
Empire State Restaurant & Tavern Association

Report From The Executive Director...Scott Wexler

March 2018

Industry Groups Launch Save NY Tips Website - The Save NY Tips Coalition, a broad coalition of restaurant owners and their employees, has launched www.savenytips.org, a new website dedicated to educating those in the restaurant industry and the public about the disastrous impacts that would result from doing away with the minimum wage tip credit, including the elimination of tipping as we know it.

The website features informational pages about the tip credit for both employees and employers. The launch of the website will be followed by the start of a regular newsletter about the Governor's plan to possibly eliminate the minimum wage tip credit and how those who work in the industry can help to preserve the current effective system.

Governor Cuomo has asked the state Department of Labor to examine the tip credit, with an eye toward replacing tipping with an increased minimum wage. Workers rely most heavily on tips as a main source of income, and eliminating tips would reduce workers' take-home pay substantially.

Some restaurants in the state have instituted a "no tipping" policy on their own, only to abandon it after pushback from both employees and customers. The state of Maine passed an initiative that abolished the tip credit, but less than a year later reversed that decision due to restaurant employees organizing against the measure after they saw a significant decrease in earnings.

The Save NY Tips Coalition was initially founded by our Association along with the New York State Restaurant Association, New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association, NYS Bowling Proprietors Association and the New York City Hospitality Alliance. The coalition's mission is to raise awareness about the importance of the tip credit for hospitality industry employers and employees. Those interested in joining the coalition should go to www.savenytips.org and sign up.

Labor Department Hearings Coming Up - The first hearings on the tipped wage are coming up over the next few weeks starting April 20th in Farmingdale, April 25th in Watertown and April 30th in Syracuse. Please register to attend and/or speak at these critical hearings by registering online at www.labor.ny.gov/subminimum, by emailing hearing@labor.ny.gov or calling 518.457.5519. We need to fill the room with servers, bartenders, owners and managers telling the Labor Commissioner to leave our tips alone.