

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1731

4
5 By: Representative Vaught
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For An Act To Be Entitled

8
9 AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN CHILD LABOR LAWS THROUGH THE
10 REINSTATEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATES; AND FOR
11 OTHER PURPOSES.
12
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Subtitle

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15 TO STRENGTHEN CHILD LABOR LAWS THROUGH
16 THE REINSTATEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
17 CERTIFICATES.
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19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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21 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings and purpose.

22 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

23 (1) Teenage part-time work:

24 (A) Teaches important lessons in:

25 (i) Personal finance;

26 (ii) Time management; and

27 (iii) Confidence; and

28 (B) Allows for important networking and career exploration
29 opportunities;

30 (2) The state has a responsibility to:

31 (A) Protect children from hazardous work environments; and

32 (B) Ensure that employment opportunities do not come at
33 the expense of a teenager's education;

34 (3) The Department of Labor and Licensing identified that, from
35 2020-2023, child labor violations increased by two hundred sixty-six percent
36 (266%) and financial penalties for child labor violations increased by six



1 hundred percent (600%) for that same time period;

2 (4) When compared to surrounding states, Arkansas has some of
 3 the highest numbers of child labor cases investigated for violations with
 4 minors involved, as well as financial penalties assigned, according to the
 5 data from the United States Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division;

6 (5) Recent national research has found a significant link
 7 between employment certificate mandates and decreased child labor violations;

8 (6) Using United States Department of Labor 2008-2020 data,
 9 researchers at the University of Maryland found that:

10 (A) On average, the prevalence rate of child labor
 11 violation cases is fifteen and one-half percent (15.5%) lower in states that
 12 mandate employment certificates as compared to states that do not; and

13 (B) The prevalence rate of minors involved in these cases
 14 is thirty-five and two tenths percent (35.2%) lower on average in states with
 15 employment certificate mandates;

16 (7) Employment certificates:

17 (A) Provide an educational touchpoint for employers,
 18 minors, and parents;

19 (B) Enhance parental choice as parents or guardians must
 20 sign off on their child's employment; and

21 (C) Do not create burdens on employers;

22 (8) Children under sixteen (16) years of age should be required
 23 to obtain an employment certificate as a condition of employment; and

24 (9) The Division of Labor should require that a child under
 25 sixteen (16) years of age verify his or her age through an employment
 26 certificate as a condition of employment.

27 (b) The purpose of this act is to:

28 (1) Reinstate the requirement that children under sixteen (16)
 29 years of age complete employment certificates; and

30 (2) Educate employers, children, and parents about employment
 31 law for children under sixteen (16) years of age by completion of employment
 32 certificates to ensure a safe and positive working environment for teenagers.

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 34 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 11, Chapter 6, Subchapter 1, is amended
 35 to add an additional section to read as follows:

36 11-6-117. Children under 16 years of age – Employment certificate

1 required.

2 (a) A person, firm, or corporation shall not employ or permit a child
 3 under sixteen (16) years of age to work in or in connection with an
 4 establishment or occupation unless the person, firm, or corporation employing
 5 the child procures and keeps on file, accessible to the Division of Labor and
 6 the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education or local school officials,
 7 an employment certificate as provided in this section.

8 (b)(1) The employment certificate shall be issued only by the Director
 9 of the Division of Labor.

10 (2) Application for an employment certificate shall:

11 (A) Be made on a form approved by the director; and

12 (B) Require submission of the following:

13 (i) Proof of age;

14 (ii) A description of the work and work schedule;

15 and

16 (iii) Written consent of the parent or guardian.

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