ECLEG APR27'12 AM11:37

A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY
LEGISLATORS LORIGO, MILLS & RATH

Re: Opposing Anti-Farming Regulations Being Proposed by the Department of Labor

WHEREAS, farming has traditionally been, and continues to be, an important industry in the United States; and

WHEREAS, while continuing to supply Americans with food for their dinner tables, farm exports have increased nearly sixty percent in the past 25 years; and

WHEREAS, although the number of farms and the number of people working on farms has steadily declined since the Great Depression, farms remain a vital component of the American experience for many; and

WHEREAS, many people involved in farming began working on farms before they turned eighteen years old, helping on their families' farms; and

WHEREAS, others became involved in farming as member of 4-H, a program that revolutionized the way that science was taught outside of the classroom and has taught countless children leadership skills and a developed their work ethic; and

WHEREAS, although some children, such as former President Jimmy Carter, went on to work on a farm as a career, others, such as Walter Mondale and Al Gore, used the skills learned in 4-H to pursue other career goals; and

WHEREAS, research shows that 4-H youth achieve higher marks in school, are more likely to attend college and contribute to their communities at higher rates than their peers; and

WHEREAS, it appears that the federal government finds this distasteful; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Labor is proposing to impose new regulations that would prevent children under 18 from being employed in the storing, marketing and transporting of farm product raw materials, including working at feed lots, livestock auctions and livestock exchanges; and

WHEREAS, as such, a seventeen year old could not utilize skills learned at 4-H, such as the ubiquitous raising of prize animals at county fairs; and

WHEREAS, further, the proposal would prohibit farm workers under sixteen years of age from operating almost all power-driven equipment; and

WHEREAS, as such, a fifteen year old could use electric clippers at home to trim his hair, but could not use similar clippers to trim his sheep's wool; and

WHEREAS, the exemption for youths employed on farms owned by their parents is dubious, because many farms have corporate structures that could arguably make even this narrow exemption inapplicable; and

WHEREAS, the new regulations would also revoke the government's approval of safety training and certification taught by 4-H and Future Farmers of America, replacing them with a 90-hour federal government training course; and

WHEREAS, this is yet another example of the bureaucrats attempting to destroy an efficient and competent program run by professionals and experts in their field in order to expand the nanny state and declare that the unalienable rights of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" considered by the founders of this nation were neither "truths" nor "self-evident"; and

WHEREAS, the new regulations being proposed by the Department of Labor, while possibly well intentioned, are detrimental to the farming industry and contrary to promoting children to develop leadership skills, a strong work ethic and the motivation to be successful in life.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature goes on record as being vehemently opposed to the proposed Department of Labor policies regarding farming; and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to President Barack Obama, the local delegation of the United States Congress and Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis.

Fiscal Impact: None.