

MAY 2024

IOWA UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

Advocacy News

The UN and Child Labor



EJ Gallagher
Iowa UNA Board Member and Advocacy Committee Member

The United Nations has set 2020 as the deadline date for its [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). Reducing the risk of violence in the lives of children is incorporated in [SDG 16.2](#), which calls for an end to abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children. The UN defines child labor as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development. Whether forms of work can be called child labor depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, and the conditions under which it is performed in individual countries.

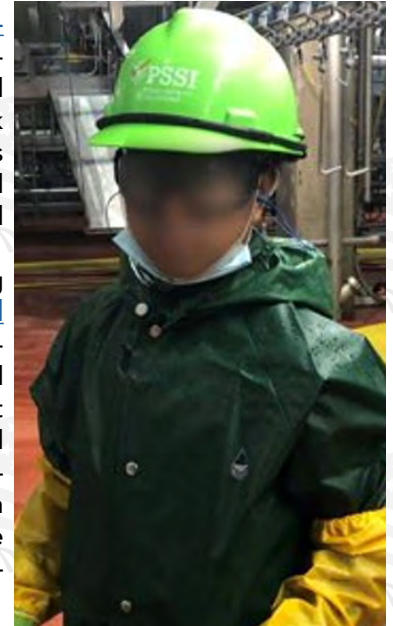
Legal standards for defining child labor vary from country to country as well as among sectors within countries. In the United States, the division is among states. [Child labor laws](#) in the United States preceded New Deal legislation but were greatly increased during that portion of our nation's history. Agriculture was often exempted from many labor laws, including child labor provisions which had a greater impact on those communities often used in that industry, particularly African Americans and Hispanics, who often worked as family units in either share cropping or migrant worker situations. National and state protections were not always the same and, when applicable, national laws often provided a floor such as minimum wage laws. Failure to update laws to reflect increased costs of living has been a problem on both governmental levels.

Iowa, along with at least thirteen other states, has [loosened child labor laws](#) by legislation passed in 2023 (Senate File 542) along largely partisan lines. There was an issue raised on whether these laws violated federal standards. The action in Iowa has been described by commentators as a roll back for increasing the hours that teens could work and in allowing sixteen- and seventeen-year-old youth to operate dangerous power-driven machines, engage in heavy manufacturing, and work in demolition after obtaining waivers. The legislation also allows younger people to work in restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages and lowers the age of persons who could serve these beverages to customers.

The bill was amended to counter concerns about conflict with provisions of the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) governing child labor. After passage, Democratic legislators contacted the [U.S. Department of Labor](#) which responded with a letter that the law would violate FLSA by allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to work in demolition, heavy manufacturing, and operating certain power-driven machines. The bill was supported by business groups in the construction, manufacturing, retail, and restaurant industries. [A poll](#) taken before passage showed 50 per cent of Iowans favoring the legislation including 57 per cent of those who were parents with children under eighteen. The bill was favored by two-thirds of Republicans responding and opposed by two-thirds of Democrats responding, Sixty percent of men supported it while forty nine percent of women favored the bill. The poll listed the various positions in the debate as those laws allowing experience versus those promoting exploitation.

Concern has been raised about an increasing number of teenagers being injured in dangerous work situations both before and after the passage of the new Iowa law. In February of this year, a [news story](#) discussed the United States Department of Labor accusing a sanitation company of illegally hiring at least two dozen children to clean dangerous meat processing facilities in Iowa and Virginia. The same story also lists other injuries from work accidents in meat packing plants.

It appears that the only way to change the new Iowa regulations, if not modified by any court challenges, is legislation which would require a change of party control in both branches of the legislature as well as the governor's office. Specifics on the new rules can be found on the web page of the [Iowa Division of Labor](#) by searching the category "child labor." A comparison of the new laws in the fourteen states, including Iowa, can be found in the web page of the [Economic Policy Institute](#) last updated in June of 2023.



ADVOCACY NEWS IS GOING GREEN!

In alignment with our commitment to sustainability, Iowa UNA is prioritizing the electronic distribution of our advocacy newsletter. We will distribute Advocacy News via email and also will publish it on our website and social media platforms. If you prefer to receive a hard copy, please email debra@unaiowa.org.

HELP SHIFT THE NARRATIVE ON IMMIGRATION

Jane Shuttleworth
Iowa UNA Board Member and Advocacy Committee Member

The facilitation of safe, orderly international migration is an integral component of the United Nations [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), crosscutting numerous goals including those related to promoting access to healthcare, education, decent work, economic growth, and gender equality and the eradication of poverty. More specifically, [Target 20.7](#) calls on countries to implement planned and well-managed migration policies to maximize the benefits of migration and minimize its negative effects. However, with Congress stalemated on immigration reform, a presidential candidate calling immigrants 'animals' and 'sub-human', and the passage right here in Iowa of HF 2340 - one of most extreme pieces of anti-immigrant legislation in the country - we need to step up and help shift the narrative. We need to demand elected officials focus on the benefits of immigration and solutions for integrating immigrants into our workforce and communities.

Shift the Narrative

The recent [media coverage of the Baltimore bridge disaster](#), although tragic and horrific, showed the potential to shine a positive light on the immigrant population in the United States when it was revealed that six workers who died were immigrants. Media coverage humanized their lives and backgrounds and reminded us of the daily, essential benefits immigrants have on US economy and society where immigrant labor is a major driver in agriculture, construction, and other sectors. That is true right here in Iowa. The Iowa Business Council, in a new [2024 analysis](#), extolled the need to recruit new Iowans into our workforce and called for more focus on federal immigration reform to overcome Iowa's workforce shortages. Unfortunately, at the same time media coverage was shifting to this more positive angle, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed [SF 2340](#) into law, described in [a statement by the Iowa ACLU](#) to be one of the most extreme, discriminatory, and unconstitutional anti-immigrant bills in the country. Based on a Texas law currently being challenged in court, SF 2340 will take effect on July 1 and will allow state and local law enforcement to arrest and detain people based on their federal immigration status without federal authorization or training in immigration law. It also will allow Iowa judges to order someone to be deported or jailed before they have an opportunity to seek humanitarian protection to which they are entitled under the law. Proponents argue the bill's goal is not to scare or intimidate those who come here legally but to discourage those who enter the country illegally from coming to Iowa. However, the bill lends itself to racial profiling, circumvents federal immigration law, denies due process and is likely to bring harassment and harm to black and brown people. It can also overburden local law enforcement, strain jail capacity and budgets.

How You Can Help

Pay attention to and talk about the positive daily impacts immigrant workers have on our economy and communities. Demand our elected officials and political candidates focus on addressing immigration reform and solutions for welcoming and integrating immigrants into our workforce and communities.

Iowa Movement for Migrant Justice

[The Iowa Movement for Migrant Justice](#) is a statewide membership based legal service and advocacy organization led by immigrant and refugees. Your membership supports their legal services and advocacy. Stay up to date on immigration developments in Iowa by signing up for their newsletter and by joining monthly first Friday Lunch and Learn and third Thursday Advocacy calls. Presentation recordings can be viewed on line and recent topics include [Immigration 101](#), [Problems in the Omaha Federal Immigration Court and Relevance for Iowa](#), [Black Lives Matter in Immigration Law](#) and more.



Water Troubles in Iowa

Nancy Porter
Advocacy Committee Member

In a [recent news story](#), you may have heard about the Nishnabotna River in Southwest Iowa. It is the victim of a valve left open over the weekend of March 11, 2024 at a fertilizer plant. This caused a massive amount of nitrates to flow into the river. Almost immediately, about 750,000 fish died. The count is still in process, and they are beginning to test effects on other organisms (frogs, insects, birds, plants). This water flows to the Mississippi River by way of the Missouri River. Our rivers in Iowa have helped to produce the richest farmland in the world, and this devastating accident will have a powerful, negative effect on all the land and waters with which it comes in contact.

Earlier, Bloody Run Creek in northeast Iowa, known for great trout fishing, was found to have [exceedingly high levels of nitrates](#). In Iowa, as elsewhere, private interests sometimes interfere with the public good. Iowa is a farming state, and the needs of

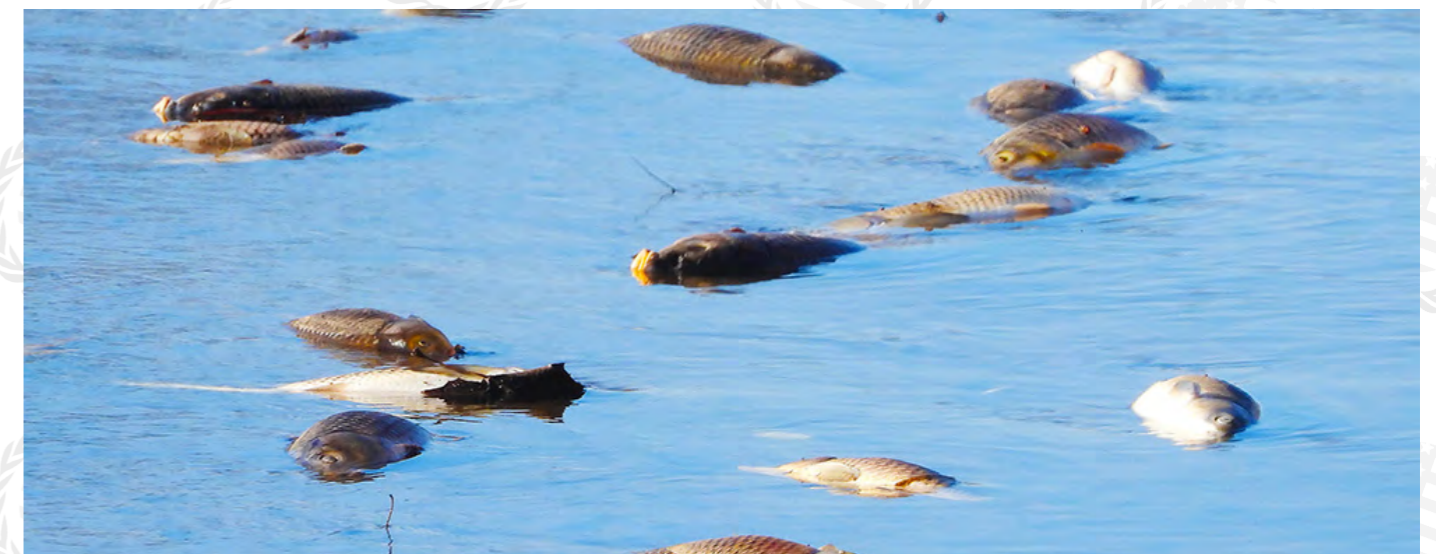


farmers should be protected, but good practices should be encouraged, and our precious recreation areas should also be preserved.

In 2015, you may recall, the [Des Moines Public Water Works sued three counties](#) along the upper Raccoon River for allowing large quantities of nitrates and phosphates to flow down river to Des Moines. To remove these from drinking water cost millions of dollars. The lawsuit resulted in Des Moines redesigning its water treatment plant to protect citizens and furnish safe drinking water. You can check out [Circle](#)

[of Blue](#) for more articles and information about water and environmental health.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) prioritize access to clean water and sanitation. [SDG 6](#) calls for all countries to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water resources so that everyone can have access to the clean drinking water essential for human wellbeing. We encourage our members to advocate for policies to ensure that all Iowans have access to clean water as a fundamental necessary to fulfill the human right to health.



ALICE DAHLE WORKS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND IUNA

 Caryl Lyons
Advocacy Committee Member

Alice Dahle, a member of the Iowa United Nations Association's Advocacy Committee from Cedar Rapids, brings the work of the UN together with her work with [Amnesty International USA](#), where she is the national chairperson of the Women's Rights Coordination Group. She and members of her group are "thematic specialists" whose job is to monitor the state of women's human rights globally, respond to crises and violations of those rights through campaigns and the media, and educate grassroots members and the public. They collaborate with Amnesty International staff, country specialists, and legislative coordinators. They also work with other human rights organizations and stand in solidarity with women's human rights defenders around the world.

The United Nations and Amnesty International share many of the same objectives related to human rights, and Dahle has worked tirelessly with both organizations for decades, helping women to confront gender inequities, their own and others', and to work toward positive change.

Recently, Dahle was in Washington, DC, to facilitate a panel at Amnesty International USA's Annual General Meeting, on Casualties of War: Conflict-related Violence Against Women and Girls. The focus was on the overlooked conflicts in Sudan, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Among other things, Alice pointed out the negative effects of women's exclusion from participation in peace negotiations.

Should "[gender apartheid](#)" become part of the international vocabulary? Alice notes that the international community is currently discussing the appropriate language to use concerning gender persecution. In Afghanistan, in particular, the status of women has gone from bad to worse, with women having no access to school, work, divorce, travel without a male chaperone or healthcare without a female provider present. Women are again threatened with being stoned to death for adultery or with public flogging for lesser transgressions. Many believe that this rises to a level where it should be called "gender apartheid."

While the term "apartheid" has primarily been applied to race, it is a strong word that can emphasize the necessity for the world to confront policies that violate women's rights. Richard Bennet, UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, has recently issued a report in which he refers to the position of women in Afghanistan as "the most comprehensive, systematic, and unparalleled assault on the rights of women and girls" and goes on to refer to it as gender apartheid.

Both the IUNA and Amnesty International have profited from the commitment and hard work of Alice Dahle on behalf of women and girls for many, many years. Thank you, Alice.



BECOME A MEMBER!

You can help the United Nations build a better world by becoming a member of the Iowa United Nations Association. Help us to continue to educate, inspire, and mobilize Iowans in support of the lifesaving work of the United Nations. Join here! You may join our Iowa Division or our chapters in Johnson County, Linn County, or the Cedar Valley. Individuals under the age of 26 years are eligible for free membership.

Explaining Global Warming and Ocean Currents

 Jozef Figa
Advocacy Committee Member

"Everything is connected with everything else." This is Barry Commoner's first law of ecology. Global warming offers many illustrations of this law. For instance, consider Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation – AMOC for short. It is a system of oceanic currents that distribute heat and energy across the entire globe. Researchers who have been studying AMOC point out that it has been slowing down as a consequence of climate change.

The Gulf Stream is one of the components of the AMOC. It has been ensuring Europe's relatively mild climate. Scientists have been anticipating the slowing down of AMOC currents as the result of global warming. As it turns out, this process has been going on for several dozens of years, and it is getting worse.

The culprit is Greenland: warm salty water flows from the tropic to the Arctic. As the



water gets thicker and colder, it sinks deeper into the ocean. Then the cold, thick water flows along the bottom of the ocean back south. However, the increasing rainfalls and the melting of the ice cover of Greenland have resulted in the increasing amount of fresh water in the ocean. This lowers the amount of salt in the ocean water, so when it gets to the north it sinks much more slowly with the resulting slowing down of the current.

One of the results of all of this is what is known as the "cold blob" south of Greenland. Slowing ocean currents could also quickly increase ocean levels along the east coast of the USA by 15-30 centimeters. The weaker AMOC translates into less warm water, and this could leverage the greenhouse effect Western Europe. But a less active Atlantic Ocean will not block the flow of the hot air from Africa to Europe; this will result in heat waves, less rain in the summer, and colder winters.

The ongoing global warming may result in weakening of

the Gulf Stream by 34-45% by the year 2100. This could bring this current to the critical point at which it would become unstable or cease to be an ocean current.

This issue affects the international community's ability to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) #13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) and #14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development). These are global problems that highlight the importance of global cooperation.



My time as an Iowa UNA College Ambassador



Jackson Geadelmann
2022-23 Iowa UNA College Ambassador (Luther College)

During my senior year at Luther College, I worked with my fellow Iowa UNA College Ambassadors across Iowa to advocate for the work of the United Nations. Much of how the world communicates now is online, and so our advocacy work went online too. We focused on shining a digital spotlight on global issues including human rights, access to water, and the progression of the various UN [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

Before becoming digital advocates, a group of us headed to Capitol Hill to make our voices heard to those who set US foreign policy. In early June 2022, we flew to Washington, D.C., for the annual [UNA-USA Leadership Summit](#) to prepare us to speak to our elected officials. We attended various sessions including experts within the State Department and the US mission to the UN, giving us insight into how we could shape our advocacy as we prepared for lobby day. When lobby day arrived, I had the opportunity to speak directly with Senator Chuck Grassley, as well as staff members of Senator Joni Ernst, Representative Hinson, and then-Representative Axne. The opportunity to not only go to D.C. for the summit but to also speak with our representatives was truly an invaluable experience.

My work as an Iowa UNA College Ambassador eventually led me to speak at the [2023 Iowa Youth Symposium](#). The symposium is a congregation of Iowa high school students,



coming together in the Iowa Capitol complex to develop resolutions on contemporary problems. Before my speech, I was briefed by several of the participants on the progress of their committees. It felt like a full circle moment—not too long ago, I was just like the teens in that chamber room participating in model UN simulations, coming up with solutions to issues that were far greater than myself. Considering also I was in my first semester of law school, it was a moment that I realized that I have left that phase of my life and have fully entered the next stage of adulthood, where my peers and I are being called to step in the driver's seat and lead.

When I first applied to be a college ambassador for Iowa UNA, I had no idea the extent of experiences it would give me. Not only was the work vitally important in helping Iowans stay informed on the importance of the UN, but the experience was also personally beneficial in building employable skills like planning and executing projects, being an advocate, as well as working with a team from across the state. Employers have asked me about my involvement with Iowa UNA in interviews, and it always has been the start of interesting conversation on advocacy work and my own passion for international law.

Double Your Impact: Join Us in Supporting the Iowa UNA!

A generous donor has pledged a matching gift of up to \$10,000 to the Iowa Division of UNA-USA, doubling the impact of every dollar we raise. With a rich history dating back to Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to Des Moines in 1953, our division has been at the forefront of promoting global engagement and advocacy.

The Iowa Division of UNA-USA coordinates statewide advocacy in Iowa and supports the work of our chapters in Cedar Valley, Linn County, and Johnson County. We produce our biannual newsletter, *Advocacy News*, raising awareness about important global issues and advocacy opportunities. Our new blog, shared with members of all Iowa chapters and published on our website, helps fulfill our mission to educate Iowans about global issues and expands our advocacy reach.

Our College Ambassador Program, now in its third year, has empowered students to become advocates for the UNA cause. Since its inaugural year in 2021, the Iowa UNA College Ambassador program has offered opportunities to 29 college ambassadors from a wide range of colleges and universities throughout Iowa, including Central College, Cornell College, Drake University, Grinnell College, Luther College, Simpson College, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa. College ambassadors continue to lead our digital advocacy on our social media platforms and write widely-read blogs on global issues of critical importance. Active on campuses across the state, our College Ambassadors amplify our advocacy messages among college students generating interest and commitment among a new generation of advocates.

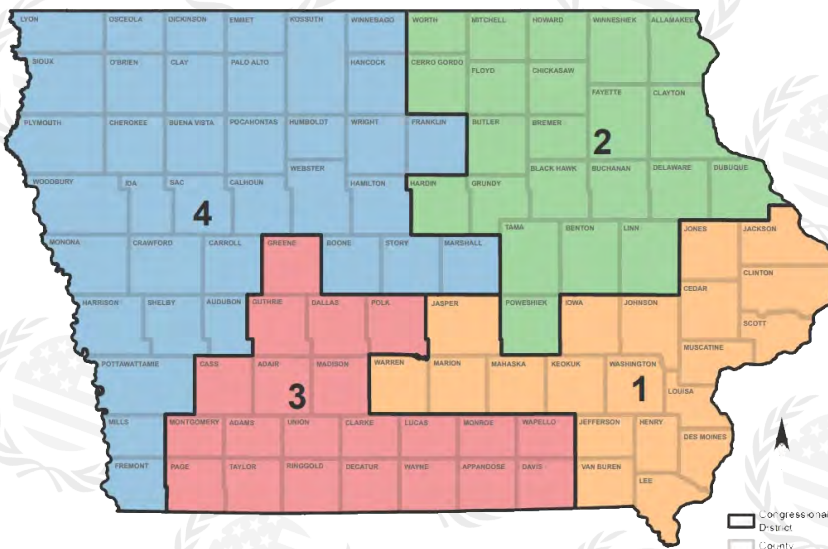
Imagine the impact of your gift: more thought-provoking blogs, more inspiring events, and more young minds inspired to champion peace, human rights, sustainable development, gender equity, and climate action. Your generous donation to this matching challenge will support this program and help us sustain our mission as we connect young people in Iowa to our critical work. I urge you to join me in seizing this extraordinary opportunity by making a gift before the deadline of September 30th. Let's rally together, as a community united by a common purpose, and unlock the full potential of the Iowa Division and our chapters in Johnson County, Linn County, and Cedar Valley. Together, we can make a difference that reverberates across generations.

To donate online, go to www.iowauna.org and select Donate button.

Please send checks to: Iowa United Nations Association/ 20 E. Market St./ Iowa City, IA 52245

DONATE!

Your generous donations help support our work in support of climate action, gender equity, human rights, and refugees. Please [donate here](#). You also may donate to Iowa UNA through Venmo@ [Iowa-UNA](#).



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District 1: Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R)
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