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Rep. Regina Lewis-Ward Introduces “Georgia Racial Equity in Agriculture Act” to Address Farming Inequality

ATLANTA – State Representative Regina Lewis-Ward (D-McDonough), along with members of the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus (GLBC), recently introduced House Bill 262, or the “Georgia Racial Equity in Agriculture Act,” which seeks to address racial disparities in farming by promoting equity in distributions of loans, programs, training and other resources to sustain socially disadvantaged farmers.

“I am honored to sponsor this historic legislation with the help of my colleagues from the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus to enable more trust in a new generation of black farmers,” said Rep. Lewis-Ward. “There is a link between discriminatory practices and the decline of Black-owned farms. Socially disadvantaged communities deserve our support, and House Bill 262 will do just that.”

HB 262 would establish the Office of Equity in Agriculture under the Georgia Department of Agriculture, which would support current members of socially disadvantaged groups and encourage the growth of members of socially disadvantaged groups into the field of agriculture. The bill would also create the Georgia Farmers Council within the Office of Equity in Agriculture to study and offer practical solutions to redress the root causes of discrimination and other barriers members of socially disadvantaged groups face. Furthermore, the bill would establish a fund to provide assistance to marginalized farmers who may be impacted by natural disasters.

Through these proposed state organizations, the GLBC seeks to encourage the development and promotion of culturally essential and specialty crops and work to provide sustainability for disadvantaged farmers in the state.

Co-sponsors of the bill are House Minority Leader James Beverly (D-Macon); State Representative Carl Gilliard (D-Savannah), chair of the GLBC; and State Representative Mack Jackson (D-Sandersville).



This legislation was not called for a vote on the House Floor before the “Crossover Day” deadline on Monday, March 6, 2023. Legislative Day 28, also known as Crossover Day, is the last day for bills to pass out of their chamber of origin and still remain eligible for the current legislative session. HB 262 will remain eligible for consideration during the 2024 legislative session, which will be the second session of the biennial term.

The GLBC also plans to tour the state to spread awareness about this legislative initiative in the coming months. During the tour, the GLBC will hear personal stories directly from Black farmers. Details about this statewide tour will be forthcoming.

For more information on HB 262, please [click here](#).

Representative Regina Lewis-Ward represents the citizens of District 115, which includes portions of Henry County. She was elected to the House of Representatives in 2020 and currently serves on the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs, Banks & Banking, Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications and Interstate Cooperation committees.

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