

Child Labor Laws

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As children, we frequently say what we want to be when we grow up, but I don't think any child dreams of having any sort of career as a kid. Being a kid is all about enjoying life and being carefree. The closest any child comes to having a job, is setting up a lemonade stand, or doing the paper route. Sadly, however, around 158 million children in other countries, between the ages of five and fourteen engage in laborious and hazardous jobs by force. This wrong-doing is going on right now, and must be stopped. Child labor needs policies and limits, and must serve justice in all countries.

In America, we don't really have problems with children working too long or at an early age. This is so because we have child labor laws. They state that children under sixteen have a maximum of hours they can work, and are limited to occupations that are very safe. Additionally, children in school cannot work more than eighteen hours in a school week, and must have a work permit and age certificate. We have many rules and regulations, and if they aren't followed, there are consequences. This prevents children from being abused or underpaid, just because of their age.

However, in countries including Malaysia and Sri Lanka, brutal child labor exists. Young children are forced to work in places like factories or fields. They're given little to no pay, and are forced into performing dangerous tasks. Plus, they have outrageous work hours with hardly any rest. Justice hasn't been served in many third world countries, because they have yet to make laws against this sort of treatment towards children. Though those countries may not understand that what they're doing is wrong. I believe child labor laws must be made in those countries as well. Children are dying every day from exhaustion or treacherous duties. It just doesn't make sense to allow this to happen up until today. Child labor is a form of slavery that must be put to a halt.

Many Americans might not even know it, but over half of the things we buy, are made by overworked children in harsh conditions. Nike, the multibillion dollar sportswear company admitted to using children under the age of ten in third world countries like but not limited to, Pakistan and Cambodia. Other retailers use children to manufacture their paraphernalia as well. Hollister, Abercrombie, Disney, and Levis are just a few. Also, the Gap Kids stores have their embroidered clothing line made by children in factories. Basically, children are working to make clothes for other children who will play in them. How something like this could happen, is just mystifying.

It is up to the rest of the world to help fix the wrongdoings of the irresponsible people who strip innocent children of their free lives. Just because we may not see this going on, doesn't mean it isn't happening. Sometimes, these major companies aren't even aware that the items they see are being made by children. Organizations including Free the Children and UNICEF are there to help these children. We must spread the news of this injustice and do what we can to help. Even if it means just donating a dollar, or informing a friend, any little thing helps. Hopefully one day, every child can have the satisfaction and relief of knowing that all they have to do is be a kid.