

Tracey Aberman
Northeast Harbor

Dear Sirs/ Mesdames,

Regarding LD1279:

Raising the minimum wage to \$16 / hour as a wholesale event is untenable. I could never support this.

I run a small cafe in Northeast Harbor. The town depends on us to be open in the summers to attract and handle the influx of visitors coming to our side of MDI. Our labor cost is 50% of our earnings at the current rates and we have not once in 5 years made a profit. For my business, which is farm to table, using local vendors and products as much as possible (which means: labor to turn these products into meals) we would have reduce our staff to the point of not being able to produce our products or reduce the quality of our ingredients (thus alienating local farmers and vendors) or we'd have to offer our products at a price consumers would not be willing to pay. Anyway you slice it, we'd be out of business and our small town, trying desperately to survive, loses another business.

I cannot support this concept as a "one size fits all" solution.

Something to consider:

Seasonal restaurants (like mine) are more often than not reduced to hiring teenagers and college students who are untrained, rarely want a 40 hour work week and leave in the middle of August to go back to school or start up sports (don't even get me started on this insanity). We are forced to rehire and retrain in the height of the season, year in and year out. As you may be aware, this takes time and resources and slows down the rest of the operation, not to mention anyone available in August to work for a month or two comes at a hefty hourly rate. All of which ends up substantially increasing the labor cost. To insist that seasonal, part time workers earn \$16/ hour is unfair to any business, small or otherwise.

I also rely heavily on J1 students as I provide them with housing and a good wholesome Maine experience in exchange for a full 3-4 month commitment and a 36 hour work week. I could not afford to do this at \$16/ hour. Its asking too much.

I do believe raising the minimum wage to \$15 hour over the course of three years is fair for full time workers, 40 hours a week who stay at a job for a minimum of 6 months. For the seasonal lot, I support a plan that starts a part time, seasonal only worker at a fair minimum wage, say \$12.50 / hour for less than 40 hours a week and if that seasonal worker returns for a second season (hello UNICORN: a fully trained worker!) then the rate would be raised by a minimum of \$1 per hour, per season of returning.

This proposal also negates performance based raises, which is again unfair to the employer. Do I need to spell out the mutiny that would occur if my 4th year line cook knows that the 15 year old trainee is making the same rate?

I can tell you if I had a seasonal staff made up of all returning workers and fully trained; I would be happy to pay them an increased rate (and I already do this). It would mean I had a committed workforce and it would translate to needing less people and being able to run my business efficiently and passing on the savings to my staff via increased hourly rates. To ask me to pay a 15 year old, ten hour a week worker, who essentially remains a trainee for the entire season, \$14, \$15, \$16 per hour is absurd.

Please do not pass this bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tracey Aberman
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Northeast Harbor, Maine