

FROM: THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE
109 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

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WASHINGTON, D.C., May 14 -- Congressman Bob Dole today said he is urging Kansas farmers to write Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz in support of proposed changes in labor regulations for hiring youth under age 16 in agriculture.

The Kansas Congressman said the proposals, signed by Wirtz yesterday, include allowing persons at least age 14 to drive farm tractors and to operate other farm machinery after supervised training.

Noting a 15-day period of consideration of the changes begins Thursday (May 16), Dole said farmers, who support liberalization of the regulations, should write Wirtz.

The current restrictions which ban hiring youth under age 16 in 16 "hazardous occupations", he said, "have slowed many farm operations from coast to coast during the busy spring season."

Noting farm employment of youth under age 16 represents about 25 percent of the seasonal work force, Dole said, "If some of the restrictions are lifted soon, more youth will be able to find summer employment, and farmers will be able to secure labor during the peak period this summer."

"Failure to eliminate some of the restrictions, he added, "would signal a critical shortage of farm labor during the summer months ahead."