

Union Calendar No. 180

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5425

[Report No. 118–221]

To amend the Small Business Act to enhance the Office of Rural Affairs,
and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

Mr. GOLDEN of Maine (for himself, Mr. MANN, Mr. PAPPAS, and Ms. TENNEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Small Business

SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

Reported from the Committee on Small Business; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

A BILL

To amend the Small Business Act to enhance the Office
of Rural Affairs, 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. OFFICE OF RURAL AFFAIRS OF THE SMALL**
 4 **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.**

5 Section 26 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 653)
 6 is amended—

7 (1) by amending subsection (b) to read as fol-
 8 lows:

9 “(b) APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT ADMINIS-
 10 TRATOR.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall be admin-
 12 istered by an Assistant Administrator, who shall be
 13 an employee in the competitive service.

14 “(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Assistant Admin-
 15 istrator shall—

16 “(A) have education or professional experi-
 17 ence with, or knowledge of, rural affairs and
 18 issues relating to small business concerns; and

19 “(B) have experience providing develop-
 20 ment assistance to rural small business con-
 21 cerns.”;

22 (2) in subsection (c)—

23 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “small
 24 business concerns located in rural areas” and
 25 inserting “rural small business concerns”;

1 (B) in paragraph (3)—

2 (i) by striking “provide information”
3 and inserting “promote”; and

4 (ii) by striking “concerning the” and
5 all that follows through the semicolon at
6 the end and inserting the following: “poli-
7 cies and programs of the Administration
8 and of other Federal departments and
9 agencies for assisting rural small business
10 concerns;”;

11 (C) in paragraph (4), by striking “; and”
12 and inserting a semicolon;

13 (D) in paragraph (5)—

14 (i) by striking “the United States
15 Tourism and Travel Administration” and
16 inserting “the National Travel and Tour-
17 ism Office of the Department of Com-
18 merce”;

19 (ii) by striking “small businesses in
20 rural areas” and inserting “rural small
21 business concerns”; and

22 (iii) by striking the period at the end
23 and inserting “; and”; and

24 (E) by adding at the end the following new
25 paragraph:

1 “(6) host webinars and outreach events for
2 rural small business concerns as described in sub-
3 section (d).”; and

4 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
5 sections:

6 “(d) OUTREACH.—The Assistant Administrator
7 shall—

8 “(1) host webinars and outreach events in var-
9 ious regions of the United States for rural small
10 business concerns; and

11 “(2) invite representatives from district offices
12 of the Administration, resource partners, Federal
13 and State agencies, and other interested persons to
14 participate in such webinars and outreach events.

15 “(e) REPORT.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
17 after the date of the enactment of this subsection,
18 and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall sub-
19 mit to the Committee on Small Business of the
20 House of Representatives and the Committee on
21 Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate,
22 and make publicly make available on a website of
23 the Administration, a report on the activities of the
24 Office during the one-year period immediately pre-
25 ceding the date of submission of the report.

1 “(2) CONTENTS.—Each report required under
2 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

3 “(A) The operational details of the Office,
4 including the name of the Assistant Adminis-
5 trator, the budget of the Office, and the num-
6 ber of full-time employees employed by or de-
7 tailed to the Office.

8 “(B) A summary of the activities con-
9 ducted under subsection (c).

10 “(C) The number of webinars and out-
11 reach events conducted by the Administration
12 to promote policies and programs described in
13 paragraphs (3) of subsection (c) and to provide
14 information described in (4) of such subsection.

15 “(D) An analysis of gaps in lending pro-
16 grams of the Administration in serving the
17 needs of rural small business concerns.

18 “(E) Information gathered from any
19 webinars and outreach events conducted by the
20 Administration during the period covered by the
21 report.

22 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 “(1) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The term
24 ‘Assistant Administrator’ means the Assistant Ad-

1 administrator of the Office of Rural Affairs appointed
2 under subsection (b).

3 “(2) RESOURCE PARTNERS.—The term ‘re-
4 source partners’ means—

5 “(A) small business development centers;

6 “(B) women’s business centers (described
7 under section 29);

8 “(C) chapters of the Service Corps of Re-
9 tired Executives (established under section
10 8(b)(1)(B)); and

11 “(D) Veteran Business Outreach Centers
12 (described under section 32).

13 “(3) RURAL SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—The
14 term ‘rural small business concern’ means a small
15 business concern located in a rural area.”.

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