

## Minimum Wage Talking Points

- Restaurants are a key economic driver in the City of Chicago. We are one of the largest employers and job creators. However, an increase in the minimum wage will threaten the vitality of the restaurant industry.
- Chicago's restaurants are still trying to pick themselves up from the hits they have taken recently due to the national economy.
- Restaurants are also preparing for increased commodity costs, higher taxes, and complying with the Affordable Care Act.
- Like many restaurateurs, many of my employees work part-time and enjoy the flexible schedules that restaurants can offer. Students can balance work with a busy course load. Single parents can take shifts that accommodate their childcare. Very few other industries can boast of such flexibility.
- Many workers in the restaurant industry are young or first-time employees entering the workforce who gain valuable skills in these jobs. In fact, the majority of those who serve in management started in these hourly jobs: 9 out of 10 restaurant managers began as hourly workers.
- The restaurant industry is a gateway to the Middle Class. Many who enter the restaurant industry at the entry level and work their way into positions of management or ownership do not have college degrees. Many are immigrants.
- Restaurants are labor-intensive businesses that already devote about a third of their sales to wages and benefits. Restaurants have exceptionally low profits per employee and have a difficult time absorbing higher labor costs.
- Historically, business owners have both increased prices and reduced employee hours following a wage increase.
- Additionally, economic theory suggests that when you put a price floor above the equilibrium wage (the wage at which the supply for workers and demand for workers is equal), this could result in increased unemployment.