

## Senator Roberts Backs Bill to Defend Family Farm Workers

Senator Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) is co-sponsoring a bill that would prohibit the Secretary of Labor from enacting a proposed rule that would alter the ability of youth to work on the family farm.

“We all know running a farm involves the entire family, so we need the Department of Labor to take a big pill of common sense and back off,” said Roberts “This issue is too imperative to the success of farms and ranches all over the country and to one of agriculture’s greatest traditions.”

The bill, the “Preserving America’s Family Farms Act,” introduced today by Senators John Thune (R-S.D.) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) would block the Secretary of Labor from finalizing a proposed rule under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 relating to child labor, that the Department of Labor (DOL) proposed last September.

At issue is the DOL interpretation of the “parental exemption” in the proposed rule on child labor in agriculture. The text of the proposed rule can be found [here](#). DOL has recently withdrawn that portion, but the threat still remains if the rest of the rule is implemented, which would prohibit youth from participating in basic farm work.

Sen. Roberts has urged DOL to withdraw the entire rule. He has worked with Sen. Moran, an outspoken opponent of the proposed rule, sending letters to the Secretary of Labor urging them to withdraw the rule and asking for an extension of the comment period so busy farmers who were in the middle of harvest would have time to comment.

As a member of the HELP Committee, and as ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Sen. Roberts has urged the HELP Committee, which oversees this issue, to hold a hearing on the rule.

A similar bill was introduced in the House by Rep. Tom Latham (R-Iowa).