities for veterans of the Armed Forces to become farmers or ranchers.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Agricultural
3 Apprenticeship Act of 2021”.

4 **SEC. 2. MENTORSHIP AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**
5 **FOR VETERANS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO**
6 **BECOME FARMERS AND RANCHERS.**

7 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Agri-
8 culture shall establish a program to make direct loans to
9 farmers and ranchers who will provide mentorship and ap-
10 prenticeship opportunities for veterans of the Armed
11 Forces to learn the skills necessary to become a successful
12 farmer or rancher.

13 (b) AGREEMENTS WITH STATES.—The Secretary of
14 Agriculture shall carry out the mentorship and apprentice-
15 ship program through agreements with State departments
16 of agriculture that will—

17 (1) select veterans to participate in the pro-
18 gram;

19 (2) secure established farmers and ranchers to
20 provide the mentorship and apprenticeship opportu-
21 nities; and

22 (3) make and administer direct loans to support
23 the resulting mentorship and apprenticeship.

24 (c) ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT.—As a condition of a loan
25 under the mentorship and apprenticeship program, a par-
26 ticipating veteran must be allowed to materially and sub-

1 stantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch
2 providing the mentorship and apprenticeship opportuni-
3 ties.

4 (d) TERMS OF LOANS.—

5 (1) INTEREST RATE.—A loan under the
6 mentorship and apprenticeship program shall be
7 made without interest.

8 (2) TERM AND REPAYMENT.—The term of a
9 loan under the program may not exceed one year
10 and the loan shall be repaid after the harvest season
11 in such installments as the Secretary may require.

12 (e) SOURCE OF FUNDS.—Of the amounts appro-
13 priated for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 to fund
14 operation of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, the
15 Secretary shall use \$1,000,000 each of such fiscal years
16 to carry out this section.

17 (f) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later
18 than March 1, 2023, the Comptroller General of the
19 United States shall submit to the Committee on Agri-
20 culture of the House of Representatives and the Com-
21 mittee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Sen-
22 ate a report evaluating the effectiveness of the mentorship
23 and apprenticeship program in assisting veterans who par-
24 ticipate in the program in becoming farmers and ranchers.

1 (g) VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term
2 “veteran” means an individual who has served in the
3 Armed Forces (as defined in section 101(10) of title 38,
4 United States Code) and who has not previously operated
5 a farm or ranch.

