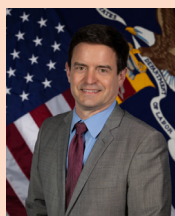




This Ancient Atrocity' The Return of Child Labor in the U.S. Why Now? What Can be Done?

Opening Remarks by:



Douglas Parker

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health



Jessica Looman

Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division

Thursday, May 2, 2024

9:00 - 10:15am

<https://keene.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAlfu-trjpkGtQy25rXvSLv-48J7aUBfe-01>

We tend to think of child labor in factories as a thing of the past. However, child labor in the US is surging with recent investigations and reporting finding children employed in violation of the law in meat processing, automobile, packaged food and seafood manufacturing. In several cases, children as young as 14 have been exposed to chemicals, dangerous machinery and long hours (often working in the middle of the night). In this policy brief, David Weil examines the causes for this increase in employers unlawfully employing children and connect it to the confluence of three forces: the presence of a large pool of unaccompanied minors in the US awaiting asylum decisions; labor shortages arising from the post-pandemic recovery; and the widescale use of “fissured” business models relying on contracted workforces. Given these causes, Weil reviews steps that can be taken under the federal law (the Fair Labor Standards Act) that regulates child labor as well as review potential revisions of that law to prevent future violations.

Presented by:



David Weil

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DAVID WEIL is Professor at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University and Visiting Senior Fellow at the Ash Center for Democracy, Harvard Kennedy School. He also served as the Dean of the Heller School from 2017-2022. Weil served as the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor under President Barack Obama from 2014 to January 2017. Weil is an internationally recognized expert in employment and labor market policy along with regulation, transparency policy, and the impacts of industry restructuring on wages employment and work outcomes. He has advised government agencies at the state and federal levels and international organizations on employment, labor, and workplace policies. He is the author of more than 130 articles and five books including The Fissured Workplace (Harvard University Press). He has received many awards including the Frances Perkins Intelligence and Courage Award and was named a Freedom Scholar by the Marguerite Casey Foundation in 2022. Weil received his BS in Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University and Master and Ph.D. degrees in Public Policy at Harvard University.

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