

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 9936

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 with respect to workforce development, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 4, 2024

Ms. SPANBERGER (for herself and Mr. MOLINARO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

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## A BILL

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 with respect to workforce development, 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. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.**

4 (a) GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS FOR FOOD AND AG-  
5 RICULTURAL SCIENCES EDUCATION.—Section 1417 of the  
6 National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching  
7 Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152) is amended—

8 (1) in subsection (b)—

9 (A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1),

10 by inserting “, junior or community colleges,

1 and postsecondary vocational institutions” after  
2 “other colleges and universities”; and

3 (B) in paragraph (3), by striking “food  
4 and agricultural sciences teaching programs, or  
5 teaching programs emphasizing” and inserting  
6 “teaching programs, including paid, work-based  
7 learning, for food and agricultural sciences or”;  
8 (2) in subsection (c)—

9 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “and” at  
10 the end;

11 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking the pe-  
12 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

13 (C) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(3) applications for teaching enhancement  
15 projects, including paid, work-based learning, that  
16 address a need for additional trained professionals in  
17 food and agricultural sciences or rural economic de-  
18 velopment, community development, or business de-  
19 velopment.”;

20 (3) in subsection (j)(1), in the matter preceding  
21 subparagraph (A), by striking “subsection” and in-  
22 serting “section”;

23 (4) in subsection (m)—

24 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “and” at  
25 the end;

1 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking the pe-  
2 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

3 (C) by adding at the end the following:

4 “(3) \$60,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025  
5 through 2030.”; and

6 (5) by adding at the end the following:

7 “(n) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 “(1) The term ‘junior or community college’  
9 has the meaning given such term in section 312(f)  
10 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
11 1058(f)).

12 “(2) The term ‘postsecondary vocational insti-  
13 tution’ has the meaning given such term in section  
14 102(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20  
15 U.S.C. 1002(c)).

16 “(3) The term ‘work-based learning’ has the  
17 meaning given such term in section 3 of the Carl D.  
18 Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of  
19 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302).”.

20 (b) EXPERIENCED SERVICES PROGRAM.—Section  
21 1252(a)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C.  
22 3851(a)(2)) is amended—

23 (1) in subparagraph (D), by striking “and” at  
24 the end;

1           (2) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period  
2           at the end and inserting “; and”; and

3           (3) by adding at the end the following:

4           “(F) assisting cooperative initiatives under  
5           section 1417(b)(3) of the National Agricultural  
6           Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act  
7           of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(3)) to improve high-  
8           er education teaching programs, including paid,  
9           work-based learning, at—

10           “(i) land-grant colleges and univer-  
11           sities (including the University of the Dis-  
12           trict of Columbia);

13           “(ii) colleges and universities having  
14           significant minority enrollments and a de-  
15           monstrable capacity to carry out the teach-  
16           ing of food and agricultural sciences; and

17           “(iii) other colleges and universities,  
18           junior or community colleges (as defined in  
19           section 312(f) of the Higher Education Act  
20           of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058(f))), and postsec-  
21           ondary vocational institutions (as defined  
22           in section 102(c) of the Higher Education  
23           Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c))) having a  
24           demonstrable capacity to carry out the

1 teaching of food and agricultural  
2 sciences.”.

3 (c) COMPETITIVE, SPECIAL, AND FACILITIES RE-  
4 SEARCH GRANTS.—Subsection (b) of the Competitive,  
5 Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C.  
6 3157(b)) is amended—

7 (1) in paragraph (6)(A), by striking “teaching”  
8 and inserting “teaching, including paid work-based  
9 learning (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Per-  
10 kins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006  
11 (20 U.S.C. 2302)),”; and

12 (2) in paragraph (7)(B), by inserting “, junior  
13 or community colleges (as defined in section 312(f)  
14 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
15 1058(f))), and postsecondary vocational institutions  
16 (as defined in section 102(c) of the Higher Edu-  
17 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c))” after “col-  
18 leges and universities”.

19 **SEC. 2. NRCS DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.**

20 Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16  
21 U.S.C. 3842) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
22 lowing:

23 “(j) NRCS DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may ap-  
25 point, without regard to the provisions of subchapter

1 I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code (other  
2 than sections 3303 and 3328 of such title), qualified  
3 candidates, as described in paragraph (2), directly to  
4 positions within the Natural Resources Conservation  
5 Service that provide technical assistance under con-  
6 servation programs administered by the Natural Re-  
7 sources Conservation Service.

8 “(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Paragraph (1) applies  
9 to a candidate who—

10 “(A) is qualified to provide the technical  
11 assistance described in paragraph (1), as deter-  
12 mined by the Secretary; and

13 “(B) meets qualification standards estab-  
14 lished by the Office of Personnel Manage-  
15 ment.”.

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