

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 “Café Nuovo” located in Providence, I write today to express profound concerns regarding the potential passing of Bill H 7531. As a member of the hospitality industry, my livelihood and those of countless others are at stake, and I seek to present compelling evidence against the enactment of this bill.

Firstly, I wish to highlight the significant adverse impact this bill would have on the industry, particularly on establishments known for their culinary excellence. The proposed changes to wage structures would impose untenable financial burdens on restaurant owners, leading to inevitable repercussions such as increased menu prices and decreased patronage.

Moreover, the proposed shift in wage responsibility from customer gratuities to restaurant owners poses a grave threat to the earning potential of tipped employees like myself. The current system allows for the maximization of income through gratuities earned by providing exemplary service—a privilege that would be severely compromised under the proposed legislation.

Furthermore, the potential implementation of a house service charge as an alternative to gratuities could significantly diminish or entirely eliminate the earnings derived from customer tips, leaving employees with earnings closer to the minimum wage. This would represent a substantial reduction in income for many in the industry, myself included, who currently earn well above the minimum hourly wage.

In addition to the financial implications, the passage of this bill would disrupt the delicate balance of staffing needs within the hospitality sector. Increased costs imposed on restaurant owners would inevitably lead to reductions in staffing levels, thereby limiting the opportunities for employees to earn a living in their chosen profession.

If Bill H 7531 were to pass, I would be forced to reconsider my future within the hospitality industry, a prospect that fills me with deep concern and apprehension. The potential

loss of livelihood and the erosion of the vibrant culinary landscape of our city weigh heavily on my mind.

As a city celebrated for its culinary mastery, the vibrant restaurant scene thrives on the commitment of its proficient hospitality professionals. These individuals, essential to our dining encounters, embody the pinnacle of customer service, guaranteeing each guest an extraordinary culinary experience. These individuals should not be compelled to make further sacrifices in their already demanding lives, nor should they receive reduced compensation for the exemplary level of service they consistently deliver to you and fellow patrons.

Therefore, I respectfully urge this court to consider the grave ramifications of Bill H 7531 and to oppose its enactment. Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Rachel Lackie