

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 30, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

**RE: Implementation of the Transparency and Accountability Provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill**

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We are writing to urge you to provide racial demographics for applicants and participants for programs implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Transparency and Accountability provision in section 14006 of the 2008 Farm Bill outlines the following specifications in the USDA policy:

(1) **Annual Requirements.** For each county and state in the United States, the Secretary of Agriculture shall annually compile program application and participation rate data regarding socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers by computing for each program of the Department of Agriculture that serves agricultural producers and landowners-

(A) raw numbers of applicants and participants by race, ethnicity, and gender, subject to appropriate privacy protections, as determined by the Secretary; and

(B) the application and participant rate, by race, ethnicity, and gender, as a percentage of the total participation rate of all agricultural producers and landowners.

(2) **Authority To Collect Data.** The head of the agencies of the Department of Agriculture shall collect and transmit to the Secretary any data, including data on race, gender, and ethnicity, that the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out paragraph (1).

(3) **Report.** Using the technologies and systems of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the Secretary shall compile and present the data compiled under paragraph (1) for each program described in that paragraph in a manner that includes the raw numbers and participation rates for-

(A) the entire United States

(B) each State; and

(C) each county in each State.

(4) **Public Availability of Report.** The Secretary shall maintain and make readily available to the public, via website and otherwise in electronic and paper form, the report described in

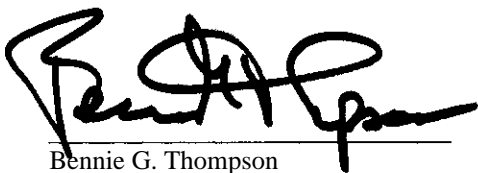
paragraph (3).

As of present, the policy has not been implemented. It is of utmost importance that this crucial information is provided across all USDA programs. Additionally, its significance extends to successfully implementing debt cancellation and discrimination prevention outcomes outlined in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

As members of Congress, it falls upon us to guarantee the preservation of transparency and accountability within our government agencies, including the USDA. Incorporating racial demographics in the data concerning program applications and participation is a necessary step toward achieving equity and rectifying agricultural disparities. To that end, we request that you promptly inform us of your plans to fully implement this policy and provide the public with the required reports.

Upon receipt of this letter, we request that you submit this information in writing to the office of Congressman Bennie Thompson by June 15, 2023, located at 2466 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC, 20515.

Sincerely,



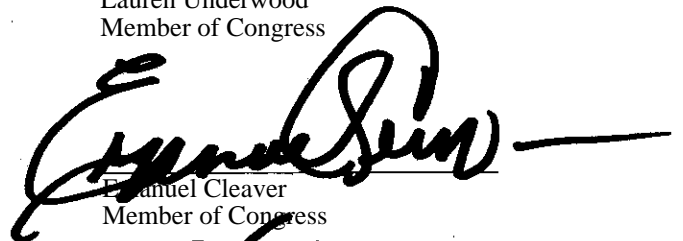
Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



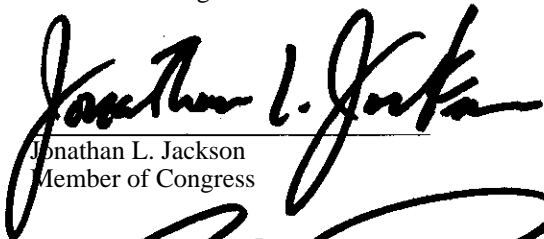
Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



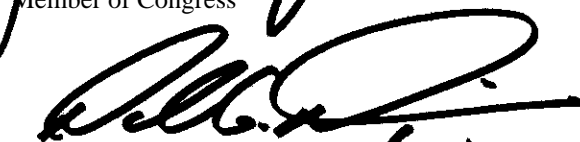
Emanuel Cleaver  
Member of Congress



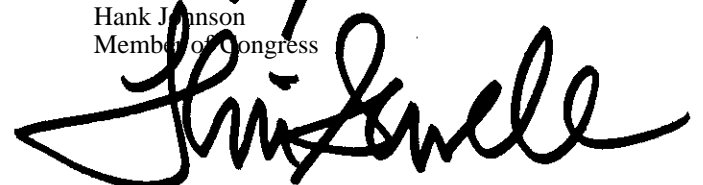
Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



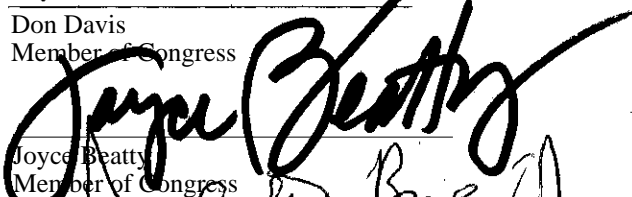
Hank Johnson  
Member of Congress



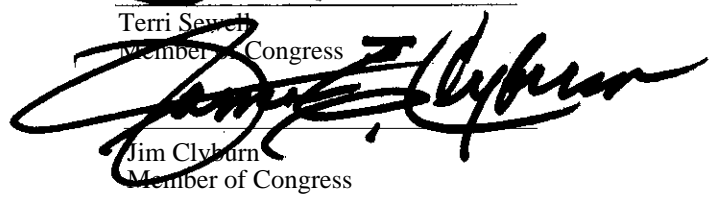
Don Davis  
Member of Congress



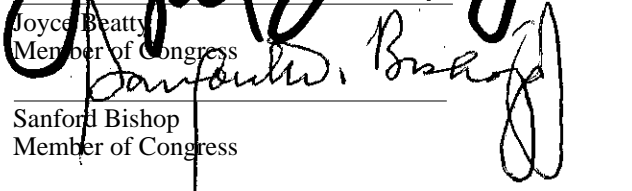
Terri Sewell  
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress



Jim Clyburn  
Member of Congress



Sanford Bishop  
Member of Congress

Al Green  
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks  
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Shelia Jackson Lee  
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
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Troy Carter  
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Ayanna Pressley  
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Glenn Ivey  
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Maxine Waters  
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Bobby Scott  
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Joe Neguse  
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Marc Veasey  
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Yvette D. Clarke  
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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore  
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Steve Horsford  
Member of Congress