

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 25, 2024

The Honorable Julie A. Su
Acting Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Acting Secretary Su:

We write to express our concerns over reports from Iowa businesses regarding the U.S. Department of Labor's enforcement of teen labor laws throughout the State of Iowa.

In May 2023, after consistently hearing from employers across the state who needed more flexibility in hiring and staffing, the Iowa Legislature passed a bill that extended working hours for 14- and 15-year-olds to 9 p.m. during the school year and 11 p.m. in the summer. We are aware of the conflict between federal and state labor laws and that the federal law places greater restrictions on young teens' ability to work during school and non-school hours. That conflict existed prior to passage of the bill, and more than 25 states currently have conflicts between their state labor laws and federal law.

Over the last several weeks, our offices have received numerous reports from small business owners who have been subject to investigations and excessive penalties by the U.S. Department of Labor. These investigations have reportedly included auditors demanding one-on-one, non-supervised access to teenage employees who were younger than 16, without parental consent or knowledge. Auditors have also reportedly threatened to issue fines of up to \$150,000 without allowing for any corrections to be made.

These small businesses are facing fines that will cause them to go out of business. Small businesses are staples of their community that provide employment opportunities to teenager workers. Rural communities in Iowa would be greatly harmed if these small restaurants were pushed out of business for mistakenly following state regulations, and it is imperative that the Department provides transparency and an opportunity to rectify situations before penalizing small businesses with excessive fines.

To provide clarity for small businesses and working families affected by these federal regulations, we ask the U.S. Department of Labor to please provide answers to the questions below by July 9, 2024.

1. What steps has the Department taken to provide businesses with an opportunity for corrective action prior to issuing a fine?
2. How does the Department determine which businesses to investigate?

3. What standards are in place to govern the Department's interactions with teenage employees during an investigation?
4. Is it standard practice for the Department to demand non-supervised access to teenage employees without parental consent or knowledge?
5. How many similar investigations are taking place in the other states – including Illinois and Minnesota – that have state labor laws in conflict with federal law?

We share the goal of providing safe and stable employment opportunities for teens while boosting our economy and workforces. We ask the U.S. Department of Labor to assess their own regulations to determine whether they are aligned with our modern work world, support our young workers, meet employers' needs and sustain a strong American economy.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ashley Hinson
United States Representative



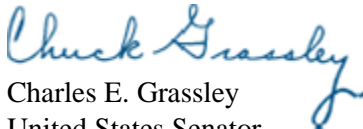
Mariannette Miller-Meeks, M.D.
United States Representative



Zach Nunn
United States Representative



Randy Feenstra
United States Representative



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