

My name is Samantha and I am originally from Massachusetts but currently live and work in Burlington, Vermont. I have been in the food service industry for four years and know the ups and downs of waitressing and the struggles of working for tips.

I started working as a take out cashier and busser when I was 16 and could rely on minimum wage while I was working, occasionally getting tipped out by the servers I worked with. When I was 18, I was able to switch to waiting tables and my wage decreased from \$10 an hour to around \$2 an hour. This made me much more aware of how the days I worked had a significant impact on the amount of money I was able to make. Shifts on Fridays and Saturdays were competitive and as a new waitress I found myself struggling to get shifts that would be worth my time. If I worked a slow night, I was barely making minimum wage from the tips I was earning and might even leave with less money if I bought a meal for myself. I've had my current job on Church Street in Burlington since September of 2018 and have had some of my slowest shifts since my first waitressing job. Some nights I would work for 4 or 5 hours and leave with \$4 in tips while making \$5 an hour. Since my hourly wage is so low, a significant amount is taken out for taxes and I have even gotten \$0 checks. I choose between buying groceries and saving money for rent. As a college student, I want to be able to make time for academics so I cannot put my efforts into a full time job. Unfortunately, this means my few shifts of waitressing a week are being spread extremely thin paying for my books, my groceries, my rent, and other expenses along the way. What becomes especially frustrating is allocating time away from studying to work for meager wages.

Increasing the wages of tipped employees would mean that college students like myself might have more financial stability and even disposable income to put back into Vermont's economy. As prices for goods rise nationwide, it is important to remember that wages for employees should too. This way, we can ensure that those who are working and contributing to the community are being compensated for their time and effort. I fully support One Fair Wage and the push to raise the wages of tipped employees so that we can comfortably pay our bills and not have to rely on an unpredictable amount of customers we may have on a given day. I hope that this testimonial can help legislators see how their constituents are impacted by wage laws and how tipped employees are working long and hard hours for low compensation.

Thank you,

Sam Moran, Burlington, VT

