

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1731

By: Representative Vaught

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN CHILD LABOR LAWS THROUGH THE
REINSTATEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATES; AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO STRENGTHEN CHILD LABOR LAWS THROUGH
THE REINSTATEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
CERTIFICATES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings and purpose.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Teenage part-time work:

(A) Teaches important lessons in:

(i) Personal finance;

(ii) Time management; and

(iii) Confidence; and

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

(2) The state has a responsibility to:

(A) Protect children from hazardous work environments; and

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) Employment certificates:

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

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

(C) Do not create burdens on employers;

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

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

(b) The purpose of this act is to:

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

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

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

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

required.

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

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

(2) Application for an employment certificate shall:

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

(B) Require submission of the following:

(i) Proof of age;

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

and

(iii) Written consent of the parent or guardian.