



Senator Laphonza Butler on Agriculture

Senator Laphonza Butler has been an advocate for economic mobility, focused on improving [opportunities for farmers](#), small business owners, and underserved communities. Through her legislative efforts, she has aimed to ensure equitable access to resources, support local economies, and promote long-term economic growth, particularly in rural and agricultural sectors that are vital to California's economy.

Key Legislative Accomplishments

- ***Specialty Crop Security Act (S. 4168)***: Senator Butler [introduced this bipartisan legislation](#) to support California's specialty crop industry, which is a bedrock of the state's agricultural economy. The bill would increase funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) from \$85 million to \$100 million per year through FY28. By doing so, it would **help farmers access the capital and resources needed to compete in global markets**, addressing the U.S. horticultural trade deficit. This legislation would also mandate that SCBGP grants be allocated based on priorities set by state program administrators, ensuring that **funding reaches the farmers and producer groups who need it most**. Senator Butler has partnered with organizations such as the Western Growers Association and the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance to gather feedback on legislative efforts and build support for the Specialty Crop Security Act. These alliances have been essential in advancing policies that directly benefit California's agricultural producers, ensuring that their voices are represented at the federal level.
- ***Crop Insurance for Future Farmers Act (S. 2458)***: Senator Butler cosponsored this legislation aimed at making crop insurance more affordable for beginning farmers, including veterans. By extending the definition of "beginning farmer" from under five years to under ten years, the bill would allow more new farmers to benefit from insurance protections. This initiative would **encourage a new generation of farmers**, supporting economic mobility in rural areas by reducing the financial risks associated with farming.
- ***Justice for Black Farmers Act (S. 96)***: As a cosponsor of this legislation, Senator Butler has been active in addressing the historical disparities faced by Black farmers. The bill seeks to aid Black farmers and ranchers through an equity commission, which would examine past discrimination by the USDA and create a Farm Conservation Corps to **help young adults from disadvantaged groups acquire skills in agriculture**. This is a step toward fostering equity and economic opportunity in the farming sector.

Notable Committee Work and Advocacy

- ***Senate Agriculture Committee Hearings on Rural Economic Development:*** Senator Butler has been actively involved in [hearings](#) that address the challenges faced by farmers, especially those impacted by natural disasters. She has advocated for policies that expand access to capital, improve water infrastructure, and promote research funding. Her focus has been on **creating a sustainable agricultural sector that supports long-term economic growth**, particularly in rural areas that are often overlooked in national economic strategies.
- ***Rural Community Roundtables:*** Senator Butler has convened several roundtables with stakeholders from the agricultural sector, including farmers, trade groups, and community organizations. These discussions have helped shape her legislative priorities, such as increasing funding for specialty crops, advocating for water conservation initiatives, and addressing issues like labor shortages and trade deficits that directly impact rural economies.