

105<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# **H. R. 4506**

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## **AN ACT**

To provide for United States support for developmental alternatives for underage child workers.

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## AN ACT

To provide for United States support for developmental  
alternatives for underage child workers.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “International Child  
3 Labor Relief Act of 1998”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Article 32 of the United Nations Convention  
7 on the Rights of the Child recognizes “the right of  
8 the child to be protected from economic exploitation  
9 and from performing any work that is likely to be  
10 hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education  
11 or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical,  
12 mental, spiritual, moral or social development.”.

13 (2) Article 2 of Convention 138 of the Inter-  
14 national Labor Organization, the Minimum Age  
15 Convention, states that the minimum age for admis-  
16 sion to employment or work “shall not be less than  
17 the age of completion of compulsory schooling and,  
18 in any case, shall not be less than 15 years.”.

19 (3) Convention 29 of International Labor Orga-  
20 nization, the Forced Labor Convention, which has  
21 been in effect since 1930, prohibits most forms of  
22 “forced or compulsory labor”, including all forced  
23 labor by people under the age of 18.

24 (4) Although it is among the most universally  
25 condemned of all human rights abuses, child labor is  
26 widely practiced. The International Labor Organiza-

1       tion and the United Nations Children’s Fund  
2       (UNICEF) have estimated the total number of child  
3       workers to be between 200,000,000 and  
4       250,000,000. More than 95 percent of those child  
5       workers live in developing countries.

6           (5) The International Labor Organization has  
7       estimated that 13.2 percent of all children 10 to 14  
8       years of age around the world were economically ac-  
9       tive in 1995. According to UNICEF, 75 percent of  
10      the child laborers in the 10 to 14 age group work  
11      6 days a week or more, and 50 percent work 9 hours  
12      a day or more. There are no reliable figures on  
13      workers under 10 years of age, though their num-  
14      bers are known to be significant. Reliable child labor  
15      statistics are not readily available, in part because  
16      many governments in the developing world are reluc-  
17      tant to document those activities, which are often il-  
18      legal under domestic laws, which violate inter-  
19      national standards, and which may be perceived as  
20      a failure of internal public policy.

21           (6) Notwithstanding international and domestic  
22      prohibitions, many children in developing countries  
23      are forced to work as debt-bonded and slave laborers  
24      in hazardous and exploitative industries. According  
25      to the United Nations Working Group on Contem-

1       porary Forms of Slavery and the International  
2       Labor Organization, there are tens of millions of  
3       child slaves in the world today. Large numbers of  
4       those slaves are involved in agricultural and domes-  
5       tic labor, the sex industry, the carpet and textile in-  
6       dustries, and quarrying and brick making.

7               (7) In many countries, children lack either the  
8       legal standing or the means to protect themselves  
9       from cruelty and exploitation in the workplace.

10              (8) The employment of children often interferes  
11       with the opportunities of such children for basic edu-  
12       cation. Furthermore, where it coexists with high  
13       rates of adult unemployment, the use of child labor  
14       likely denies gainful employment to millions of  
15       adults.

16              (9) While child labor is a complex and multi-  
17       faceted phenomenon that is tied to issues of poverty,  
18       educational opportunity, and culture, its most abu-  
19       sive and hazardous forms are repugnant to basic  
20       human rights and must be eliminated.

21              (10) Created in 1992, the International Labor  
22       Organization's International Program on the Elimini-  
23       nation of Child Labor (IPEC) is the world's largest  
24       technical cooperation program on child labor, involv-  
25       ing more than 50 countries and over 1,000 action

1 programs. Governments take the initiative in seeking  
2 IPEC assistance, and demonstrate their commitment  
3 to combating child labor by signing a memorandum  
4 of understanding with IPEC, which serves as the  
5 basis for a long term in-country program that is  
6 overseen by a national steering committee comprised  
7 of representatives of government, employers' and  
8 workers' organizations, and relevant nongovern-  
9 mental organizations. IPEC activities aim at pre-  
10 venting child labor, withdrawing children from haz-  
11 ardous work, and providing alternatives to child  
12 labor as a transitional measure toward its elimi-  
13 nation.

14 **SEC. 3. UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENTAL**  
15 **ALTERNATIVES FOR UNDERAGE CHILD**  
16 **WORKERS.**

17 For each of the fiscal years 1999 through 2001 there  
18 are authorized to be appropriated for the Department of  
19 Labor under the heading "International Labor Affairs Bu-  
20 reau" \$30,000,000 for a United States contribution to the

- 1 International Labor Organization for the activities of the
- 2 International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor.

Passed the House of Representatives October 8,  
1998.

Attest:

*Clerk.*