Good morning Chairman Mendelson. I know we all are probably at our limits of stress especially after yesterday but I still hope to find you all in good spirits as we all can muster today.

My name is Tracy Javier and I have been a bartender at the W Hotel working at POV, their premiere rooftop lounge for the past 10 years.

The union has helped me maintain a living wage and secured me with benefits when we’ve been laid off.

With a Living wage, we are secured in competitive wages for an expensive city.

With inflation and the economy always bringing the cost of living to the sky, the union fights to ensure our wages reflect our surroundings. I wouldn’t stand a fighting chance to be able to live where I do in DC without the help to negotiate competitive living wages.

2020 has been a difficult year for us in the hospitality industry. My hotel, as recently as the end of September, started bringing back minimal staff to open our restaurants. My outlet is running at less than 25% of our normal operating hours and staffing levels. Healthcare has been cut to those who have been laid off for the 6 plus months of this pandemic and I am one of the few lucky ones who have been able to hold on to it due to the fact that I have worked just 3 shifts in barely over a month. The union helped negotiate that the we secured health insurance from March until October but now a lot of us have to readjust.

Readjusting and shifting is not only crucial to provide for our families and ourselves but also a must in accordance with the changing information of this deadly virus. It is stressful with no end in sight and if a vaccine happens soon, it’s still months and maybe years in the least before we can even look to a brighter horizon. I worry that if things take a turn for the worse, I could be out of this job permanently.

Those who have held on to the hope of coming back to their hotel once it is safe to do so, should not have that hope snuffed out from under them because of the severity of this virus and the duration of the layoffs. We all have experienced the loss, whether it is with loved ones, the economy, our jobs, or the sense of normalcy. The union is fighting for us at least to make sure our jobs are available to go back to once we can resume a safe new normal life.

Lately I’ve been thinking about the 5 human truths I learned when first joining the W Team:

To belong

To feel special

To reach my potential.

To be in control

To be understood

Covid-19 has tested us as humans on these values. How can one seek these 5 truths while put under the economic, financial, health, and personal pressure? I hope with speaking to you all today, that you help us stay in these truths with the safety of our jobs and with the help of Local 25.

Thank you for your time, and your humanity.