

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 233

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the urgent need for the Department of Agriculture to resolve certain Montana civil rights discrimination cases.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 18, 1999

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. BURNS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

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# RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the urgent need for the Department of Agriculture to resolve certain Montana civil rights discrimination cases.

Whereas there exists a strong public policy against discrimination against minority groups, whether the discrimination is committed by private individuals or by the Federal Government in the operation of its programs;

Whereas, whenever discrimination occurs in the conduct of a Federal Government program, the responsible Federal Government agency should take quick and aggressive action to remedy the discrimination;

Whereas, last year, the Department of Agriculture was held accountable for certain civil rights violations against United States agricultural producers in connection with

their attempted participation in lending programs of the Department;

Whereas a significant number of Montana civil rights petitioners have not received a timely and equitable resolution of their complaints;

Whereas the agricultural community has faced a series of hardships, including record low prices, extreme weather disasters, and a shortage of farm loan opportunities;

Whereas additional frustration and financial difficulties perpetuated by the inadequate review process has further imposed undue hardship on the Montana civil rights petitioners;

Whereas the mission of the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Agriculture requires the Office to facilitate the fair and equitable treatment of customers and employees of the Department while ensuring the delivery and enforcement of civil rights programs and activities;

Whereas the Department of Agriculture should be committed to the policy of treating its customers with dignity and respect as well as to providing high quality and timely products and services; and

Whereas an urgent need exists for the Department of Agriculture to resolve certain Montana civil rights discrimination cases, many backlogged, by a date certain in furtherance of that policy: Now, therefore, be it

- 1       *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that, not
- 2 later than March 1, 2000, the Secretary of Agriculture
- 3 should resolve, or take other action to resolve, all cases
- 4 pending on the date of approval of this resolution of al-
- 5 leged civil rights discrimination by the Department of Ag-

- 1 riculture against agricultural producers located in the
- 2 State of Montana.

