Mr. Speaker, my legislation, ''The Young American Workers' Bill of Rights Act,'' which I introduced in the last Congress and which I will be reintroducing again soon in this Congress, reflects the problems and conclusions discussed in ''Protecting Youth at Work.'' This comprehensive domestic child labor law reform bill addresses two major aspects of child labor: the deaths and serious injuries suffered by young workers in the workplace and the negative impact the working excessive hours during the school year can have on a youth's education and academic performance.

Specifically, ''The Young American Workers' Bill of Rights Act'' proposes new sanctions for willful violations of child labors laws that result in the death or serious bodily injury to a child, strengthening existing limitations of the number of hours children under 18 can work while school is in session, protection for children under the age of 14 who are migrant or seasonal workers working in agriculture (except in the case of children of family farmers), requiring better record keeping and reporting of child labor violations, and specifying that minors may not use or clean certain types of hazardous equipment or engage in certain hazardous occupations, such as poultry processing and handling pesticides. Mr. Speaker, the aim of this legislation is to ensure that the job opportunities for America's youth are meaningful, safe and healthy, not to discourage children from working.

I urge my colleagues to carefully review ''Protecting Youth at Work'' and to join me in supporting the enactment of meaningful child labor law reform legislation during this Congress.

PROTECTING YOUTH AT WORK

Congress should authorize the U.S. Department of Labor to limit the number of hours that all youths under the age of 18 can work during the school year. The jobs held by children and adolescents in the United States should not interfere with the educational opportunities and healthy development they need to thrive later in life.

Congress also should eliminate current distinctions in child labor laws between agricultural and nonagricultural employment, says a committee of the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine in its report Protecting Youth at Work: Health, Safety, and Development of Working Children and Adolescents in the United States. In addition, because of the hazardous nature of many agricultural jobs—such as working with heavy equipment and around dangerous chemicals—Congress should examine the effects and feasibility of extending Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations to cover all young people, no matter where they work.

More broadly, the Labor Department should review regulations intended to protect employed youth from hazards in the workplace. Because of the many changes that have occurred in the U.S. economy and society in the past 30 years, the federal government needs to update and enhance these regulations and adequately enforce the laws that cover children and adolescents at work.

A NATIONAL NORM

Work is a common part of the lives of many children and most adolescents in the United States. In surveys, 80 percent of high school students interviewed say that they have held jobs sometime during their high school years.

Working has a broad mix of positive and negative effects on young people. It provides them with valuable lessons about responsibility, punctuality, dealing with people, and money management, while increasing their self-esteem and helping them become independent and skilled.

But the workplace also can be dangerous. Work-related injuries send tens of thousands of children and adolescents to hospital emergency rooms annually. Hundreds of these young people require hospitalization, and at least 70 die of work-related injuries every year. The rate of injuries per hour worked is almost twice as high for children and adolescents, in part because of their inexperience and lack of training. The workplaces with the most injuries for young workers are retail stores and restaurants, manufacturing and construction, the public sector, and agriculture. Furthermore, an unknown number of young workers are exposed to toxic or carcinogenic substances, which may cause illnesses many years later.

''High-intensity work''—generally defined as more than 20 hours per week—is associated with additional negative consequences for adolescents, ranging from less time spent with families and a lack of sleep to substance abuse and minor deviance like theft and aggression.

PROTECTING EMPLOYED YOUTH

The legal and regulatory provisions developed years ago to protect employed youth do not reflect today's work hazards or important changes in rates of school attendance and employment. For example, exempting 16- and 17-year-olds from limitations on working hours was reasonable when most of them had left school and were earning money for their families; now that the vast majority remain in school, this exemption no longer makes sense.

Other rules and regulations regarding working youth also need to be updated. The Department of Labor should work with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to review periodically the rules that define which jobs are too hazardous for workers under the age of 18. Steps to eliminate outdated regulations, strengthen inadequate ones, and develop additional restrictions or safeguards to address new technologies and working conditions should be based on research provided by NIOSH.

Many of the industries that employ large numbers of children have high injury rates for workers of all ages, but young workers often do not receive appropriate health and safety training. The developing physical, cognitive, and emotional characteristics of adolescents—along with their inexperience—should be considered in understanding the risks they face and in designing job training for them. Issues that need particular attention are the exposures of working youth to pesticides and other toxic substances and the adequacy for young workers of state workers' compensation systems.

EDUCATION

A national initiative, spearheaded by NIOSH, could promote understanding of safety hazards in the workplace and the protections to which employed youth are entitled by law. Regional resource centers and community partnerships could provide assistance to schools, parents, employers, government agencies, and youth.

Employers who provide healthy, safe, and beneficial workplaces for young people should be recognized. The secretary of labor should convene a prestigious group to develop criteria for designating ''commendable workplaces for youth.'' Local organizations then could use these criteria to identify exemplary employers.

BETTER INFORMATION

Although a combination of federal, state, and local data sources provides a fair amount of information about working teenagers, significant information gaps remain. NIOSH needs to develop and implement, with other federal agencies, a comprehensive plan for monitoring the injuries, illnesses, and hazards experienced by workers under age 18. The Bureau of Labor Statistics should routinely collect and publicly report data on the employment of young people age 14 and older. In addition, these and other federal agencies should conduct research in several critical areas, including the employment of children under age 14 and the most effective strategies to protect youth in the workplace.

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR THOMAS A. EGAN

HON. BILL LUTHER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 1999

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today to honor a devoted public servant, Thomas A. Egan of Eagan, MN. After twenty distinguished years as council member and Mayor of Eagan, Tom recently decided to retire from public service. Although his leadership will be greatly missed, Tom's legacy is the shared sense of community and responsibility that Eagan residents will carry into the new millennium.

Tom also served a successful tenure as President of the National Organization to Insure a Sound-Controlled Environment (NOISE) where he was a tireless advocate of airport noise mitigation. Tom's dedication to airport noise reduction helped communities and citizens nationwide address the adverse effects of increased noise pollution.

On behalf of these communities and citizens, especially his constituents in Eagan, MN, we greatly appreciate all of Tom's contributions and efforts, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

A BILL TO HELP REDUCE WASTEFUL GOVERNMENT SPENDING

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 1999

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I believe that one of the most serious problems facing our country today is wasteful Government spending. Each year our Government spends billions of taxpayer dollars on things which are ineffective and simply unnecessary.

I have heard many stories from Federal employees about the pressure to spend all of the money they have been appropriated for a given fiscal year. Agency administrators know that if they have a surplus at the end of the fiscal year, it is likely that their budgets will be cut the following year.

That is why I have decided to introduce legislation to address this problem. This bill will