



10 W Lafayette Street
Trenton, NJ 08608-
2002

609-393-7707
www.njbia.org

**Michele N. Siekerka,
Esq.**
President and CEO

Christine Buteas
Chief Government
Affairs Officer

Raymond Cantor
Vice President

Christopher Emigholz
Vice President

Alexis Bailey
Director of
Government Affairs

Kyle Sullender
Director of Economic
Policy Research

To: Chairman Sarlo, Vice-Chairwoman Cunningham & Members of the Senate
Budget & Appropriations Committee

From: Christopher Emigholz, Vice President Government Affairs
(cemigholz@njbia.org)

Date: June 27, 2022

RE: NJBIA Testimony in **Strong Support of A-4222 & S-2796**
(Freiman/Egan/Calabrese/Gopal) - Expands Working Hours for Minors &
Updates Process for Obtaining Working Papers

Good afternoon! My name is Christopher Emigholz, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the New Jersey Business & Industry Association (NJBIA) covering tax, budget, economic development and workforce development issues. On behalf of our member companies all throughout our state that make NJBIA the largest statewide business association in the nation, thank you Assemblyman Freiman and Senator Gopal for sponsoring these bills and thank you Chairman Sarlo for posting them and allowing us the opportunity to express our **very strong support for A-4222 and S-2796**.

NJBIA strongly supports this legislation because it is one of the most impactful initiatives you can pursue to address the current workforce crisis, especially for our hospitality and retail businesses that get busier in the summer. The business community thanks you for the successful temporary law change last summer, and this bill builds off that by making it easier to hire and manage teen workers for longer hours every summer. Additionally, this year's bill also includes reform of the overly cumbersome and antiquated working paper process. It is a win-win-win because it helps:

- employers get more worker hours and build capacity to get through this workforce force crisis and beyond,
- teens more easily get jobs and valuable work experience with more hours and pay, and
- all people throughout New Jersey avoid longer lines and waits throughout their summer.

Workforce Crisis

As we all see in windows and lit-up displays as we drive down any business district, as we have all heard on the nightly news, as you hear from the businesses in your legislative districts, as we hear from our NJBIA members and as the data purports, we are in the middle of a workforce crisis. Confounding that crisis for many seasonal businesses is the fact that they are not seeing the federal visa program hires they used

to, and that is on top of trying to stay on top of inflation and make up for lost income due to COVID-19 losses. And long-term, this bill and its extended teen hours will also develop our future workforce by giving teens more work experience at earlier ages – hopefully building work ethic and career awareness.

Importance of Legislation's Reforms

A-4222 reforms our antiquated teen worker rules in a variety of ways that are beneficial to the teens themselves and employers by:

- permanently expanding the work week for 16- and 17-year-olds from 40 to 50 hours
 - We thank you for last summer's temporary expansion, and building off that law's success that we heard about from many businesses, this permanent expansion will provide many employers the ability to improve service to their customers.
- allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to work up to 10 hours per day in the summer instead of up to 8 hours per day
- making the break requirements for minors more flexible
 - This is important, because the current law takes away flexibility from both employers and teen workers setting their own breaks, so increasing the number of hours that can be worked without a break will allow employers to stagger breaks more efficiently and give teen workers the opportunity to take a break at a more convenient time for themselves.
- allows a one-time parent opt-out from working late summer hours
- changes the antiquated working paper process
 - cumbersome working paper process per job with a one-time online authorization system that is easier for minors and employers to navigate
 - removes school and doctor permission requirements.
- New Jersey was the only state that required both
 - creates an advisory council with parents and employers to oversee the new process
- make the 50 hour per week, 10 hour per day and 6-hour break requirement take effect immediately, with the more complicated working paper reforms to take effect next year
 - This is important to immediately address the workforce crisis for seasonal businesses this summer while take time for the long-lasting and more complicated reforms.

NJBIA thanks you all for the consideration of our perspective and urges this committee to vote “yes” on this critically important win-win-win workforce bill that helps teen workers, employers and all New Jerseyans who will spend less time waiting in lines over the summer. Please let me know if you have any questions at cemigholz@njbia.org.