



TOBACCO LABOR

House Bill 356 seeks to restrict tobacco labor by prohibiting youth from working on tobacco farms. Like the many generations of Virginians who grew up on tobacco farms, we also recognize this legislation as unnecessary as it will undermine youth development in the industry.

There are already existing laws on what minors can and cannot do and regulations are in place to protect children currently working on Virginia farms. For many years, the US Labor Department has proposed changes to prohibit children under 16 from working on farms – but they have been withdrawn in response to opposition from important agricultural youth organizations.

Bills like this would negatively impact the ability of young people to find employment for a summer job, for instance, in a rural area. As in all professions, and especially in a labor-centered industry like agriculture, these valuable learning years often determine the trajectory of a young person's career in the industry.

In the tobacco industry in particular, contractors who work with farmers to produce tobacco take worker protection extremely seriously. Over the past 10 years, they have collectively implemented safety trainings, audits, and workshops with their contracted growers to ensure the safety of all their workers, particularly minors.

Our Position

We oppose this unnecessary legislation as it undermines youth development in the industry and fails to recognize the safeguards currently in place of the industry.

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*“We Represent Virginia Agribusiness with a Unified Voice”
For more information, please contact us at vac@va-agribusiness.org*