

Suffer the children

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 05.04.23

President Biden has created 12.6 million jobs in 27 months. Unemployment is the lowest since 1968. Scarce labor means higher wages and lower profits. Shameless employers found it cheaper to rob the cradle. Shameless Republicans are greasing the skids for hiring kids.

Last Christmas a Hendersonville, NC Chick-fil-A violated child labor laws by having kids operate dangerous machinery and paying them with meals instead of money. Last August, a Florida Chick-fil-A forced 17 kids, ages 14-15, to work longer, later hours than the law allows.

Chick-fil-A closes on Sundays. Workers bid customers, “have a blessed day.” It claims to practice Christian values. But, when Jesus said, “Suffer the children, and forbid them not, to come unto me,” he did NOT add “and have them bring me some waffle fries and a spicy chicken deluxe.”

McDonalds and Chipotle also violated child-labor laws. Across all industries, Labor Department investigators recorded a massive 283% jump in the number of kids working illegally since 2015.

Officials estimate 388,000 children are working illegally, with 69,000 performing hazardous tasks that damage their health and lead to accidents. Recent abuses include 13-year-olds suffering chemical burns from cleaning slaughterhouses in Nebraska, and teenagers illegally handling dynamite in Georgia.

Shockingly, Republican legislators in at least 11 states have set child labor laws back 100 years so businesses can get away with paying lower wages.

Ohio Republicans want 14-15-year-olds to work until 9 PM, even on school nights. Iowa Republicans want teens to work in mines and slaughterhouses. Even worse, they want to exempt employers from liability if those kids are sickened, injured or killed on the job!

Arkansas Republicans just eliminated child work permits so 14-year-olds can work dangerous jobs 48 hours a week—without permission from their parents! So much for Republicans’ pretense about protecting parents’ role in their children’s lives. Given a choice between corporate profits, parents’ rights, and children’s safety, Republicans’ answer is clear: “Suffer the children.”

Kristine Garrity
Calabash