

March 5, 2015

To the distinguished members of the Labor Committee:

I am testifying in favor of raising the tip credit worker minimum wage. This bill would prevent me and my family, along with thousands of workers just like me across the state, from disappointing our children.

I live in Waterbury and I have been a server at the Waterbury location of a national chain restaurant for almost one year.

I work more than forty hours a week on the subminimum wage of \$5.78 per hour. Because I work so hard, my paychecks can often cover our rent but little else. My partner and I share a car and she works to cover groceries.

As the cost of living increases, I will not be able to pay our rent if the wage does not increase to the full minimum wage.

Many people have a misperception about servers: that we are all young women who have parental financial support, that we clean up every day with tips but that is wrong. Just recently I served a table of five teenagers and the bill was approximately \$80.00. They left me a two dollar tip.

My partner has a daughter, an 8 year old girl named Bella. I have chosen to shoulder half – often times more – of the financial responsibility of raising Bella because her father is unable to live up to his responsibilities. How can I tell her “We have to move to a smaller apartment and you have to go to a new school” because I can’t pay rent? It doesn’t matter whose child she is. She deserves a stable upbringing and if I don't make a predictable amount of money each week, enough to cover our rent she will not have one.

If the tipped wage is not eliminated and replaced with the full minimum wage, just as other workers earn, then I – and a lot of servers across the state – will not only suffer financially but we will be forced to tell our children that we cannot support them. No child deserves to hear that. I refuse to tell Bella anything like that which is why I have chosen to speak against the passage of this law.

**Please pass SB 858 and ensure that it pays all workers - servers included - the full minimum wage instead of a tipped sub-minimum wage.**

Jennifer Spezzano  
Waterbury