

Amendment offered by Representative Chellie Pingree

Amendment description

The amendment would require USDA to rehire or hire a replacement for all qualified federal employees that were separated from service as part of a mass termination by the Department beginning on January 20, 2025. It also prohibits NRCS, FSA and RD office closures.

AMENDMENT TO _____
OFFERED BY MS. PINGREE OF MAINE

Add at the end of section 10108 the following:

1 (d) PROHIBITION ON CLOSURE OR RELOCATION OF
2 CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICES.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture
4 may not close or relocate a county or field office of
5 the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the
6 Farm Service Agency, a Rural Development area, or
7 any county service center of the Department of Agri-
8 culture.

9 (2) EXCEPTIONS.—Paragraph (1) shall not
10 apply with respect to—

11 (A) an office that is located not more than
12 20 miles from another office of the Natural Re-
13 sources Conservation Service, the Farm Service
14 Agency, a Rural Development area, or any
15 county service center; or

16 (B) the relocation of an office within the
17 same county in the course of routine leasing op-
18 erations.

19 (e) REHIRE.—

1 (1) PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.—None of
2 the funds made available by this Act may be used
3 until the date on which the Secretary of Agriculture
4 reinstates or hires a replacement for all qualified
5 Federal employees that were separated from service
6 as part of a mass termination by the Department of
7 Agriculture during the period beginning on January
8 20, 2025, and ending on the date of enactment of
9 this Act.

10 (2) DIRECT HIRING AUTHORITY FOR REPLACE-
11 MENTS.—With respect to any terminated qualified
12 Federal employee who does not accept an offer of re-
13 instatement pursuant to paragraph (1) before the
14 date that is 60 days after the date of enactment of
15 this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall have di-
16 rect hiring authority to hire a replacement for such
17 employee.

18 (3) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

19 (A) MASS TERMINATION.—The term
20 “mass termination” means not fewer than 15
21 voluntary or involuntary separations from serv-
22 ice in an Executive agency during a 30-day pe-
23 riod pursuant to the same or related actions, di-
24 rectives, orders, or activities by the Federal
25 Government.

1 (B) QUALIFIED FEDERAL EMPLOYEE.—

2 The term “qualified Federal employee” means
3 an individual who was—

4 (i) was employed by the Natural Re-
5 source Conservation Service, Farm Service
6 Agency, or USDA Rural Development on
7 January 19, 2020; and

8 (ii) was not involuntarily separated
9 from the Department of Agriculture after
10 such date—

11 (I) on clearly documented
12 charges of misconduct or delinquency;
13 or

14 (II) following a clearly docu-
15 mented performance review that was
16 unacceptable or less than fully suc-
17 cessful.

