



# MAKING RURAL AMERICA COUNT

C O N G R E S S M A N   D A V I D   G .   V A L A D A O

Rural communities throughout the United States are struggling. According to the United States Census Bureau, household incomes outside metro areas are about twenty five percent lower than their metro counterparts. While rural America provides the majority of our nation's food, energy, and clean water, these communities are often forgotten and face many unique challenges.

In an effort to create jobs and drive economic development in rural areas, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Program offers loans, grants, and loan guarantees to individuals, businesses, and cities in rural regions throughout the nation. These programs help improve the economy and quality of life in rural American communities by supporting essential services such as housing, healthcare, community facilities, as well as water, electric, and communications infrastructure.

In order for businesses and municipalities to qualify for Rural Development programs they must be located within a region that meets certain requirements, including population limits. These population limits include prison populations, putting rural businesses and entire cities located in regions with a prison at a disadvantage when applying for USDA Rural Development assistance.

The **Making Rural America Count** Act provides a simple solution to this problem and would exclude incarcerated prison populations from overall population eligibility requirements as they pertain to Rural Development Programs administered by the USDA.

*For more information on Making Rural America Count, please contact Congressman David G. Valadao's office at (202) 225-4695.*

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