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3/23/25

Testimony against LD 853, An Act to Replace the Minimum Hourly Wage with a Regionally Based Living Wage

Chair Tipping, Chair Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor:

I write today in strong opposition to LD 853, *An Act to Replace the Minimum Hourly Wage with a Regionally Based Living Wage*.

In my opinion, this is a solution looking for a problem. Our current state minimum wage bill provides for an annual cost of living increase tied to CPI.

Moving to an index that no other state uses for minimum wage would be extremely harmful to Maine labor, businesses, and the economy as a whole. Our industry has already seen the dramatic effects of a higher minimum wage in Portland, becoming one of many causes for the many restaurant closures over the previous year.

Out of almost 300 employees, I have few if not none that earn the minimum wage. The competitive labor market forces businesses to pay higher than minimum wage. Quite frankly, with increasing costs to businesses in the areas of energy, healthcare, tariffs, and paid leave programs, we're at a tipping point where we just can't pass more cost increases on to customers.

This bill is a bad idea and will put Maine at a disadvantage to the rest of New England and the US as a whole.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Jason Clay
Owner/CEO, Governor's Restaurants

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