

SB886 Testimony

Good afternoon. My name is Timothy Linaberry. I am a Maryland resident, and a tipped employee. I am here speaking on behalf of those who cannot be here themselves. Those of us who are unable to request off a day for fear of not being able to pay their rent. Those of us who intended to be here, but are exhausted and in desperate need of a day off. Those of us who are literally afraid to be out in public with a gestapo police force roaming free and largely unabated. I am here on behalf of Maryland's workers to say - Maryland can do better.

We can do better than \$15 an hour. We can do better than the \$3.63 an hour tipped employees receive. No one can live comfortably on \$15 an hour in 2026. No one deserves to live in a world with subminimum wages. We the workers of Maryland deserve better.

We can deliberate till we debilitate, while the people, Marylanders not fortunate to be able to attend this hearing, struggle to keep their head above the ever rising tide. We can sit around and wait for states like California and New York to raise their minimum wages, and they will.

Maryland can follow, or Maryland can lead.

There are those of us here that have and will speak against this bill, citing a concern for the economic impact, and the businesses it will affect. They will say it will be the end of tipping as we know it. And while on the surface this argument might seem to hold water, it misrepresents the reality. A reality where seven states - including the state where I was born, California - do not have a tipped wage and have a thriving restaurant industry.

They will say this will impact small businesses, and in truth, it will. But not in the disastrous way they claim. Because the truth is, when you raise the floor - when you pay the people who live paycheck to paycheck more - they spend more. And where do they spend it? Right here, in Maryland.

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, I am proud to call Maryland my home. And I am here because I know that you, like me, are proud to represent such a great state. We are all Marylanders. And we can deserve a living wage. Pass SB886.

Thank you.