

Senator Schuitmaker offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 143.

A resolution celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the signing of the Smith-Lever Act, the founding legislation of the nationwide Cooperative Extension System.

Whereas, May 8, 2014, marks the centennial of the signing of the Smith-Lever Act (May 8, 1914, Ch. 79, 38 Stat. 372, 7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.), which established the Cooperative Extension System, the nationwide transformational education system operating through land-grant universities in partnership with federal, state, and local governments; and

Whereas, United States Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia and United States Representative A. F. Lever of South Carolina authored the Smith-Lever Act to expand the “vocational, agricultural, and home demonstration programs in rural America” by bringing the research-based knowledge of the land-grant universities to people where they live and work; and

Whereas, Cooperative Extension is a critical component of the three-part land-grant university mission and works collaboratively with research, particularly the Agricultural Experiment Station System, and academic programs in 106 colleges and universities, including historically black, Native American, and Hispanic-serving institutions; in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and six U.S. territories to reach traditional and underserved audiences in all communities; and

Whereas, The Cooperative Extension System continues to receive federal programmatic leadership and support enabled by the Smith-Lever Act and other legislation through the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture; and

Whereas, Cooperative Extension’s research-based education for farmers and ranchers helped establish the United States as a leading agricultural-producing nation in the world; and

Whereas, Since 1924, when the clover emblem was adopted by the USDA to represent 4-H, Cooperative Extension’s nationwide youth development program has reached millions of youth and helped prepare them for responsible adulthood; and

Whereas, This program prepares people for healthy, productive lives through sustained education such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, breaking the cycle of poverty and reducing expenditures for federal and state assistance programs; and

Whereas, Cooperative Extension provides rapid response to disasters and emergencies through the Extension Disaster Education Network and other similar efforts by providing real-time alerts and resources so Extension educators can respond to urgent needs resulting from hurricanes, floods, oil spills, fire, drought, pest outbreaks, and infectious diseases affecting humans, livestock, and crops; and

Whereas, Cooperative Extension translates science-based research for practical application through local and online learning networks, where educators are uniquely available to identify emerging research questions, connect with land-grant university faculty to find solutions, and encourage application of findings to improve economic and social conditions; and

Whereas, Cooperative Extension engages with rural and urban learners through pragmatic, community-based, and online approaches, resulting in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and motivation to strengthen the profitability of animal and plant production systems, protect natural resources, help people make healthful lifestyle choices, ensure a safe and abundant food supply, encourage community vitality, and grow the next generation of leaders; and

Whereas, Many states are celebrating the centennial of the signing of the Smith-Lever Act with resolutions and proclamations, and many land-grant institutions are also commemorating the signing of the historic legislation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we recognize the significance of the Smith-Lever Act to the establishment of the Cooperative Extension System nationwide. We encourage the people of Michigan to observe and celebrate the centennial with a focus on launching an innovative and sustainable future for Cooperative Extension; and be it further

Resolved, That we hereby honor the university faculty and local educators who dedicate careers to providing trusted education to help individuals, families, youth, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future. We thank Cooperative Extension volunteers who provide thousands of hours to promote excellence for 4-H, Master Gardeners, family and consumer sciences, and other programs in their communities; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage continued collaboration and cooperation among federal, state, and local governments to ensure the sustainability of Cooperative Extension as the nation's premiere nonformal educational network. We celebrate the millions of youth, adults, families, farmers, ranchers, community leaders, and others who engage in Cooperative Extension learning opportunities designed to extend knowledge and change lives.