

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund

March 4, 2021
Briar Blakley
Interim Director of Communications & Member
Relations
Phone: 404-765-0991
briarblakley@federation.coop



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Emergency Relief for Farmers of Color Act: A Collaborative Call to Action for the U.S Senate

East Point, GA (March 4, 2021) - The Federation is urging strategic partners, supporters, and members to rally behind the bill that will repeal major injuries to farmers of color. The American Rescue plan, which includes up to \$16.1 billion in agriculture and food provisions, landed a success in the house on Feb. 27, raising hope for systemic restoration and repealing of USDA discrimination and injustices done to Black farmers.

As the Emergency Relief for Farmers of Color Act now lies in the Senate, awaiting the passage of the Emergency Relief Bill, The Federation sees this as an opportunity to amplify the challenges faced by Black farmers and to support champions of reparative action.

The Federation has asked for its extensive network and cooperative partners to support the mission of Ag committee members to recalibrate past discrepancies amongst socially disadvantaged farmers. "The Emergency Relief for Farmers of Color Act is an important step toward equity, justice, and inclusion as well as putting our nation on a track toward resiliency and sustainability," says Cornelius Blanding, Executive Director.

This coalition of support is inspired by the Ag Committee's collaboration and commitment to leveraging the new administration's push for more equitable policies and legislation to save Black farmers and farmland.

Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock (D-GA), a new member of the Senate Ag Committee, introduced the Emergency Relief for Farmers of Color Act co-sponsored by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), Senator Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), and Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI). The bill provides \$5 billion to farmers of color with \$4 billion going towards direct relief payments to farmers of color struggling with farm loan debt and help with responding to the economic effects of the pandemic.

Fighting to rebound economically, Black farmers like James Childs Jr., a member of the Federation, have experienced the worst for his small farm in Green County, Alabama. He stated, "We lost some customers, and we now have to do more door to door to get rid of the

produce we can't sell. We lost about 20% of our farm income. We need that income to pay our land lease."

The bill will use the remaining \$1 billion to support USDA programs to address systemic racism and provide technical and legal support for agricultural communities and farmers like Childs. The bill also promises debt forgiveness for Black farmers who filed claims under Pigford v. Glickman class action discrimination suit filed against USDA.

This bill and full debt relief are necessary for our country to move closer toward its promise of equality and to ensure that all of its citizens are a part of the solution to protect our common air water and soil.

[Read More from the Senate Ag Committee](#)

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, entering its 54th year, assists limited-resource farmers, landowners, and cooperatives across the South with business planning, debt restructuring, marketing expertise, and a whole range of other services to ensure the retention of land ownership and cooperatives as a tool for social and economic justice. The overall mission is to reverse the trend of black land loss and be a catalyst for the development of self-supporting communities via cooperative economic development, land retention and advocacy.

##

FOLLOW US

