

The General Assembly

STATE OF IOWA
Ninetieth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

March 14, 2023

Jessica Looman
Wage and Hour Division
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Seema Nanda, Solicitor
Solicitor's Office
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Re: Proposed Iowa Child Labor Legislation

Dear Ms. Looman & Solicitor Nanda:

This Legislative session, Iowa lawmakers have proposed legislation that drastically weakens the state's current child labor protections and contradicts federal labor regulations. If these proposed changes are enacted, many Iowa employers may inadvertently violate federal labor regulations by relying upon inconsistent state law.

Specifically, HF 647 and SF 542 would permit 14-and-15-year-olds to work six-hour nightly shifts in industrial laundries, meat freezers, or on light manufacturing production lines; permit 16-and-17-year-olds to serve alcohol at establishments; and permit employers to recruit 14-18-year-olds for a "work-based learning" program that may require performance of hazardous job duties. It is our understanding that each of these proposals are inconsistent with current federal regulations.

Some of the other, more extreme proposed changes to Iowa's child labor laws include removing existing rules that prohibit parents or guardians from making false statements to procure employment; eliminating the Iowa Labor Commissioner's authority to provide work permits for minors in certain occupations; and providing the state new discretion to waive, reduce, or delay civil penalties if an employer violates child labor laws.

These proposed policies undermine the Fair Labor Standard Act's child labor requirements, which protect minors from exploitation and being required/permitted to work in unsafe conditions. Since 2020, Iowa's business industry has experienced a significant labor decrease due, in part, to low wages and dangerous work environments. Rather than address our state's

labor shortage by offering fair wages and comprehensive benefits, the proposals seek to amend child labor laws so younger lowans may fill the employment gap.

Based on the Department's current child labor investigations and Iowa's proposed child labor law changes, we request that the United States Department of Labor (DOL) review the legislation to determine whether these provisions contradict and/or are inconsistent with federal child labor regulations. Further, we also request that the DOL provide us with information related to the number of any ongoing child labor investigations in Iowa.

We stand ready to assist with anything needed to continue federal compliance and protect Iowa's children from exploitation from working in hazardous work environments.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



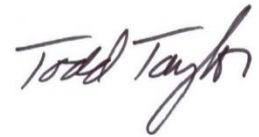
Bill Dotzler
State Senator



Molly Donahue
State Senator



Nate Boulton
State Senator



Todd Taylor
State Senator



Megan Srinivas
State Representative



Sean Bagniewski
State Representative



Jeff Cooling
State Representative

Cc: Kristen Garcia, Chief of Staff
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