



Date: Thursday, June 25, 2026

To: Chair Schuette and members of the House Committee on Rules

From: Anne Kuhnen, Kids Count Policy Director, Michigan League for Public Policy

Subject: Opposition to House Bill 5727 — Weakening of Youth Employment Standards Act

On behalf of the Michigan League for Public Policy, I thank Chair Schuette and members of the Committee on Rules for the opportunity to express our opposition to House Bill 5727. The proposed legislation would undo the positive changes to the Youth Employment Standards Act (YESA) made by Public Act 196 of 2024.

The League is a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization that promotes economic opportunity for all and analyzes the impact of public policy on the lives of Michiganders who have been systemically left out of prosperity. The League is also the state's Kids Count organization, working as part of a national effort to measure the well-being of children at the state and local levels and to shape efforts that improve their lives.

The H-4 substitution of HB 5727 aligns with federal labor law. We appreciate the bill sponsor's efforts to ensure HB 5727 does not encourage activities that violate federal law by removing discrepancies dealing with working hours and hazardous work. Maintaining state legislation consistent with Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) rules on child labor is good for the health and well-being of children, just as it is good for employers who want clear guidance on their obligations when hiring minors. Despite these improvements, the remaining provisions still take our youth employment standards backwards.

Eliminating Michigan's youth work permit system will put child workers at risk. State systems for documenting youth employment through the issuance of work permits are effective at ensuring young people can gain valuable work experience while preventing child labor violations. Research has shown states with work permit requirements see 17% fewer child labor violations under the FLSA and 43% fewer children involved in those violations.¹

¹ Fred (Jiacong) Bao and Ashish Kabra, "State Mandated Employment Certificate for Minors Reduces Child Labor Violations in the US," June 7, 2024, <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4857432>.

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A centralized system for work permits enables more effective enforcement of child labor law. From 2020 to 2025, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) identified over 1,200 child labor violations and issued corrective action notices to these employers during investigations into YESA complaints.² Work permits also allow the department to proactively inform employers of regulations. In this way, work permits are good for employers, who want to follow the law, and for parents, who seek to be informed of their child's rights in the workplace.

The proposed legislation will undermine efforts to improve educational outcomes. HB 5727 strips LEO's ability to revoke work authorization based on school performance, allowing a student to continue working even if they are chronically absent, falling behind academically or exhibiting disciplinary issues.

According to the 2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book, Michigan falls in the bottom 10 states for educational outcomes.³ If we want students to graduate on-time and college-ready, lawmakers should not limit the ability of schools to respond when work is creating disciplinary, attendance, and academic performance issues. We as a state can enable positive first work experiences that set young people up with the skills, training and confidence they need for career success, but that should not come at the expense of educational attainment.

We ask the committee to preserve the Youth Employment Standards Act and reject these changes that will put child workers at risk and undermine efforts to improve educational outcomes. If we value the lives and well-being of all children and want them to have positive first work experiences, then our laws need to reflect those values.

² Special data request through the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity.

³ 2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2026),

<https://www.aecf.org/resources/2026-kids-count-data-book>.

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