

HB 1229 Testimony

Good afternoon my name is Timothy Linaberry. I am a Maryland resident, a tipped employee and a concerned citizen. Concerned about the harrowing position we are in: a society crumbling. Crumbling infrastructure, deteriorating social fabric, a climate and environment totally out of whack. All of it can be traced back to a few of us glorifying greed and pursuing fairytales of endless economic growth.

While the few have done well for themselves - stockpiling profits on the backs of the workers of the world - the rest of us are out here...struggling. Struggling and juggling. Juggling an ever-increasing cost of living with our innate human desire to live a good and fulfilling life. We the workers deserve better.

We the workers demand a raise. We deserve to not to live in fear for whether or not we will be paid for the work we perform. No other industry so clearly represents the racist, classist roots of US society quite like the restaurant industry - where servers, cooks, and porters dote on paying patrons - hoping that they're fortunate enough to be paid properly for the hospitality they perform day-in and day-out. Meanwhile, in states like Maryland, owners pay tipped employees what amounts to literal pennies.

Growing up in California, I can firmly attest to the absurdity of the subminimum wage. Living in Maryland, I can also definitively state that \$15/hr is not enough to live on. We the workers demand better.

Those with the ability to pay their workers more will hide behind the small businesses, propping them up as a shield against change. Meanwhile, they plot behind their backs to consolidate and gobble up market share anywhere and everywhere. They hide behind a faulty logic of scarcity - as if there isn't enough to go around. We the workers know there is more than enough to go around. We the workers know that when you raise the floor society gets better. We spend the surplus right back into the local economies.

Pass HB1229. The question is not IF we should be given a raise, but HOW to make it happen. That should be the focus of this and future hearings. Thank you.