

I'm here to testify **in strong support of Senate Bill 803**, to end the subminimum wage for tipped workers in Maryland. We already passed this in Washington, DC . It was a struggle, but in the end, it was the right thing to do. And as a customer of restaurants across the region, it's important for me that the standards are the same across the company - in both DC and MD. So I'd like to see MD follow DC's lead. In addition, we are going through the worst staffing crisis in the history of the restaurant and hospitality industry, and it's tough to find staff in MD. With DC raising tipped workers' wages to \$16 plus tips, I'm very concerned we're going to lose even more staff if we don't raise wages in MD soon. We need a policy that will create a level playing field so no one is at a competitive disadvantage. And we need policy that will signal to thousands of workers that it's worth coming back to work in restaurants