

March 1, 2025

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

Re: Opposition to H 5507

Chairman Corvese and Members of the House Labor Committee,

As a owner of Four Brothers Pizza located in North Kingstown, I write to express my opposition to H 5507, which would eliminate the tipped minimum wage.

There is a reason people choose tipped restaurant jobs – they know the economics are in their favor. Tipped workers take these jobs for the earning potential.

The median full-service restaurant tipped worker makes nearly \$29.00/hour in Rhode Island. In my restaurant, that number can go as high as \$32 per hour.

If this bill passes, we will need to raise prices drastically to the consumer to offset the loss in tip credit against payroll expense and taxes. There will inevitably be loss in guests due to the price increase and we will then be forced to cut staff hours and shifts which will then defeat the purpose of the bill to begin with. All waitstaff that I know that rely on tips are against this type of bill. If the loss is great enough we may even need to change our business model to remove table service totally and go to an “order and pick up” counter service only hence losing almost all waitstaff jobs.

No tipped worker ever makes less than the prevailing minimum wage for any hour they work. Historically, when tip credit has been eliminated, the level of consumer tipping has dropped because of menu price increases or imposition of house service fees.

You may think by eliminating the tip credit you will be helping employees, but it will drastically change their earnings. The elimination of the tip credit will drastically change one of the fundamental business models in the industry, forcing me to quickly make changes to how we operate and force us to find ways to bear the cost of \$11.11 more per hour for each tipped employee. This does not include the additional payroll costs such as workers 'compensation and other costs that are directly related to payroll.

The elimination of tip credit could be a catastrophe for our industry. I respectfully ask that you oppose H 5507. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Batista

Resident of Narragansett, RI