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**Policy Paper**

**Introduction**

There is an estimated 215 million children involved in child labor and half of those children are expose to the worst form of child labor according to International Labor Organization (ILO).[[1]](#footnote-1) Many of them are being exploited through slavery, forced labor, and illicit activities. They’re also being exposed to hazardous environments and conditions. Many children are being forced to work full time jobs in an unstable environment and only earn a little money at the end of the day. They’re getting beat up for mistakes that they made, no matter how small they are. In fact, they’re being use for illegal activities like prostitution and trafficking. Most of the children are under age and illiterate; they don't know what’s happening to them. All they know is that they were promised to make money for their families and to get a good life.[[2]](#footnote-2)Industries are lying to children and their parents so that they can get cheap labor. Many industries were found using child labor to produce their products. One industry that was found using child labor was the electronic equipment industry. This industry was found using children under the age of 16 to produce products for Apple. [[3]](#footnote-3)These children are working without the proper gears in hazardous environments that have harmful chemicals. This type of working environment caused health problems that could kill the employees. There needs to be a stop to industries that uses child labor to produce their products and the way they treat workers. Also, there needs to be a stop to countries that buy products that are associated with child labor.

**Overview/Background**

Since the start of the Industrial Revolution in the 1790 to 1920, people have been using children for hard and dangerous labor. The reason for hiring children is because it’s cheap labor and children can’t do anything to owners. They also wouldn’t want to get fired because most of them are working to pay off their family’s debts or to get money for their family.[[4]](#footnote-4) Most of the families that work in factories are families from the country. They moved to the city to find jobs in factories because they couldn’t be farmer anymore. Inventions of machinery has made agricultural faster and easier without needing a lot of workers in the field. As people started moving to the cities, the population increased. People from rural areas were migrating to urban areas. Cities then started growing and populations got bigger and bigger.

Besides machinery, many other inventions like Thomas Edison’s electricity, Henry Bessemer’s steel refiner, and Thomas Newcomen’s steam engine also brought changes to people’s lives. People now had electricity which allowed them to work all night long, stronger and faster produced steels allowing buildings to be built bigger, and the steam engine allowed people to travel to far places and nations to exchanges goods. The steam engine made boats and trains travel much faster and farther. This allowed other nations like the United States exchange products with France, Germany, and England.

However, Industrialization brought conflict and stress to people and business. It made owners desperate for profits, so they started treating workers badly in order to increase profits and the speed of manufacture. They beat workers for their sleepiness during work, mistakes they made, and for refusing request of owners. They also traded workers with others factories. During the Industrial Revolution owners have the economic policy of Laissez Faire. They get to set the working conditions and to do whatever they want. Governments did not create regulations over businesses and industries. As a response to poor working conditions and the way they were treated, workers gathered together to create union movements to bargain for better rights. They’re fought for better wages, reasonable hours, safer working conditions, health care and aid to workers who are injured or retired.[[5]](#footnote-5)

There is no current policy on the subject of child labor. As a response to the issue of child labor, we want to pass a law with the help of legislative body because we are children as well as the kids that are working in child labor and it is wrong that those children have to have that life for the rest of their life. They don’t even have a chance to be children at all. They don’t even have any childhood memories nor will they when they turn 50. Children as young as eight years old are being forced to work extreme hours in hazardous condition and only earning a little money.

For example, in *Free the Children b*y Craig Kielburger, an eight year old little girl worked for 11 hours and she earned less than two cents per hour. Her job was to separate used syringes. According to Kielbuger, “The girl no older than eight was pulling apart the syringes and depositing the parts into three separate bins. She wore nothing on her feet, no protection of any kind on her hands.” [[6]](#footnote-6) They're being forced to work as slaves in dangerous environments. Many children are suffering health problem because of these jobs. Many parents often let their kids go to work because they were tricked by factories owners. Owners lied to them that if they let their kids go then their kids will learn a trade and make good money. In *Free the Children*, a father stated, “I was cheated. I was told that Munnilal would learn carpet weaving and earn good money. I never received one rupee.” The children were just taken to work as child labor and they never see their families again[[7]](#footnote-7)Two million children died in India each year because of child labor.[[8]](#footnote-8) We believe that the state legislative body is the one that can help pass this law because if it gets passed to all the states then there’s a better chance of child labor being eliminated faster.

In the electronics industry, ninety-one children under the age of 16 were found working for Apple Supplier Company in China. In the same factory, 137 workers were poisoned by n-hexane.[[9]](#footnote-9) Apple’s supplier company Foxconn in China was using child labor to produce Apple’s products like iPod, iPhone, and Mac. In fact, China's official Xinhua news agency stated that there were about 56 underage interns. A spokesman for NGO China Labor Bulletin Geoffrey Crothall said in a statement that interns are "cheap and convenient source of labor."[[10]](#footnote-10) Even if kids are cheap labor they still know how it feels like to work in hazardous and extreme hours. All human beings have feelings.

We want to pass a law that requests the following from industries that hire children: a minimum age that children could work, reasonable hours, children’s ability to perform the task, jobs has to be legal, safe environments and conditions if not then requirements need to be provided by owners, better wages, health care, and aid to workers who are injured. This law will ban products from industries that do not follow the requests. Governments need to get involved in this type of issue because it’s going to affect people and businesses. Once it affects them the country will be affected too. There needs to be strict laws on child labor if an owner wants to hire children because of the past we don’t want it to happen again.

**Proposed Policy and Analysis-**

The proposed policy has requests for industries to follow and if they fail then there will be ban on their products. The policy request that children has to be at least be 16 years or older to work and only to work a maximum of 12 hours in a week. The job has to be legal and they have to be able to perform the job without any problems. If they're younger they need to be put in a lighter job. The environments and conditions of the jobs have to be safe for them and their health. If any injuries occur at the workplace because of the jobs or other workers then owners are to help pay for medical care and aid. All workers are to be paid the same amount of wages. If this law passes there will be pros and cons. The pros of this law are that it will help reduce child labor, give children a chance to get educated, and be children. Workers are going to have a safer working environment and working conditions. They’ll also get paid with a good wages and have medical care if anything happens to them because of the job. The cons of this policy are that it could cause business to decrease, prices to go up, and unemployment rates to increase. The policy might shut down business and because of that more people will become unemployed. If there’s less business prices of item will raise.

**Recommendation**

If Apple makes a profit of about 32 billion every year, why can’t they pay 91 [[11]](#footnote-11)children with a living wage and provide safe working conditions for them. Apple announced that in the 4th Quarter of 2012 they made a profit of 8.2 billion. [[12]](#footnote-12) An estimate of that would be 32 billion every year. They’re working the same amount of hours and jobs as adults and they’re getting paid less. The policy should be put into effect because we as children don’t want to be treated as slaves and not even getting paid as much as what we are supposed to. If this policy gets put into effect and passes then the young children that are 8 years old wouldn’t have to work anymore and more workplace are would have safer environments. The pros of our policy are that it’ll help reduce child labor and allow young children to get educated. The cons of the policy are that it might cause a raise in prices of electronic and business shutdowns.

**Conclusion**

There are a lot of child laborers in the world. Two hundred and fifteen children are begun exploited to work as slaves, prostitutes and to perform illicit activities. They’re also getting exposed to hazardous environment causing them to have health problems and bad influence. Industries that use child labor needs to be stop. If the policy that we’re proposing passes, children could go to school and get educated, earn good money for the families or themselves, get medical care if they’re injured in the workplace, and they’ll also have a safer environments and conditions to work in. No one in the world would want to work every day and only get paid less than 2 cents for the entire day.

1. # “World Day Against Child Labor 2012: Human rights and social justice... let's end child labour,” accessed October 31, 2012,

   <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Campaignandadvocacy/wdacl/2012/lang--en/index.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “The Dark Side of Chocolate,” accessed October 31, 2012

   <http://documentaryheaven.com/the-dark-side-of-chocolate/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ## “Foxconn fiasco: Apple supplier admits using child labor in China,” last modified October 17, 2012

   <http://rt.com/news/foxconn-china-use-children-646/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Kielburger, Free the Children [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “Labor Movement,” accessed October 31, 2012

   <http://www.history.com/topics/labor> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Craig Kielburger, *Free the Children* (New York: HarperPerennial 2000), 239-241. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Craig, *Free the Children,* 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “India,” accessed October 31, 2012

   <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/where-we-work/asia/india> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “Apple Report Reveals Child Labor Increased”, last modified February 15, 2011

   <http://stopchildlabor.org/?p=2918> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. ## “Foxconn fiasco: Apple supplier admits using child labor in China”

    [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. **“**Foxconn fiasco: Apple supplier admits using child labor in China” [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. ## “Apple profits jump 23.8% year-over-year to $8.2 billion in Q4 2012,” last modified October 25, 2012

    <http://www.insidemobileapps.com/2012/10/25/apple-profits-jump-23-8-year-over-year-to-8-2-billion-in-q4-2012/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)