

News and Current Events :: U.S. Labor Dept may ban children from performing farm chores...

U.S. Labor Dept may ban children from performing farm chores... - posted by ccchhrrriiiss () , on: 2012/4/25 13:11

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Rural kids, parents angry about Labor Dept. rule banning farm chores

By Patrick Richardson

THE DAILY CALLER

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A proposal from the Obama administration to prevent children from doing farm chores has drawn plenty of criticism from rural-district members of Congress. But now it's attracting barbs from farm kids themselves.

The Department of Labor is poised to put the finishing touches on a rule that would apply child-labor laws to children working on family farms, prohibiting them from performing a list of jobs on their own families' land.

Under the rules, children under 18 could no longer work "in the storing, marketing and transporting of farm product raw materials."

"Prohibited places of employment," a Department press release read, "would include country grain elevators, grain bins, silos, feed lots, stockyards, livestock exchanges and livestock auctions."

The new regulations, first proposed August 31 by Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, would also revoke the government's approval of safety training and certification taught by independent groups like 4-H and FFA, replacing them instead with a 90-hour federal government training course.

Rossie Blinson, a 21-year-old college student from Buis Creek, N.C., told The Daily Caller that the federal government's plan will do far more harm than good.

"The main concern I have is that it would prevent kids from doing 4-H and FFA projects if they're not at their parents' house," said Blinson.

"I started showing sheep when I was four years old. I started with cattle around 8. It's been very important. I learned a lot of responsibility being a farm kid."

In Kansas, Cherokee County Farm Bureau president Jeff Clark was out in the field—literally on a tractor—when TheDC reached him. He said if Solis's regulations are implemented, farming families' labor losses from their children will only be part of the problem.

"What would be more of a blow," he said, "is not teaching our kids the values of working on a farm."

The Environmental Protection Agency reports that the average age of the American farmer is now over 50.

"Losing that work-ethic—it's so hard to pick this up later in life," Clark said. "There's other ways to learn how to farm, but it's so hard. You can learn so much more working on the farm when you're 12, 13, 14 years old."

John Weber, 19, understands this. The Minneapolis native grew up in suburbia and learned the livestock business working summers on his relatives' farm.

He's now a college Agriculture major.

"I started working on my grandparent's and uncle's farms for a couple of weeks in the summer when I was 12," Weber told TheDC. "I started spending full summers there when I was 13."

"The work ethic is a huge part of it. It gave me a lot of direction and opportunity in my life. If they do this it will prevent a

lot of interest in agriculture. It's harder to get a 16 year-old interested in farming than a 12 year old."

Weber is also a small businessman. In high school, he said, he took out a loan and bought a few steers to raise for income. "Under these regulations," he explained, "I wouldn't be allowed to do that."

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Re: U.S. Labor Dept may ban children from performing farm chores..., on: 2012/4/25 13:25

I grew up on a farm... I was driving a tractor by the time I was 12. The government has almost eradicated the family farm from existence, and something stupid like this would all but finish it. Instead of farmer Joe having his kids out there in the fields, he'll now have to hire someone over 18, pay that person minimum wage, social security, etc... not to mention buy small business insurance in case the guy gets scratched or something while on the job.

I dont know ANY family farmers who can afford all that.

Like Ronald Reagan said once: "The 10 most dangerous words in the English language are... 'I'm from the government and I am here to help!'"

Go away, Uncle Sam... we dont need your help.

Krispy