

MAC THORNBERRY
13TH DISTRICT
TEXAS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

December 9, 2011

The Honorable Hilda L. Solis
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department Of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20210-0001

Dear Secretary Solis,

I am writing to express my concern with the September 2, 2011, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to update the agricultural child labor regulations.

Having grown up on a family farm and ranch, I understand the need to be cautious around livestock and machinery. However, I believe this regulation goes too far. The removal of many of the student-learner exemptions will make it more difficult for local 4-H and FFA programs to operate and teach kids a skill that they could utilize in their careers. Other provisions will simply prevent youths from performing many of the basic functions necessary for agriculture.

I understand there are many areas of our country that are becoming more urban. However, that does not mean there are no longer rural areas in which agriculture continues to drive the economy and affects nearly every aspect of the local community. Preventing a high school freshman from earning extra money on a farm or helping his neighbor work cattle limits the ability to teach our youth the value of hard work and that it is still possible to pay your own way in many rural areas.

Within your rules and regulations, I respectfully ask that you immediately suspend any further push to implement the proposed changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mac Thornberry', written in a cursive style.

Mac Thornberry
Member of Congress

WMT/ms