Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Jeff Fortenberry today urged the federal Department of Labor to reconsider a proposed rule that could restrict youth involvement in certain agricultural work, including detasseling.

"It may be a foreign concept in the Beltway, but detasseling is a rite of passage for many Nebraskans," Fortenberry said. "Thousands of young teenagers earn money each summer working in the fields. In the process, they learn the value of hard work and its rewards. While it is important to ensure worker safety in all circumstances, this uninformed and unnecessary edict from Washington threatens a vital Heartland industry and an important economic opportunity for many Nebraskans."

Fortenberry, a member of the House Agriculture Committee, also submitted to the Department of Labor his concerns about the proposed rule's potential impact on family farm operations and agricultural education programs such as 4-H and Future Farmers of America.

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