

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 25, 2025

Ms. Brooke Rollins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

Amid layoffs across the federal government, we write to express grave concerns regarding the recent layoffs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and how they will affect the Department's ability to serve farmers, ranchers, and rural America.

On February 14, USDA issued a statement outlining the actions USDA has taken to eliminate positions at the Department and has reportedly terminated or put on administrative leave thousands of nonpartisan public servants across the Department, including at the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) National Animal Health Laboratory program office, the Forest Service (FS), the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Rural Development mission area (RD).

These widespread layoffs jeopardize USDA's ability to respond to the ongoing avian flu outbreak, process farm loans, disaster relief and other assistance for farmers, and distribute grants and loans for infrastructure and services that rural Americans rely on.

We request that USDA respond to the following questions:

1. Please provide a list of the total number of USDA employees terminated or placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025, with a break down by state, by USDA agency or office (e.g., APHIS, FSA, RD's Rural Utilities Service and Rural Business and Cooperative Service, FS, NRCS, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agricultural Research Service, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of General Counsel) by job position, and by veteran status. Please include any individuals whom USDA may have rehired after February 14, 2025.
  - a. For the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, please provide a breakdown of the number of employees terminated or placed on leave who worked as part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, worked in an office handling animal disease prevention or control, or worked as a veterinarian.

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

- b. For the Food Safety and Inspection Service, please provide a breakdown of the number of employees terminated or placed on leave who worked as a veterinarian.
  - c. For the Agricultural Research Service, please provide a breakdown of the number of employees terminated or placed on leave who worked on research related to animal diseases.
  - d. For the Farm Service Agency, please provide a breakdown of the number of employees terminated or placed on leave in each state who processed or handled farm loans.
2. What criteria and process did the Administration use when determining which employees to terminate or put on leave?
  - a. Please provide examples of the termination notices sent out by each USDA agency or office, with any personal identification information removed.
  - b. Please provide details on any employees exempted from terminations or leave.
3. Has the Administration conducted any assessments of how the terminations will impact the services provided by each USDA agency and office? If so, please provide a copy of any such assessments.
4. Has USDA rescinded any termination letters or rehired any individuals who were terminated on or after January 20, 2025?
  - a. If so, what is the total number of individuals USDA attempted to rehire? Please provide a list of the positions that USDA rehired or rescinded termination letters to, with a breakdown by state, USDA agency or office, whether the individual was successfully rehired, as well as an explanation for why the individual was rehired.
5. Does USDA intend to hire new employees to replace the employees who have recently been terminated? If so, please describe in detail the timeline and expected hiring process to replace employees.
6. Does USDA have any plans to terminate any additional employees? If so, please describe in detail what criteria and process USDA will use to terminate additional employees and the estimated number of employees that will be terminated in each USDA agency and office.

We have deep concerns that the termination of thousands of nonpartisan USDA employees and contracts in less than a month will hinder the Department's ability to address the challenges facing American agriculture and rural America. Please provide responses to the information requested in questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 not later than Friday, February 28, and

# United States Senate

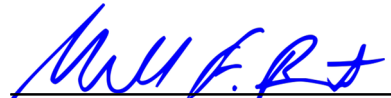
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

responses to questions 5 and 6 not later than Friday, March 7. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Agriculture, Nutrition, and  
Forestry



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



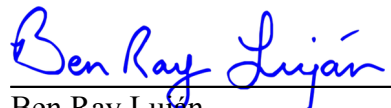
Tina Smith  
United States Senator



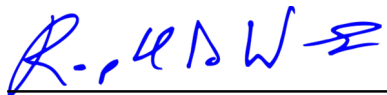
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



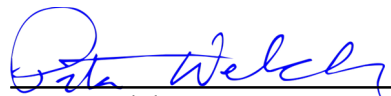
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator



Peter Welch  
United States Senator




John Fetterman  
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510



---

Elissa Slotkin  
United States Senator