

FW: New NYT article on child labor

Simy Cuervo <SCuervo@usccb.org>

Tue 9/19/2023 11:28 AM

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ICYMI

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From: ucstrategycall@googlegroups.com <ucstrategycall@googlegroups.com> **On Behalf Of** Jennifer Nagda

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 11:03 AM

To: Mario Bruzzone <mariob@wrcommission.org>; ucstrategycall@googlegroups.com

Subject: RE: New NYT article on child labor

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Thanks so much for sharing, Mario. I also found the Leonhardt summary deeply disturbing. We need to disrupt that narrative quickly; the New Yorker should know better.

Jennifer Nagda (she/her)

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From: ucstrategycall@googlegroups.com <ucstrategycall@googlegroups.com> **On Behalf Of** Mario Bruzzone

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 11:00 AM

To: ucstrategycall@googlegroups.com

Subject: New NYT article on child labor

Hi all,

I wanted to flag that the New York Times Magazine just published a long-form piece on child labor, focusing on [one unaccompanied child from Guatemala as the main profile](#). The link there should be unlocked.

I'd also flag the problematic summary from David Leonhardt's morning newsletter (pasted below), which paints the TVPRA as the problem.

Best,

Mario



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The New York Times
The Morning

September 19, 2023



By [David Leonhardt](#)

Good morning. We're covering the latest Times investigation into child labor — as well as the prisoner release in Iran, Hunter Biden and Ozempic.



Marcos Cux, 15. Meridith Kohut for The New York Times

Child labor and a broken border

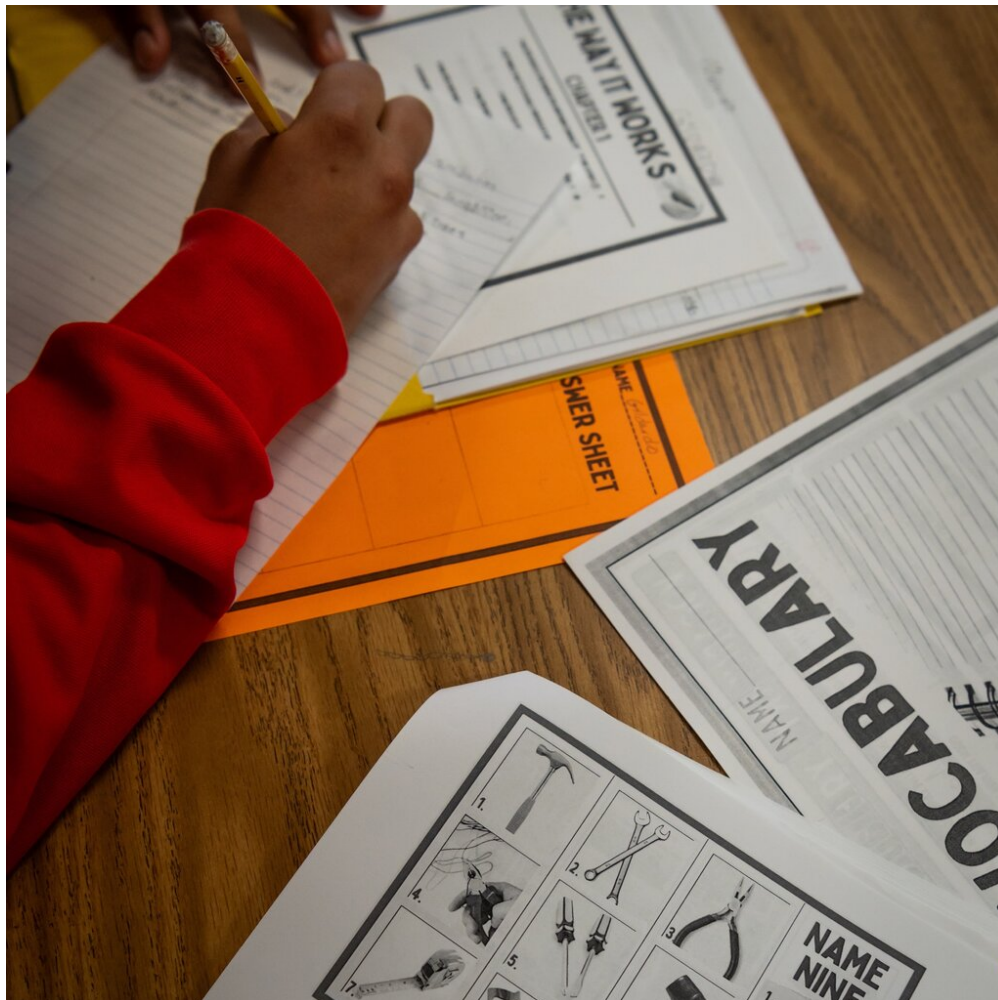
It sounds like something out of an earlier century. Tens of thousands of children in the U.S., spanning all 50 states, work full time, often on overnight shifts and in dangerous jobs. The adults in their communities — including executives at major companies like Perdue Farms and Tyson Foods, whose slaughterhouses are cleaned by the young teenagers — look the other way. Government officials, in state capitals and in Washington, allow it to happen.

For the past year and a half, my colleague Hannah Dreier has been reporting on the explosion of child labor among young migrants who have recently arrived in this country. [Her latest story](#), which tells the story of Marcos Cux, a 15-year-old who was maimed last year in a chicken plant in rural Virginia run by Perdue, has just published in The Times Magazine.

The story exposes the human costs of this country's broken immigration system. Over the past 15 years, entering the U.S. without legal permission has become easier, especially for children. A 2008 law, intended to protect children from harm on the Mexican side of the border, has meant that children can usually enter the country without documentation. As Hannah writes, "In the 15 years since, the carveout has become widely known in Central America, where it shapes the calculations of destitute families."

Likewise, a 2015 ruling by a federal judge made it easier for children to enter the country with their families, as [a recent New Yorker story by Dexter Filkins explained](#).

These policy changes aren't the only reasons that migration — by adults, too — has recently increased. The collapse of Venezuela's economy and a rise in global poverty during the Covid pandemic also play a role, as does a perception in Latin America that the Biden administration is less vigilant about border security than either the Trump or Obama administrations.



Many students quit school as soon as their English is proficient enough to get work.

An open secret

Whatever the causes, migrant children are arriving in a country that's often unable, or at least unwilling, to protect them.

After unaccompanied children come to the U.S., authorities place them with so-called sponsors, adults who are supposed to care for the children and ensure they attend school. Frequently, though, the sponsors allow the children to work full time, knowing that their parents need the money that working children can wire home. The children use false documents to get the jobs, and employers accept them even when they're obviously incorrect. In many communities, child labor has become an open secret.



Maria Escalante, a U.S.D.A. inspector, feels badly for the children working the night shift, but says, "It's not my place to say anything."

Yet this modern version of child labor brings the same terrible costs that led this country to ban the practice in the early 20th century. Children are exhausted. Many never graduate high school and learn the skills necessary to find decent-paying work as adults. Some, like Marcos, suffer gruesome injuries while working jobs intended for adults.

In response to [Hannah's reporting](#), companies like Perdue and Tyson have said they do not tolerate child labor, but their actions suggest otherwise. And although the Biden administration responded to her initial story by increasing enforcement, it has so far fined only subcontractors for employing children, rather than brand-name companies.

I recommend you find the time this week [to read Hannah's story](#). It is wrenching, but it offers some reason for hope about Marcos's future. It's also part of a larger problem: The U.S. has allowed millions of people to enter the country in recent years and is failing to care for many of them.

For more

- “So Much Suffering”: The Times’s Ginia Bellafante writes about [the struggle of New York City schools](#) to care for migrant children.
- On a recent episode of “The Daily,” Nicholas Fandos explained how the migration surge has [caused a political crisis](#) in New York.
- Unlike other cities, Los Angeles is [not facing a migrant crisis](#). The high cost of living and a lack of jobs have deterred many people from coming.

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