

Bill 22-913 Testimony

My name is Avalon Oona Barnes.

I live in Centreville, VA and work at Mate Lounge in Ward 2.

Thank you, council members, for giving me the opportunity to speak about my concerns about initiative 77.

I work part-time bartending at Mate Lounge along with running a business selling high end and local products. The money I make bartending allows me the ability to grow my business. If initiative 77 passes, both sides of my income will suffer. As a tipped employee my restaurant will have to raise food and beverage prices, which will deter guests from dining as often as they normally would on a weekly basis, along with restaurants not being able to afford products I offer. It should be noted that, just because our wage may increase, it does not mean that guest's income will.

As a knowledgeable bartender and sales person, the ability to UP-Sell will become even MORE difficult because of this.

I hope you understand the work that we have done to fight 77. We have been fighting against an organization that are NOT entirely tipped workers, and have NOT been tipped workers. Not to mention the fact that this is what the MAJORITY of them do for a living. We are not lobbyist or politicians. We are bartenders, servers, back of the house staff, owners and operators. I myself have taken time away from my Husband, family, work, and life in general. All of which I love I very much, in efforts to fight against 77. I choose to make the commute into DC to work because I can make more money in DC with the Tipped Credit than I can in VA.

The fact that NON-Tipped workers were able to dictate our lively hood is deeply frustrating. Which is why I have tried to reach out to as many Tipped-Workers from VA & MD who commute here for work, to try and help show the amount of people who had no say but WILL be affected by this bill.

This is the DC industry workers point. No matter how much you love something if it doesn't love you back you become complacent. It's a fate no one wants. Council members, please help keep the passion of hospitality in the service industry.

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