United States Senate

October 25, 2011

The Honorable Hilda L. Solis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

We request an extension of the comment period for proposed changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act that would affect the ability of farmers and ranchers to hire youth to work in agriculture. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, "Child Labor Regulations, Orders and Statements of Interpretation; Child Labor Violations—Civil Money Penalties" (76 Fed. Reg. 54836), if allowed to move forward in its current form, would have vast implications for the agriculture industry. The original 60 days allowed for comment are not enough for the affected parties to express their concerns.

It is particularly concerning the DOL would publish a proposed rule in September and set the comment period during the fall harvest season. For agricultural producers across the nation this is the busiest time of year. To allow agriculture producers a reasonable amount of time to consider the proposed regulation and comment, the DOL should allow, at a minimum, an additional 60 days for farmers, ranchers, and others to comment.

Not only would this regulation, as currently drafted, have far reaching effects on youth agricultural education programs, farms, ranches, and other agricultural businesses, it could greatly impact the structure of family farms and rural communities in the states we represent. We strongly urge you to consider extending the comment period an additional 60 days.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerry Moran
U.S. Senator Jerry Moran

Ben Nelson
U.S. Senator Ben Nelson

Pat Roberts

Debbie Stabenow

Mike Johanns

Max Baucus

Roy Blunt

Kent Conrad

Jerry Moran

Claire McCaskill

Mike Crapo

Ron Wyden

Lisa Murkowski

Amy Klobuchar

John Barrasso

Jon Tester

Jim E. Risch

Chuck Grassley

Mike Enzi

Jim DeMint

John Boozman

Richard Burr

Richard G. Lugar

John Thune

Orrin G. Hatch

Tom Coburn

Herb Kohl

Tom Udall

Saxby Chambliss