

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE WAGE BOARD

ON

Raising the Tipped Minimum Wage

November 13, 2014

Ethan Powell

CO-Owner – Eat: An Oyster Bar, and The Parish Restaurant

My name is Ethan Powell. It is my privilege to address the members of the New York State Wage Board on this issue as a Co-Owner of Eat: an Oyster Bar, and The Parish Restaurant in Portland, Oregon.

As an Oregon restaurant owner and operator, I am able to manage a successful business in a state without a tipped sub-minimum wage, *and* I encourage the Governor of New York to issue a “wage order” that would end this outdated practice in order to improve the lives of food service employees, restaurant owners, and their local communities.

I started “Eat” in 2008. We opened up during the worst economy in a generation. Things weren’t always great, but we managed to build up a strong customer base in our community. In 2012, our success allowed us to expand by opening up The Parish Restaurant in downtown Portland.

Between both establishments we now employ about 40 staff during our busy season. If we operated our businesses in New York, about half of our employees would be considered food service workers and therefore I would only be required to pay them \$5 per hour. However, a minimum wage of \$9.10 per hour has never prevented me from hiring.

As a business owner, all of my employees are important to me. They work hard to make money for my restaurant and they should be compensated appropriately by my restaurant. Providing a fair and equal minimum wage for my tipped employees gives them a steady income that they can rely on even during slow shifts, and off-season.

Additionally, the money I spend on payroll for my staff is an investment towards more customers in my local community. My team regularly eats out, and staff at those restaurants are customers for both of my locations. The more money food service workers have in their pockets, the more success our local restaurants have in Portland.

As a restaurant manager, I appreciate that my staff seem happier than I did when I made \$2.63 per hour as a server in Arkansas. They get to take home a fair paycheck every two weeks, unlike the checks I received when I was in their position. They’re also less likely to quit because they aren’t making enough money. Lower turnover means spending less time and money training staff.

Again, I encourage the state of New York to eliminate its' sub-minimum wage for food service employees.

Thank you,

Ethan Powell

Co-Owner

Eat: An Oyster Bar
3808 N Williams Ave #122
Portland, OR 97227

And

The Parish Restaurant
231 NW 11th Ave
Portland, OR 97209