

Dia King
Monday, September 17, 2018
Written Testimony for Public Hearing # #B22-0913

Thank you Chairman Mendelson and the Committee of the Whole / DC Council for giving me this opportunity to share my comments in support of enacting Initiative 77 and phasing out the use of the subminimum wage.

My name is Dia and I have been a Valet driver for 4 and a half years. I've lived and worked in DC most of my life and currently live in Ward 7.

When I first started working as a Valet, I was paid \$7/hr. Now, 4.5 years later, I still have not gotten a raise, even though I have asked many times. They typically make up excuses like, saying it's not in the budget and even one time they simply refused. Yet at the same time I have witnessed multiple increases in valet rates for guests.

The cost to park a car is \$50+. If I park 25 cars in a day, the company makes \$1,250 and in that same 8 hours they are only responsible to pay me \$56 -- assuming that my tips make up the difference.

I enjoy working at the hotel and all of the relationships I have built. I have met so many amazing people, guests, co-workers and even celebrities. I have stayed at my job because I like it, but as a professional, I feel greatly undervalued.

Being a Valet driver, I am required to "post up" -- which means to stand up straight, and don't lean for hours. I have to smile and greet every guest who comes to the hotel. [We are taught to act as if we are servants.] I leave work exhausted with my feet hurting and it has even caused me back problems.

Instead of the professional and valuable employees we are, my coworkers and I don't feel appreciated by our employer. They make us feel disposable. The low wages they pay, show how much they truly value our worth. Many of my coworkers want to leave because they are demoralized.

I live in a city where the cost of living is constantly going up. Rent, food and transportation continues to increase while my wage stays the same.

Since they refuse to give me a raise, I am here now talking to you to **make** them give me the raise I deserve. They are not planning to make changes anytime soon, so it is our job to hold them accountable, and that's what we're doing right NOW!