Good Afternoon. My name is Ellie Grenauer and I am co-owner of the Glen Park Tavern. The Tavern, located in the Village of Williamsville, is a small Restaurant that seats 100 people. We have approximately 40 employees.

I began in the restaurant business in the 80's. I have worked many positions including dishwasher, hostess, bus person, waitress and bartender. When asked to move to management I refused the position because the money I made as a tipped employee was far greater than the money made as a manager and required less hours. I find this true today as well ... our servers and bartenders make more than me or either of my partners do and work less hours then we do. They deserve the money they make which at our restaurant averages about $25 per hour as a server and about $35 dollars per hour as a bartender which includes their hourly wage and tips. If the service minimum wage is to increase and eventually reach minimum wage their hourly rate would decrease severely since tipping would no longer be required.

The restaurant business has traditionally been a learning industry. For example, I have a young woman now 23 who started with us as a bus person at the age of 15. She worked her way up to server and put herself through college. She now works full time in her field and just a couple nights a week to pick up extra cash. This is the story for a majority of the front of house staff hired in the restaurant business. If someone chooses to make the business a career an hourly wage between $20 and $35 per hour can provide a decent living for a 30 to 35 hour work week between $31,000 and $64,000 per year.

Let's now look at how raising minimum wage for the front of house will affect the back of house staff. These men and women are more likely to make the business a career choice. At our restaurant the typical cleaning and beginning cook with no experience will start at minimum / training wage and work their way up to an hourly wage between $9.50 and $16 per hour. If the front of house wage increases we would no longer be able to offer these wages in the kitchen. The increase in the front of house to minimum wage at $8.75 per hour would increase our payroll by $57,590. The front of house staff would lose about $178,000 in cash tips and most likely a few jobs would be lost due to the increase in our labor cost.

In order for our doors to stay open I need to keep my wage percentage at about 30% which because we have such long standing employees we typically run about 33%. This increase based on current sales would bring my wage percentage to almost 40%.