

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5491

To provide loans and grants to qualified agricultural associations to assist
in the establishment of agricultural association health plans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 12, 2018

Mr. FORTENBERRY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To provide loans and grants to qualified agricultural associa-
tions to assist in the establishment of agricultural asso-
ciation health plans.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Rural Health Insur-
5 ance Act of 2018”.

6 **SEC. 2. SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION**
7 **HEALTH PLANS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture may
9 establish a loan program and a grant program to assist
10 in the establishment of agricultural association health

1 plans, in order to help bring new health options and lower
2 priced health care coverage to rural Americans.

3 (b) LOANS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to plan years
5 2019 through 2022, the Secretary of Agriculture, in
6 consultation with the Secretary of Labor, may make
7 not more than 10 loans under this section, for pur-
8 poses of establishing agricultural association health
9 plans, to qualified agricultural associations that have
10 not received a loan under this section.

11 (2) USE OF FUNDS.—The proceeds of a loan
12 made under this section may only be used to finance
13 costs associated with establishing and carrying out
14 an agricultural association health plan.

15 (3) LOAN TERMS.—A loan made under this sec-
16 tion shall—

17 (A) bear interest at an annual rate equiva-
18 lent to the cost of borrowing to the Department
19 of the Treasury for obligations of comparable
20 maturities;

21 (B) have a term of such length, not ex-
22 ceeding 20 years, as the borrower may request;

23 (C) be in an amount not to exceed
24 \$15,000,000;

1 (D) require that the borrower submit an-
2 nual audited financial statements to the Sec-
3 retary; and

4 (E) include any other requirements or doc-
5 umentation the Secretary deems necessary to
6 carry out this section.

7 (c) GRANTS.—The Secretary may make grants to ag-
8 ricultural trade associations or industry associations which
9 have been in existence for at least three years prior to
10 applying for such a grant to provide for technical assist-
11 ance in establishing an agricultural association health
12 plan.

13 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
15 appropriated to carry out this section \$65,000,000
16 for the period of fiscal years 2019 through 2022, to
17 be available until expended.

18 (2) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—Of the funds
19 made available under paragraph (1), not more than
20 15 percent of such funds shall be made available to
21 make grants under subsection (c).

22 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 (1) AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION HEALTH
24 PLAN.—The term “agricultural association health
25 plan” means a group health plan within the meaning

1 of section 733(a)(1) of the Employee Retirement In-
2 come Security Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 1191b)—

3 (A) that is sponsored by a qualified agri-
4 cultural association; and

5 (B) with respect to which the Secretary
6 has received a letter from the relevant State in-
7 surance commissioner certifying that such asso-
8 ciation may offer such plan in such State.

9 (2) QUALIFIED AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION.—

10 The term “qualified agricultural association” means
11 an association—

12 (A) composed of members that operate a
13 farm or ranch or operate an agribusiness;

14 (B) that qualifies as an association health
15 plan within the meaning of guidance or regula-
16 tion issued by the Department of Labor;

17 (C) that acts directly or indirectly in the
18 interest of its members in relation to the plan;

19 (D) that is able to demonstrate an ability
20 to implement and manage a group health plan;
21 and

22 (E) that meets any other criteria the Sec-
23 retary deems necessary to meet the intent of
24 this section.

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