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To whom it may concern:

As the owner & manager of a small restaurant in Dixfield, I am a great example of how tough it is to run a small business in Maine. I was astounded at taxes & licensing fees, as well as food costs. We did very well the first 3 years we were open, each year within \$1000 of each other, but then a small bridge construction on the only bridge in & out of our little town lasted 19 months, through 2 summer seasons which were the only time we actually had great business. We lost the majority of our business because people got tired of fighting the construction times. When they finally finished, we thought we could at least have that summer season, but in the state's infinite idiocy, they chose to pave the main street...not in may, or even June or September, but they started it on July 8, which is the beginning of the real summer business. That lasted 4 weeks. We never totally recovered from those 3 years, & spent the next 4 years desperately trying to keep our doors open.

My husband was the chef in our place, & he quit due to his back & the stress in December of 2015. I spent the next year paying 3 people to do the job he'd done for free all those years, just as I'd done mine for free also. I had all I could do to meet payroll, to say nothing of all the other bills. When they started talking about raising the minimum wage, I knew that would do us in. This is a small mill town, & I did everything possible to avoid raising prices, without sacrificing quality, to no avail. They passed it early in November 2016, & we shut our doors at the end of November. There was no way to avoid going under.

I know I was right now to do that. I noticed immediately that the fast food prices were raised, all in small increments so that hopefully nobody would notice. Since then, I've seen them raise them 3 times, & it's been barely a year. The grocery prices all went up, the same way. What a self defeating bill that was. I know of many other small businesses that had to close, & were fighting just as hard, to no avail, not to raise their prices. The other things I saw were people working themselves, in one case to death, because they could no longer afford the help they needed.

The minimum wage hike was the last nail in our coffin.

Sincerely,

Sammie H. Angel – Owner/Proprietor
The Front Porch Cafe