

Costello Media Release
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Date: November 29, 2011

Pledges Quest for Congressional Reversal if Adopted

Costello Calls Federal Labor Department Rules “Attack” on Rural American Farm Life

Oklahoma City - In a letter to U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis, Oklahoma Labor Commissioner Mark Costello voiced opposition to rules the U.S. Department of Labor is proposing to the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding child farm workers. Costello charged that the proposed rules are a “frontal attack on the rural family, farm life, and the family farm or ranch as a small business operation.”

The U.S. Department of Labor proposes that the family farm or ranch, when its legal structure is a partnership or corporation, is not allowed to employ children, 16 years of age or younger, in farm work deemed hazardous. Costello asserts under the new rules “young teens are barred from riding on a tractor, herding and branding cattle, and grandparents are barred from having their grandchildren work on the family farm. I would much rather defer to the authority of a parent to manage the safety of their child than a distant bureaucrat.”

Costello asserted, “This proposed regulation is suspect, in particularly, originating from an administration headed by someone who has spoken derisively of rural Americans who ‘cling to guns or religion.’ This absurdity will destroy agricultural jobs, hurt American agricultural competitiveness, and damage the cultural integrity of the rural family. This bureaucratic overreach tangibly demonstrates a lack of private sector agriculture experience and would criminalize traditional family farm life.”

“As Commissioner of Labor, duly elected by the citizens of Oklahoma, I have a lawful obligation to speak out for the economic well-being as well as safety concerns of the citizens of this state,” stated Costello.

Costello urged Secretary of Labor Solis to stand down from enacting “flawed nanny state rules.”

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