

My name is Andy, I'm a tipped worker, and I'm in support of raising the tipped minimum wage to one fair wage. I grew up in the Midwest, in a single-parent household, and among a loving network of other working class folk. I am the first in my family to graduate from a university. Navigating the waters of life after college is twice as difficult for anyone not already buttressed by others who have done it before. As I, and many others like me, find my way through the ever-changing job market, I have chosen the service industry as a way of supporting myself financially.

I have a deep respect and love for the work ethic required of those in food production and service. I enjoy this work. Regularly interacting with both new and familiar faces is the best part of my job. But to make a living wage based on tips is inconsistent, and often means odd hours, more tables per server, few breaks, and a lack of benefits. It is a demanding job that takes a particular work ethic that can only be gained after years in the industry. Serving is quickly being recognized as a skilled craft, as it should be. A significant wage increase for tipped workers would show those in the service industry that their hard work is valued.

Here in Vermont, much of the tourism that sustains our communities is made through the ever-expanding food and beverage businesses. The breweries and restaurants are a big draw in the summer and fall. A raise in the tipped minimum wage would entice more young people to move to (or stay in) Vermont. Wage insecurity for tipped workers is the greatest drawback for seeking a job in the service industry. I can speak personally to this issue.

I love what I do. However, unlike other types of work, relying on tips to meet a livable wage can be very inconsistent. It can be hard to predict if there will be enough on next week's check. A minimum wage increase for tipped workers, and for all workers in Vermont, is a positive proposal with many benefits. Please support the Senate and House bills for one fair wage!

Andy Sebranek
Burlington, VT
February 2019
sebran34@gmail.com