

# OFFICE OF COLONIAS AND FARMWORKER INITIATIVES ESTABLISHMENT ACT OF 2024



## **The Office of Colonias and Farmworker Initiatives Establishment Act of 2024**

Increasing representation and coordination within the US Department of Agriculture for farmworkers and colonias communities

### **Summary**

This legislation would create an Office of Colonias and Farmworker Initiatives within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to coordinate intradepartmental and interagency efforts to address the needs of colonias residents and farmworkers, including affordable housing, health care, water and wastewater infrastructure, high-speed internet, and economic development. It would also transfer the existing Farmworker Coordinator position at USDA into this Office, as well as name a new Colonias Coordinator position to work with community groups and nonprofits serving colonias, giving residents a direct voice to advocate for their communities.

The Office of Colonias and Farmworker Initiatives Establishment Act would direct the Office to ensure that colonias, farmworkers, and nonprofits representing such communities have equitable access to and participation in USDA programs by:

- Establishing an Office of Colonias and Farmworker Initiatives within USDA which would implement a plan to improve outreach to farmworkers and colonias communities, provide input to USDA programs and other Federal agencies on policy decisions affecting farmworkers and colonias, and serve as a liaison between nonprofit organizations serving colonias and farmworkers and local, state, and federal government agencies;
- Creating an interagency federal coordinating committee to provide recommendations for assisting colonias and farmworkers and their families;
- Requiring USDA to establish goals to increase the participation of individuals in colonias and farmworkers in USDA programs.

### **Background on Colonias**

Colonias are unincorporated communities within 150 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border that lack basic infrastructure such as safe drinking water, wastewater systems, and adequate housing. Recent studies estimate that 2,459 colonias exist across Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

### **Endorsers**

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, Chicanos por la Causa, Enterprise Community Partners, Housing Assistance Council, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders, National Education Association, National Rural Housing Coalition, Rural Community Assistance Partnership

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