

# Phonebank and Email Script

Please use this document to contact your elected officials on the Senate/House Appropriations Committees and Agriculture Committees. These committees oversee the national budget and the USDA. Please also consider contacting your city hall to ask them how the firings at USDA ARS are going to impact your local communities.

The firings affected probationary employees across the federal government. For USDA ARS scientists, the probationary period is 3 years. For technicians, it was 1 year. The firings were not based on performance nor efficiency and they included veterans. They were fired without just cause and without severance. This is not only cruel, but it poses a threat to our rural economies. Entire worksites may be closed resulting in losses of hundreds-of-thousands in research dollars that will no longer be spent at local businesses for equipment (tractors, etc.), plant/animal protection, hardware stores, services, contractors, restaurants, and more.

Please use this script and list of [elected officials](#) on Ag/Appropriations committees to call.

## Order of Priority

- 1) Senate members in *your* state
  - a) [Congress](#)
  - b) [Senators](#)
- 2) Senator in your state on the [Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry](#)
- 3) Congressional representative on the [House Committee on Agriculture](#)
- 4) Rest of the members in the ([Fed Mass Layoff Phonebank Elected Officials 2.15.25](#)):
  - a) [Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry](#)
  - b) [House Committee on Agriculture](#)
  - c) [House Appropriations Committee](#)
  - d) [Senate Appropriations Committee](#)
- 5) [Governor of your state](#)

## Phonebank script template

*Protect USDA ARS and rural America*

**Senators/Congressional reps to call:** [Fed Mass Layoff Phonebank Elected Officials 2.15.25](#)

This has a list of senators/congressional representatives on their respective Appropriations and Agriculture committees with contact information and how much USDA funding their states/districts receive (overall and specifically in the form of research). E.g. for Washington,

- i) WA District 4: [Dan Newhouse](#) (Prosser, WA)
  - (1) He's on the House Appropriations Committee and Ag Committee
  - (2) His district received \$3,076,504 in USDA research funding FY 24

- ii) \_\_\_ WA District 3: [Marie Gluesenkamp Perez](#) (Skamania Co.)
  - (1) She's on the House Appropriations Committee
- iii) WA District 5: [Brian Baumgartner](#) (Pullman/Spokane, WA)
  - (1) Rep. Baumgartner represents Pullman and his district received \$62,725,717 in USDA research funding FY 24
- iv) WA Senator [Patty Murray](#) is on the Senate Appropriations Committee and WA State received \$77,764,892 in USDA research funding FY 24.
- v) \_\_\_ OR District 6: [Andrea Salinas, OR](#)
  - (1) She's on the Ag Committee
  - (2) Her district received \$77,183 in USDA research funding FY 24
- vi) OR Senator [Jeff Merkley](#) is on the Senate Appropriations Committee and OR State received \$57,809,954 in USDA research funding FY 24.
- vii) ID District 2: [Michael K. Simpson](#) (Idaho Falls, ID)
  - (1) He's on the House Appropriations Committee
  - (2) His district received \$1,838,267 in USDA research funding in FY 24
  - (3) Idaho received \$86,493,839 in USDA research funding in FY 24

General script:

### Introduction

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a  (Job title)  at \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling to express my personal opinion about the mass layoff of probationary employees at the USDA. May I speak with a legislative staffer for [\[Ag or Appropriations committee if the elected is on one of the target committees\]](#) in [\[REPRESENTATIVE'S\]](#) office?

[\\*If you are a constituent, provide your zip code](#)

### Our Concern

I am calling regarding my extreme concern about the recent mass layoffs of federal employees on probation at the USDA, especially those at the Agricultural Research Service, USDA-ARS.

[\[If they are a member of the :](#)

- [Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry Committee](#)
- [House Committee on Agriculture](#)

[mention this as these have oversight over USDA, ARS, Extension/Experiment Stations, Forestry, and Agriculture.\]](#)

[\[If they are a member of the :](#)

- [Senate Appropriations Committee](#)
- [House](#)

[mention this as these have oversight over spending.\]](#)

[If you are a grower/industry/researcher, start by explaining in ONE short sentence about the work USDA ARS contributes to your field]. The research USDA ARS conducts is critical to maintaining our leadership in agriculture and science, but the recent mass layoffs and threats of consolidation pose a serious threat to food security, market competitiveness, scientific progress, and public health. It is essential that these disruptions are reversed so research projects on avian flu, cattle, trade barriers, pulses, soy beans, forage quality, and other critical food security issues can continue uninterrupted. Every day that these mass layoffs remain in effect and uncertainty continues is a day that we fall behind in the global competition to be on the leading edge of science and the health of the American people is put at further risk.

Not only is this a food security and public health concern, but also an economic one. In the last year alone, our district/state received [\[FIND FUNDING INFO HERE\]](#) dollars in USDA research funding alone, not to mention other funds from the NIH, NSF, DOE and other agencies. These restrictions not only put the jobs of researchers in our district at risk, but they stifle scientific innovation which drives economic growth in rural America. Every \$1 spent on public Research & Development returns on average \$20 in benefits to the US economy. For rural America, these job cuts mean entire research programs are eliminated resulting in hundreds-of-thousands of dollars in USDA funds not being spent at local equipment, plant/animal protection, hardware stores, restaurants, fuel, cooperatives, local contractors, direct payments, or services.

[For Ag Committee] The executive branch cannot be allowed to fire thousands of employees overseen by the Agriculture committee.

These layoffs were not about improving efficiency nor were they based on performance. They, along with thousands of other hardworking ARS employees, were fired with unjust cause, without notice, and without severance. This is going to devastate thousands of families, rural communities, and agriculture at large. Oversight and ensuring federal dollars are spent efficiently is an admirable goal, but this is not the mechanism to do so and the result has been entirely counterproductive.

### **Call to Action**

Will the [\[Congressperson or Senator\]](#) use their position on the [\[Agriculture Committee/ Appropriations Committee\]](#) to reverse the firings at USDA ARS and protect these vital programs from dissolution to ensure no further disruptions to the American agriculture economy?

Thank you for your time.

### **Short Script/template**

*Use this rap if the elected's office isn't giving you a lot of time to speak*

## Introduction

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a (job title) at \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling to express my concerns about the mass layoff of probationary employees at the USDA. May I speak with a legislative staffer for [Ag or Appropriations committee if the elected is on one of the target committee] in [REPRESENTATIVE'S] office?

\*If you are a constituent, provide your zip code:

## Our Concern

I am calling regarding my extreme concern about the recent mass layoffs of federal employees on probation at the USDA, especially those at the Agricultural Research Service, USDA-ARS. These layoffs were not about improving efficiency nor were they based on performance. They, along with thousands of other hardworking ARS employees, were fired with unjust cause, without notice, and without severance. This is going to devastate thousands of families, rural communities, and our nation. This must end.

## Call to Action

Will the [Congressperson or Senator] use their position on the [Agriculture Committee/ Appropriations Committee] to reverse the firings at USDA ARS and protect these vital programs from dissolution to ensure no further disruptions to rural america?

Thank you!

## Email/Letter Template

*If you are not able to get through on the phone, send the following message via email or message portal on the elected's webpage.*

Dear [elected's title and name],

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a (job title) at \_\_\_\_\_ and a constituent of [City, Zip code], but I'm writing to express my concern about the mass layoff of probationary employees at the USDA.

[If they are a member of the :

- Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry Committee
- House Committee on Agriculture

mention this as these have **oversight over USDA**, ARS, Extension/Experiment Stations, Forestry, and Agriculture.]

[If they are a member of the :

- Senate Appropriations Committee
- House

mention this as these have oversight over **spending.**]

**[If you are a grower/industry/researcher, start by explaining in ONE short sentence about the work USDA ARS contributes to your field].** The research USDA ARS conducts is critical

to maintaining our leadership in agriculture and science, but the recent mass layoffs and threats of consolidation pose a serious threat to food security, scientific progress, and public health. It is essential that these disruptions are reversed so research projects on avian flu, cattle, trade barriers, pulses, soy beans, forage quality, and other critical food security issues can continue uninterrupted. Every day that these mass layoffs remain in effect and uncertainty continues is a day that we fall behind in the global competition to be on the leading edge of science and the health of the American people is put at further risk.

Not only is this a food security and public health concern, but also an economic one. In the last year alone, our district/state received [\[FIND FUNDING INFO HERE\]](#) dollars in USDA research funding alone, not to mention other funds from the NIH, NSF, DOE and other agencies. These restrictions not only put the jobs of researchers in our district at risk, but they stifle scientific innovation which drives economic growth in rural America. Every \$1 spent on public Research & Development returns on average \$20 in benefits to the US economy. For rural America, these job cuts mean entire research programs are eliminated resulting in hundreds-of-thousands of dollars in USDA ARS funds not being spent at local equipment, plant/animal protection, hardware stores, restaurants, fuel, cooperatives, local contractors, direct payments, or services.

**[For Ag Committee]** The executive branch cannot be allowed to fire thousands of employees overseen by the Agriculture committee.

These layoffs were not about improving efficiency nor were they based on performance. Veterans were included in this round of mass layoffs. They, along with thousands of other hardworking ARS employees, were fired with unjust cause, without notice, and without severance. This is going to devastate thousands of families, rural communities, and our nation. This is blatantly illegal and must end.

I call **[Congressperson or Senator]** to action to use their position on the **[Agriculture Committee/ Appropriations Committee]** to reverse the firings at USDA and protect these vital programs from dissolution to ensure no further disruptions to rural america.

We must protect rural america!

[Name & Personal contact information]