

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5425

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

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.—

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

4 “(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Assistant Admin-
5 istrator shall—

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

9 “(B) have experience providing develop-
10 ment assistance to rural small business con-
11 cerns.”;

12 (2) in subsection (c)—

13 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “small
14 business concerns located in rural areas” and
15 inserting “rural small business concerns”;

16 (B) in paragraph (3)—

17 (i) by striking “provide information”
18 and inserting “promote”; and

19 (ii) by striking “concerning the” and
20 all that follows through the semicolon at
21 the end and inserting the following: “poli-
22 cies and programs of the Administration
23 and of other Federal departments and
24 agencies for assisting rural small business
25 concerns;”;

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

3 (D) in paragraph (5)—

4 (i) by striking “the United States
5 Tourism and Travel Administration” and
6 inserting “the National Travel and Tour-
7 ism Office of the Department of Com-
8 merce”;

9 (ii) by striking “small businesses in
10 rural areas” and inserting “rural small
11 business concerns”; and

12 (iii) by striking the period at the end
13 and inserting “; and”; and

14 (E) by adding at the end the following new
15 paragraph:

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

19 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
20 sections:

21 “(d) OUTREACH.—The Assistant Administrator
22 shall—

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

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

5 “(e) REPORT.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
7 after the date of the enactment of this subsection,
8 and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall sub-
9 mit to the Committee on Small Business of the
10 House of Representatives and the Committee on
11 Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate,
12 and make publicly make available on a website of
13 the Administration, a report on the activities of the
14 Office during the one-year period immediately pre-
15 ceding the date of submission of the report.

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

18 “(A) The operational details of the Office,
19 including the name of the Assistant Adminis-
20 trator, the budget of the Office, and the num-
21 ber of full-time employees employed by or de-
22 tailed to the Office.

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

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

6 “(D) An analysis of gaps in lending pro-
7 grams of the Administration in serving the
8 needs of rural small business concerns.

9 “(E) Information gathered from any
10 webinars and outreach events conducted by the
11 Administration during the period covered by the
12 report.

13 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

14 “(1) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The term
15 ‘Assistant Administrator’ means the Assistant Ad-
16 ministrator of the Office of Rural Affairs appointed
17 under subsection (b).

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

20 “(A) small business development centers;

21 “(B) women’s business centers (described
22 under section 29);

23 “(C) chapters of the Service Corps of Re-
24 tired Executives (established under section
25 8(b)(1)(B)); and

1 “(D) Veteran Business Outreach Centers
2 (described under section 32).

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

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