



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**CHILD LABOR, CORN DETASSELING**

**House Bill 4507 (Substitute H-2)  
First Analysis (6-4-87)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Glenn Oxender  
Committee: Labor**

***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

The Youth Employment Standards Act specifies that the minimum age for the employment of minors is 14 years, with the exception of golf caddies, who can be employed at age 11. Certain farm operations have been excluded from the act: those practices incident to, or in conjunction with, preparation for delivery to storage or market, or to carriers for transportation to market, as long as the employment is not in violation of Department of Labor standards. In addition, employers who hire minors are required to keep on file a copy of a work permit, which the minor must obtain from the issuing officer of his or her school district.

Detasseling, roguing, hoeing, and similar acts involving the production of seed are not included among those farm operations which minors under 14 years of age may engage in. Many farmers, however, have been unaware of this and have been operating outside the law for the last several years.

***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would amend the Youth Employment Standards Act to specify that the work permit requirements of the act would not apply for minors age 13 or older employed in detasseling, roguing, hoeing, or any similar act involved in the production of seed. Minors employed in this work would not be required to obtain work permits if the employment occurred during school vacation or during periods when the minor was not regularly enrolled in school. The employer, however, would be required to obtain evidence of the age of the minor, in the manner prescribed by the act, and to keep this on file at the place of employment.

MCL 409.103 and 409.104

***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

Fiscal information is not available.

***ARGUMENTS:***

***For:***

Farm work has always been regarded as healthy work for young people. In addition, it allows them the advantage of earning money at an early age. Wages are paid at the minimum wage rate, often with a bonus of 60 cents per hour. Since the period of time involved in this particular farm operation lasts from June 15 to August 15, most minors earn between \$300 and \$400, which many save toward the purchase of their first car, or for college.

***Against:***

Amending the Youth Employment Standards Act to allow one particular type of employment an exemption is unwise. It could open the door to a situation where other employers would want to add lists of jobs which minors could perform.

***POSITIONS:***

The Department of Labor supports the bill. (6-3-87)

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