

Bianca, Pam

From: Rich Williams <Rich.Williams@99restaurants.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:34 AM
To: LABTestimony
Subject: Opposition to SB858

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB-858

I am a director of several restaurants in Connecticut for the past 10 years. During this time, I have had to witness the shuttering of 5 restaurants, laying off about 300 people, all due to the economy. While I support paying a fair wage for all working people, I have experienced firsthand in my restaurants, that servers and bartenders are paid well above minimum wage and in fact, most actually make in the range of \$20 per hour currently.

Eliminating the tip credit in this state will do 2 things for my restaurants.

- 1) It will force me to close more restaurants. Restaurant margins are already paper thin. I simply cannot afford to keep restaurants open that barely make a profit and will actually lose money if forced to pay all servers and bartenders minimum wage.
- 2) For the restaurants that actually make a profit now, I will be forced to change the service model. I currently employ about 30 service staff, this number will be reduced to half in order to maintain profitability. Servers will be replaced with automation. Instead of being greeted by a smiling server, they will have a tablet or other device to place their order.

The tip credit system works well in my industry and have in fact, I have advocated for not increasing the tip credit in the past. Eliminating completely will be devastating for my industry as I believe many other restaurant operators would share my same view.

Please vote "NO" to SB858

Thank you

Rich Williams

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