

November 30, 2010

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4783, with particular reference to the Pigford late filer claims provision, regarding claims of widespread, rampant racial discrimination by the Department of Agriculture against black farmers.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard about the 18,000 farms, the 18,000, many more than 18,000 farmers, former farmers, many of them lost their farms and others tried, and they were too subjected to racial discrimination. But in 1999 the court ruled that black farmers who farmed between 1981 and 1996 and who had filed a complaint against the department by July 1, 1997, were eligible to seek monetary compensation from the government if they could prove their case. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of black farmers complained that they were not made aware of the July 1997 cutoff date.

To provide relief to those farmers left out of the original action, Congress authorized a cause of action for those late filers who were denied a determination on the merits of their discrimination claims, and those claims have now been settled, conditioned upon congressional appropriation of \$1.15 billion.

This bill provides the funding for the resolution of the longstanding claims for those who can prove it. This settlement is long overdue, and I hope my colleagues will approve this matter, as we have twice before, to bring this longstanding matter to a close.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I would like to thank my fellow Virginian, John Boyd, the president of the National Black Farmers Association for his hard work over many years on behalf of black farmers.