

My name is Kate Rowe. My husband and I own The Back Burner Restaurant and Tavern in Brownfield. We are a 45 seat restaurant with the distinction of holding the first and only full liquor license in town.

Brownfield is a town of approximately 2000 people located next to the Conway, New Hampshire border. We employ 10 people from the surrounding communities. If anyone is familiar with our town, you know we rely heavily on tourist business and customers from adjacent towns to exist, as the bulk of our citizens cannot afford the "luxury" of going out to dinner.

Requiring our business to pay the full \$7.50 to our tipped staff, will require us to raise our prices. We survive in this small town, competing against the much bigger neighboring North Conway, by keeping our prices low. We are able to do this by a few different ways including recognizing lower profit, being owner-operators, residing above our business and paying \$3.75/hr to our wait staff and \$4.50/hr to our bar staff.

Understanding my opposition to the elimination of the tip credit is best explained in the manner I speak to proponents of increasing minimum wage: If we were in North Conway, Portland, or Bar Harbor; we could probably get away with charging \$12+ for a cheeseburger. We charge \$6.29. If we were to increase that price by as little as \$1.00 - no one would purchase that from The Back Burner. We charge \$10.95 for a heaping portion of Fish & Chips and local customers "boycotted" us for months because that price was increased from \$10.25.

I do not know if the larger restaurants can absorb this increase; I do know the smaller mom & pops cannot. If this legislation passes; The Back Burner Restaurant & Tavern, which has been serving Maine since 2005, will be forced to close and displace 10 local people who rely on us to give them a job.

I hope this is helpful; I guess my future depends on it.

Thank you,
Kate Rowe