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## New TV Ad Challenges Maine's Proposed Rollback of Child Labor Laws

MAINE – A [new TV ad](#) launched today in Maine spotlights the disturbing efforts by members of the Maine legislature and Governor Paul LePage to roll back the state's child labor laws, adding Maine to the growing list of states that have recently tried to eliminate workplace standards and protections that America's workers have relied on for generations. The ads are spearheaded by the National Employment Law Project and the Maine People's Alliance and call on Maine residents to register their opposition to the harmful proposals being considered by the legislature.

Click here to view the ad that begins airing today: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpZxIJCcKo>

"The reckless tampering with Maine's longstanding child labor laws would encourage children to work longer hours, later into the night, and for less than the minimum wage," said **Christine Owens, executive director of the National Employment Law Project**. "Governor Paul LePage and the bill's supporters seem to have forgotten that Maine's child labor laws were enacted in 1847 because children were so exhausted from work that they were falling asleep in school. Now, in an ill-advised move, they are trying to repeat history."

Governor LePage's efforts to roll back child labor laws comes on the heels of his controversial removal of a mural from the state labor department that depicts Maine's labor history, including child labor, and commemorates the state's advancement of workplace rights over the years. The governor's support for the rollback also follows the aggressive efforts in Wisconsin and Ohio to strip the rights of public employees; attacks on the minimum wage in Missouri, Florida, Nevada and other states; and the dramatic cuts in unemployment benefits recently passed in Michigan and Missouri.

"In state after state, opponents of workplace rights are trying to eliminate the labor protections that working men and women have relied on for generations," said Owens. "They began by attacking collective bargaining rights and the minimum wage. Then they trained their sights on the unemployment safety net. Now they're going after protections for children. These efforts are destructive to the economy and fly in the face of workplace values the nation has cultivated and practiced for generations."

Bill L.D. 1346 in the Maine state legislature proposes that workers under age 20 be paid as little as \$5.25 an hour for as long as six months, significantly undercutting the state's \$7.50 minimum wage. It also would remove any limits on the number of hours that children 16 or older can work on school days. Bill L.D. 516 would increase the hours a student can work during the school day, and pushes the 10pm threshold at which employers are now required to end youth work hours one hour later, to 11pm.

“Sadly, while trampling over child labor laws, this legislation would do nothing to create jobs or promote the kind of economic growth Maine needs in these tough economic times. With high unemployment and stagnant wages, states should be looking to protect and expand—not undermine—existing labor standards that promote consumer demand, good jobs, and the basics that families need to make ends meet,” said Owens.

With the Maine legislature continuing to consider both bills, the National Employment Law Project and Maine People’s Alliance ads start to air Tuesday in Portland, the state’s largest city, as part of a statewide effort to preserve the state’s child labor laws and promote policies that create good jobs and help rebuild the state’s economy.

In addition to the ads, the Maine People’s Alliance—a statewide membership organization of 32,000—and a broader statewide worker justice coalition of labor, religious, women’s, and worker justice organizations, is coordinating outreach to voters and public testimony from Maine residents concerned about the harm that longer work hours and less pay would bring to the state’s youth, families, and economy.

For more information or to view the new TV ad running in Maine, please visit the National Employment Law Project at [www.nelp.org](http://www.nelp.org).

*The National Employment Law Project works to restore economic security and opportunity for working families across America. In partnership with grassroots and national allies, NELP promotes policies to create good jobs, enforce hard-won workplace rights, and help unemployed workers regain their economic footing.*

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## TV AD TRANSCRIPT:

VOICEOVER: Governor Paul LePage wants to roll back child labor laws.

ON SCREEN: Photo, Governor Paul LePage.

TEXT: He supports legislation to have kids work longer hours, later at night and for less than minimum wage.

ON SCREEN: “LePage orders removal of labor mural, sparking outcry” – The Sun Journal  
“Maine Erases Labor History” – The Star-Ledger

VOICEOVER: Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it.

ON SCREEN: Photo of girl working at factory.

VOICEOVER: Tell Governor Paul LePage: Protect our children. Don’t roll back child labor laws.

ON SCREEN: Call his office: 207.287.3531.