

Testimony on Senate Bill 50
House Commerce and Labor Committee
November 4, 2025

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Lear, Ranking Member McNally, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 50. My name is Rebecca Gorski and I am the Political/Campaigns Director for the North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor. As Ohio's largest labor council, North Shore AFL-CIO brings together nearly 150 local unions across Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga Counties to fight for a better future for all working people – including young workers and working children.

I write today in opposition to Senate Bill 50, which would allow employers to schedule 14- and 15-year-old children for work as late as 9:00 p.m. on school days, beyond the 7:00 p.m. limit maintained by federal law.¹ The carefully crafted measures of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act are designed to balance the needs of young workers with their rights to a proper education. These federal child labor provisions ensure that when young people and children work, the work is safe and does not jeopardize their health, well-being, or educational opportunities.

SB 50 seeks to dismantle child labor protections and legal safeguards at a time when child labor violations are trending upward both in number and severity. From 2019 to 2024, the Department of Labor found a 31% increase in violations of federal child labor laws.²

Proponents of SB 50 speak of difficulties in filling job openings, often in dangerous or low-paying industries. Children should never be used to fill in gaps at the lowest cost when employers are unable to attract and retain workers. Rather than rolling back longstanding child labor protections and exploiting young workers, employers should create more family sustaining jobs by investing in fair wages, benefits, and safe working conditions for adult workers.

All working people must be able to rely on the full protection of our labor and employment laws. Rather than prioritizing short-term economic gains, lawmakers should uphold the standards that protect working people and safeguard Ohio's children from exploitation.

I ask you to consider my testimony and urge you not to vote this bill out of committee.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, "The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended," Revised May 2012, <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/FairLaborStandAct.pdf>

² U.S. Department of Labor, Report to Congress, Enforcement of the Child Labor Provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/child-labor/child-labor-report-congress_2023-2024.pdf