

Venorica Tucker
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Written Testimony for Public Hearing #B22-0913

Thank you to the council for having us here and listening to our concerns about the possibility of ignoring the will of the people. Please do not ignore the will of the people, anyone who's considering the repeal of initiative 77, should think again. Residents went to the polls, and they voted favorably for Initiative 77. They did this because many of them work in this industry themselves or have family, friends and neighbors who are in that position.

My name is Venorica Tucker. I am a nearly 70 year old woman who has worked in the hospitality industry for most of my life. I was born in Washington, D.C. and have worked here all of my life. Most of that time, I have been a tipped worker. I discovered ROC and I support many of the programs they have initiated. Policies like ban the box, paid sick days, and their advocacy against sexual harassment in the workplace. I have been working to pass One Fair Wage because I know that this would make a tremendous difference for many people who work in this industry. This would allow them to support their families by earning income that they can rely on. Many of my friends who I know who work in this industry work between 2- 3 jobs. Upholding Initiative 77, or One Fair Wage, could lessen that burden.

Initiative 77 would afford them the opportunity to do extra things for their families, spend time together, take vacations, or care for a loved one when they are ill. That's why many people voted to see this pass. They see it as a way to a better life. And I know the D.C. Council wants all of their community members to have a better life. It seems unfair to say that a tipped worker doesn't deserve the same things that all other workers do.

We all know that the District of Columbia is a very expensive place to live. I have family and friends who live all over the city, and when you think where this city is going, with all of the improvements and renovations taking place, it's becoming more and more expensive to live here. We all know that \$15 is not a living wage, but it's a start.

Tips are not a salary. Tips are not guaranteed. Some customers come in and all they can afford is the food and beverage that they order. There are times that I've been left a \$0 tip. Tips are meant to be a bonus, and I shouldn't have to rely on them for the entirety of my wages. A \$15 minimum wage with tips on top would help to secure an income that would allow us to have livable wages in order to meet our obligations and responsibilities, pay our mortgages and rent, do things that other workers are able to do based on a steady income.

I am saying to you that I am hopeful, and I hope you can understand and appreciate where I am coming from. I ask you to uphold a \$15 min wage for tipped employees and One Fair Wage for all.