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## **New Survey: 94% of New York Restaurant Workers Support One Fair Wage, Ending Subminimum Wage for Tipped Earners**

*New York's Restaurant Workers Are Fleeing Sector at Country's Highest Rate Due to Low, Unpredictable Pay as Cost of Living Skyrockets*

*Recent Polling Shows 71% of New York Voters Support Ending Subminimum Wage for Tipped Restaurant Workers, Passing One Fair Wage Law in New York*

**NEW YORK** – As New York restaurant workers flee the sector at the highest rate in the country, a new report released today by [One Fair Wage](#) finds that the overwhelming majority of the state's tipped restaurant workers would prefer earning the full minimum wage – rather than the unpredictable subminimum wage they currently earn. Of the tipped restaurant workers surveyed across New York, 94% said they want to earn the state's full minimum wage, while 66% said that the restaurant sector's low pay has forced them either to leave or consider leaving the sector. New York restaurants are only required to pay their workers 66% of the overall minimum wage, approximately \$8.35 to \$10.40 per hour.

The survey conducted by One Fair Wage of 2,000 tipped workers nationally and 84 in New York between 2023 and 2024 comes as working class people are migrating out of New York at alarming rates. Since 2020, New York has lost approximately [884,000 residents](#), leading the nation in outmigration. The survey also follows polling [released](#) by Data for Progress last year that found that 71% of New York voters support One Fair Wage's bill to end the subminimum wage for tipped restaurant workers.

"Passing the One Fair Wage bill and ending the subminimum wage for tipped workers would benefit New York restaurant employees and owners alike," said **Saru Jayaraman, President of the One Fair Wage coalition**. "Hundreds of thousands of working class people have left New York due to the high cost of living, creating a restaurant worker shortage that will have devastating long-term effects on the industry. The One Fair Wage legislation in New York ensures predictable and stable wages for workers, and provides for a \$50 million restaurant and restaurant worker recovery loan program to cover any short-term increased costs on employers. Thousands of restaurant employers across the country – including hundreds in New York – have unilaterally stepped up to pay their workers a fair wage, and states like California who have passed One Fair Wage legislation have seen their restaurants continue to thrive."

### **Key findings from the survey:**

- **94% of New York tipped workers** surveyed support One Fair Wage.

- **Over 120,000 tipped workers** – 18% of the workforce – did not return to the industry after pandemic-related shutdowns, more than any other U.S. state.
- **Nearly half of New York tipped workers** reported that they are leaving the industry because “wages and tips are too low.”
- **More than half of New York tipped workers** reported that their top reason they would come back to the industry would be ‘A full, stable, livable wage.’

“Passing One Fair Wage legislation will strengthen one of New York’s most vulnerable and hardworking workforces,” said **Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas**, sponsor of the Assembly’s One Fair Wage bill ([Assembly Bill A1710A](#)). “The restaurant labor force is largely made up of women — including many women of color and mothers who are struggling to make ends meet due to low wages and declining tips. I’m alarmed by reports that women working in the industry are frequently forced to tolerate inappropriate customer behavior to feed their families in tips. We have an opportunity this legislative session to ensure that these employees receive a livable, predictable wage, and we must act now.”

“Restaurants are the lifeblood of New York’s regional economies, and we must act now to strengthen the sector’s workforce,” said **Sen. Robert Jackson**, sponsor of the Senate’s One Fair Wage bill ([Senate Bill S5567A](#)). “Passing One Fair Wage and ending subminimum wages once and for all will increase purchasing power for middle class New Yorkers, who are leaving our state at historic rates. I’m proud to sponsor a bill that stands to stimulate economic growth for small enterprises across our state while uplifting the lives of our hardworking restaurant employees.”

“I’ve worked in the restaurant business for over 25 years, and I support ending the subminimum wage,” said **Jessica Piazza Santos, a restaurant worker and Queens native**. “Financial planning where tips are the primary source of income is not reliable. Tips are not guaranteed, and they fluctuate, depending on the time of year and levels of business. Like many New Yorkers, I work two jobs to combat the rising costs of living. All workers deserve to receive a reliable and consistent wage, especially as life gets more and more expensive.”

“As a restaurant owner in the Hudson Valley, I know firsthand that successfully operating a small business requires a stable workforce and predictable conditions,” said **Sarah Suarez, co-owner of Gaskins in Germantown, New York**. “But in the Hudson Valley and across Upstate New York, restaurant operators are bearing the brunt of a workforce shortage crisis. When tipped workers have stable and predictable income, small businesses like mine can attract and retain talented employees who are committed to delivering exceptional service. Reduced turnover means less time and resources spent on recruitment and training, allowing us to focus on providing quality dining experiences for our valued customers.”

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### **About One Fair Wage**

One Fair Wage is a national organization of nearly 300,000 service workers, over 2000 restaurant employers, and dozens of organizations nationwide all working together to end all subminimum wages in the United States and improve wages and working conditions in the service sector in particular. One Fair Wage policy would require all employers to pay the full minimum wage with fair, non-discriminatory tips on top, thus lifting millions of tipped and subminimum wage workers nationally out of poverty. For more information, visit [www.onefairwage.org](http://www.onefairwage.org).