

CONSUMER ALERT!



NEW YORK CONSUMERS CAN EXPECT SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS WHEN DINING OUT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

*Workers Protesting Low-Wages Threaten Holiday Walk-Outs;
Ending Subminimum Wage Is Only Way To Save Holiday Dining and Entire Industry*

The holidays are a big season for celebrating with friends and family at restaurants. However, because legislators in 43 states and at the federal level have failed to act to end the subminimum wage and raise wages for restaurant workers, protests threaten to roil the holiday dining season.

Consumers should be aware – and to avoid disruptions, should prioritize dining at “high road restaurants” that pay a full, fair minimum wage with tips on top. This number has grown, since in response to the staffing crisis, [over 400 restaurants](#) have raised their wages to pay a full minimum wage with tips on top.

The “Great Resignation” – where more workers are quitting than ever before – is affecting the restaurant industry, and especially restaurants in New York State. Of the 11.5 million workers quitting their jobs in April, May, and June of 2021, 1 million workers have left the restaurant industry in particular, and more than one in 10 of those restaurant departures have been in New York state. According to a [new report](#) from One Fair Wage, the situation is expected to worsen during the holiday season.

Specifically:

- **Since 2019, nearly 1 million workers have left the restaurant industry in particular, and more than 1 in 10—nearly 12%—of all restaurant workers who left the industry were in New York State.**
- **New York in particular has witnessed the largest decline (18%) in the overall restaurant workforce of any US State; more than 120,000 workers have left the**

industry in New York. With a pre-pandemic workforce of about 675,000 employees, there remain a little over 550,000 workers in the restaurant industry statewide.

- **Among those restaurant workers who remain, more than half report that they are leaving.** In May 2021, 53% of all restaurant workers who remain in the industry nationwide and exactly half (50%) of all New York restaurant workers who remain in the industry reported that they were leaving. Nine in ten workers (90%) cited that they were leaving due to low wages and tips. Nearly eight in ten workers (78%) stated that a ‘full, stable, livable wage with tips on top’ would be the main factor to make them stay in the industry, higher than all other potential incentives by 30 percentage points.
- **Without policy to end the subminimum wage for tipped workers, the exodus threatens to continue and worsen this holiday season and in 2022.** More than [17,000 workers have signed a petition](#) to Governor Hochul stating that they will not work without One Fair Wage - full minimum wage with tips on top - and [hundreds are saying](#) they will not work for subminimum wages this holiday season.^{1,2} This will significantly reduce consumers’ ability to dine out during the holiday season and in 2022.

Consumers need to prepare for holiday disruptions to dining and, in addition to patronizing “high road restaurants,” press their favorite dining establishments to raise wages and support One Fair Wage legislation. That’s the only way to level the playing field for all restaurants, bring back workers and save the restaurant industry.

Diners in key states, especially New York, need to press their leaders to act immediately to save the industry and save holiday dining.

Without a policy to end the subminimum wage for tipped workers, the exodus threatens to continue and worsen this holiday season and in 2022. We need our political leaders to act so that all of us – diners, workers and restaurant owners – can have a joyful holiday season.

¹ One Fair Wage. (Dec 2021). NY National Petition for One Fair Wage. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u7pyjv-NJf-TafqJQu4L0-lwJ0ED9edw/view>.

² One Fair Wage. (Dec 2021). NY Restaurant Workers Demand Fair Wages. Co-Worker. <https://www.coworker.org/petitions/ny-restaurant-workers-demand-fair-wages>