

Child Labor Accountability Act of 2023

Over the last several years, there has been a significant surge in child labor violations. This coincided with repeated calls from various media outlets emphasizing the imperative for increased transparency, accountability, and resource allocation to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) – the leading federal agency tasked with combatting child labor violations. To that end Senators Rubio (R-FL), Padilla (D-CA), Hickenlooper (D-CO), and Marshall (R-KS) introduced the *Child Labor Accountability Act of 2023*.

This bipartisan legislation would:

- Seek to ensure that federal agencies provide greater transparency about child labor violations to Congress by amending the *Fair Labor Standards Act* to require more comprehensive annual reporting to Congress by the DOL concerning child labor violations domestically.
- Provide the Department of Labor additional time to investigate child labor violations and build their case to combat child labor violations.

The *Child Labor Accountability Act* reporting would provide Congress with more comprehensive and consistent data and information concerning child labor violations. Among other things, DOL would be required to report to Congress:

- The number of pending and closed investigations into child labor violations;
- Key demographic information about perpetrators and those subject to child labor; and
- Policy recommendations on how to mitigate and combat child labor.

The bill also importantly provides DOL with more time to obtain a court order to halt the shipment of goods produced with unlawful child labor. Under the existing ‘hot goods’ provisions, DOL has an unreasonable 30 days to make their case against those violating child labor laws. This is significantly shorter than the 90-day “hot goods” period for products made in violation of minimum wage and overtime law. The bill seeks to ensure that DOL has more time to investigate and ultimately hold child labor violators accountable and ensure parity between existing “hot goods” statutes of limitations.