

SR-94, As Adopted by Senate, November 9, 2011

Senators Emmons, Kowall, Hildenbrand, Proos, Colbeck, Booher, Pavlov, Walker, Casperson, Moolenaar, Caswell, Kahn, Pappageorge, Richardville, Meekhof, Hansen, Robertson, Jones, Marleau, Brandenburg, Green, Nofs, Hune and Jansen offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 94.

A resolution to memorialize Congress and the United States Department of Labor to halt the implementation of proposed restrictions regarding youth employment on farms.

Whereas, By any measure, farming is a unique enterprise. While clearly an essential business, especially in Michigan where agriculture is the second-largest economic activity, farming involves traditions rooted in family and community. Practices that would be unthinkable in many types of work, such as spouses and other relatives stepping in routinely to handle difficult tasks when the need arises, represent a great strength and are part of a heritage with many benefits to families and our entire society; and

Whereas, The U.S. Department of Labor has proposed regulations that would significantly revamp rules regarding young people working on farms. While the intent of the new regulations to increase safety is commendable, the provisions are restrictive in ways that are counterproductive and confusing and which do not fully recognize the uniqueness of the family farm. Under the proposed rules, youth under the age of 16 could not perform a wide range of tasks. These restrictions would prohibit young people from many jobs involving animals and common equipment; and

Whereas, The regulations proposed do include exceptions for young people working on their parents' farm, but it is notable that the exceptions do not extend to those working on farms operated by grandparents, uncles, cousins, or siblings. The many people in the farm community objecting to the proposal decry the fact that these measures largely ignore the generational family structure that is one of the hallmarks of American agriculture. In an age in which formidable challenges are already preventing many young people from pursuing farming as their livelihood, the new regulations are even more problematic to many; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we memorialize Congress and the United States Department of Labor to halt the implementation of proposed restrictions regarding youth employment on farms; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of the United States Department of Labor, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.