118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION  

H. R. ______

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out an initiative to develop, expand, and improve rural childcare, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. PEREZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _______________________

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out an initiative to develop, expand, and improve rural childcare, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Expanding Childcare in Rural America Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. EXPANDING CHILDCARE IN RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:
(1) Childcare.—

(A) In general.—The term “childcare” means any program that—

(i) provides quality care and early education for young children who—

(I) are in kindergarten; or

(II) have not yet entered kindergarten; and

(ii) is operated by—

(I) an eligible childcare provider described in section 658P(6)(A) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858n(6)(A)); or

(II) a childcare provider that, on the date of enactment of this Act—

(aa) is licensed, regulated, or registered in the State, territory, or Indian Tribe in which the provider is located; and

(bb) meets applicable State, Tribal, territorial, and local health and safety requirements.

(B) Inclusions.—The term “childcare” includes—
(i) a school-based program described in subparagraph (A);

(ii) a facility used for a program described in subparagraph (A); and

(iii) a service provided under a program described in subparagraph (A).

(2) INITIATIVE.—The term “Initiative” means the Expanding Childcare in Rural America Initiative established under subsection (b).

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish an initiative, to be known as the “Expanding Childcare in Rural America Initiative”, under which the Secretary shall provide, for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028, priority in accordance with subsection (c) to address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in agricultural and rural communities.

(c) CHILDCARE PRIORITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in selecting recipients of loans and grants under a program described in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall give priority to any qualified applicant that proposes to use the loan or grant to ad-
dress the availability, quality, or cost of childcare in
an agricultural or rural community.

(2) DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS.—The pro-
grams referred to in paragraph (1) are the following:

(A) The essential community facilities loan
and grant programs authorized under section
306(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural
Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)).

(B) The technical assistance and training
grant program authorized under section 306(a)
of that Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)).

(C) The rural business development grant
program authorized under section 310B(c) of
that Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)).

(D) The business and industry direct and
guaranteed loan program authorized under sec-
tion 310B(g) of that Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(g)).

(E) The rural microentrepreneur assist-
ance program authorized under section 379E of
that Act (7 U.S.C. 2008s).

(F) The rural innovation stronger economy
(RISE) grant program authorized under section

(d) REQUIREMENTS.—In providing funding in ac-
cordance with the Initiative, the Secretary shall—
(1) give priority to communities in farming-dependent counties, as described in the 2015 county
typology codes published by the Economic Research
Service (as revised); and

(2) ensure a balanced geographical distribution
of the benefits under the Initiative.

(e) USE OF INTERMEDIARIES.—In providing funding
in accordance with the Initiative, the Secretary may make
awards through a childcare resource and referral organiza-
tion, a staffed family child care network, a community de-
velopment financial institution, a nonprofit organization,
or a network of nonprofit organizations, with dem-
onstrated expertise in—

(1) providing technical or financial assistance
for the acquisition, construction, renovation, or im-
provement of childcare facilities;

(2) providing technical, financial, or managerial
assistance to childcare providers; or

(3) securing private sources of capital financing
for childcare or other low-income community devel-
opment.

(f) EVALUATION; REPORT.—

(1) EVALUATION.—Not later than 2 years after
the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
shall conduct a comprehensive quantitative and qual-
ative evaluation of the projects carried out using assistance provided under the Initiative, including—

(A) a description of—

(i) the types of projects carried out;

(ii) the communities in which the projects are carried out;

(iii) the organizations and entities participating in the projects; and

(iv) the types of partnerships developed to carry out the projects; and

(B) the economic and social impacts of the investments in the projects.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the House Representatives a report describing the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1), including a thorough analysis of the outcomes of the evaluation.