Advocates are speaking out on behalf of child workers' health and well-being after a bill that would have regulated Virginia's tobacco farming industry failed to pass last week.

Minors would not be allowed to work directly with tobacco plants or their dried leaves, had Virginia House Bill 1906 passed, NBC 29 News reported. Children working on family farms as part of tradition would have been exempt from the law.

Proponents of the bill pointed to a report released by Human Rights Watch (HRW) last May that found children who work on tobacco farms are more at risk of getting cancer, living with reproductive health issues and suffering from permanent neurological damage, among other side affects.

While the bill in Virginia failed to pass and no other state-level legislation is currently in the air, Jo Becker, advocacy director of HRW's Children's Rights Division, told The Huffington Post that "there's certainly been a lot of interest" at a national level in cracking down on child labor in the tobacco industry.

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