

My name is Marc Grossman and I am the owner of The Farm at Our House, a small organic farm that exclusively sells certified organic produce in Montgomery County at the Silver Spring and Bethesda Farmers Markets as well as to a few fine dining restaurants like Il Pizzico, Black's Bar and KitchenBlack's Market Bistro as well as others. All three of these restaurants named can be commended for the quality of their product and the treatment of their employees,

As a supplier of local Montgomery County restaurants this proposal threatens my farm's economic sustainability. When a restaurant's bottom line shrinks the first contracts to go are those contracts with other small independent businesses who often charge a little bit more than their larger peers. For me, that represents the potential for lost business. Lost business means lost jobs in Montgomery County.

I have visited the backs of kitchens selling fresh produce for over a decade now and can tell you that the workers who need government protection and assistance aren't the ones who receive tips, it's the slew of dishwashers and expeditors who almost universally speak a language other than English as their primary language and might get paid less than minimum wage with no benefits.

I suppose back kitchen staff are not receiving the attention of the council because many of them are not citizens or do not vote. Make no mistake, it will be those in the back of the kitchen who will be denied a wage hike or pass through tips as restaurants direct more of their income to wait staff in an effort to comply with this proposal.

Running a successful restaurant is extremely difficult which is why so many go out of business. Montgomery County already possesses anachronistic alcohol laws that make it even harder for small independent restaurants to survive. Make no mistake, large franchised restaurants should be compelled to pay their workers more, but I fear that this law will particularly punish small independent restaurants.

Montgomery County has an opportunity to attract and retain a dynamic dining scene and bolster our economy if we don't go the way of DC and PG. Please say no to getting rid of tipped employment.

The proposal as it stands is bad for the economy, it will harm those restaurant workers who receive the least protections, it rewards bad players who already violate laws that mandate tipped employees receive a minimum wage and it harms farms like mine.

Marc Grossman  
The Farm at Our House, Owner