

Good morning City Councilmembers, thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak about the repeal of Initiative 77. My name is Brett Johnson and I am a bartender at Larry's Lounge and DuPont Italian Kitchen. I live in Ward 5 and work in Ward 2. I have been a resident in the District of Columbia since June of 2006 and have worked as a tipped employee for over 10 years. I am proud to call the District home. I can walk through any neighborhood I have lived or worked in and I run into friends. Friends to me are regulars I met in the District, friends I knew, and businesses that were able to stay alive or gain strength. If Initiative 77 takes effect I will not be able to have these amazing District experiences I have had, due to money loss.

I understand that all voters were allowed to vote but not enough voters represented and not enough voters knew the facts. The voters not know or understand, barbacks and food runners make an hourly wage and sometimes get paid more than servers and bartenders because most places tip out what sales or service or time is used. It is absolutely strange to put tipped employees together. I do not work in a hair salon and sometimes I work at a bar, without support staff and not a restaurant. Not all tipped positions are alike, and I don't believe it makes sense to place all tipped employees under the same payment structure. This is where I lose the people trying to put tipped employees and the District into a certain place and payment plan.

I have always worked for locally owned and operated businesses in the District and I'm more afraid of losing local businesses because of what the District of Columbia decides. If local businesses cannot afford hourly salaries for the people in their business then service will go down and eventually close. To me the District of Columbia, the place I call home, could lose so many talented people and local businesses due to this Initiative 77. Thank you for the time to listen to our voices.