

March 27, 2024

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese
Chairman, House Committee on Labor
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: *Opposition to H 7531*

Chairman Corvese and Members of the House Labor Committee,
As a Server at Angelo's Palace Pizza located in Cumberland, Rhode Island. I write to express my opposition to H 5731, which would eliminate the tipped minimum wage.

Working as a tipped employee in the hospitality industry provides me the opportunity to maximize my earning potential through earning gratuities by providing excellent customer service. I am concerned about the negative effects this bill would have on my income, shift availability and flexibility, and the overall hospitality experience by imposing increase wage burdens on restaurants, rather than the current system supported by customer gratuities.

If implemented, I believe restaurants will be forced to implement new policies to absorb these increased costs that could harm businesses, customers, and servers. Raising menu prices poses risks to the volume and frequency that our patrons would dine out. Losing customers or seeing them less frequently would result in reduced needs for staffing, reducing staffing needs, taking away the flexibility and opportunities for me to earn a living in hospitality.

Other options like imposing a house service charge to cover the shift in wage responsibility may drastically reduce or eliminate entirely gratuities generated from customers, leaving my earnings closer to the minimum wage than they currently are. It is important to note that I make far in excess of the current \$14 minimum hourly wage, and while this bill is claimed to support raising my wages, I fear its actual impact would be to lower it.

this legislation gets passed, it will eliminate my opportunity to work in this state as a hospitality worker. It will increase the prices of food and drink in the restaurant and at the same time decrease the number of patrons that come in to dine. With the state of the economy in this country, it is already difficult to bring people into the restaurant and with this legislation being passed, we can forget about any sort of lunch and dinner rush. It is imperative that I make a living wage and with this new law that would be impossible. Not only do I, like many others, pay rent, I have student loans that are not shrinking anytime soon. If this legislation gets passed, many people will be forced to leave the hospitality industry in Rhode Island, forcing family-owned businesses, such as Angelo's Palace Pizza, to close. I survive on my tips. If you plan on passing this legislation you might as well replace all the human beings with robots. You won't have to pay them anything!

I respectfully ask that you oppose H 7531. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Maloof
Providence, R.I.