

To the Labor Committee:

Please support SB 858 to protect the minimum wage for tipped workers, and 6933 for fair schedules.

My name is Melanie Heuberger and I am a server at the Waterbury location of a national chain of sit-down, family restaurants. In addition to my job as a server, I also work a second job at a Subway restaurant.

Legislators don't know what happens to tip credit workers. The inner-workings of large chain restaurants that use complex computer systems often create situations whereby the server actually ends up paying for a party to eat at the restaurant.

At the end of the shift, the amount I must "tip out" and the amount of taxes taken from me are determined by my sales, not by the actual amount of tips I earned. If I sell \$1000.00 of food during the shift, my manager expects that I have earned at least \$150.00 in tips, regardless of what the customers left for me.

Many nights I do not collect anywhere near 15% of my sales in tips, yet a certain amount of money is taken from me and distributed to other restaurantworkers. If someone doesn't tip me the full 15%, I am essentially paying for the opportunity to serve them. It's backwards.

I am paid biweekly and, for 80 hours of work, I generally earn \$160.00 in my paycheck because the tipped wage is less than \$6, and assumptions about how much I was given in tips eat up the rest in taxes. Labor regulations dictate that my employer must assure that my tips fill the gap between the tipped subminimum wage and the minimum wage for non-tip workers which is \$3.37 an hour. Many times I don't earn \$3.37 an hour in tips, but my employer does not make up the difference, and they won't get caught doing so as long as it's legal to pay anyone less than the

minimum wage. I am working full time and I can never get ahead because of the subminimum wage.

I hope that the people responsible for making laws in the State of Connecticut know that not taking steps to close the gap between the tipped subminimum and regular minimum wages will cause hardship for servers.

Many of the issues being heard today are related to each other, and in my case the financial insecurity of a tipped wage and unreliable schedules go hand-in-hand. If the tipped wage is not raised, then more servers will need two jobs to survive just like I do. Sometimes it becomes difficult for me to maintain both of my jobs when my schedule changes so rapidly. Knowing all of my hours in advance would assure that I can keep both jobs. If the General Assembly cannot correct the inequities of the tip credit system, then they must pass fair scheduling laws to allow servers to keep two jobs.

I urge you to vote in a way that protects your hard-working constituents.