



Our Mission is Your Success

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 31, 2013

Contact: Justin Winslow
MICHIGAN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION
517-377-3931

OFFICIAL STATEMENT REGARDING FAST FOOD FORWARD PROTESTS

LANSING, MI – “The restaurant industry is an industry of opportunity. Many have lived the American Dream by starting in entry level positions and eventually owning their own restaurants. Proposals to more than double the minimum wage would dramatically increase menu prices and cost jobs.”

- Michigan Restaurant Association President and CEO Brian DeBano

Consider the facts:

1) The restaurant industry is proud of its unassailable reputation as an industry of opportunity.

- Nearly half of all adults have worked in the restaurant industry at some point during their lives, and 80 percent of restaurant owners said their first job in the industry was an entry-level position.
- The restaurant industry employs more minority managers than any other industry and creates an unmatched path to small business ownership for immigrants.
- In short, the restaurant industry is the embodiment of the American Dream for any hard-working and entrepreneurial individual, regardless of race, sex, or creed.

2) The restaurant industry is committed to be an engine of growth and job creation for America's economy.

- Restaurants have been the third-largest private sector job creator since the economic recovery began in 2010 and through that time restaurant wages have increased naturally, without legislative mandates.
- The average hourly earnings of non-supervisory eating and drinking place employees increased at a 2.2 percent rate in 2012, compared to a 1.6 percent gain in wages of non-supervisory employees in the overall private sector.

3) It is critical to understand that the minimum wage is a starting wage and rarely received by either full-time employees or those acting as head of the household.

- Forty-six percent of federal minimum wage restaurant workers are teenagers, while 70 percent are under the age of 25.
- The average household income of restaurant workers who earn the federal minimum wage is \$62,507.

4) A wage mandate like that demanded by Fast Food Forward would dramatically increase menu prices and cost jobs.

- After the 2007 federal minimum wage increase, which was only a small fraction of the more than 100 percent increase demanded by Fast Food Forward, 58 percent of restaurant owners increased menu prices
- Forty-one percent reduced total employees' hours to offset the wage increase and 24 percent actually laid-off employees to compensate for the wage increase.

The Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is the recognized leader of Michigan's hospitality industry, providing essential services to the foodservice community. Founded in 1921, the MRA represents nearly 4,500 Michigan foodservice establishments. The industry plays an integral role in Michigan's economy, employing more than 390,000 people and creating more than \$13.1 billion in annual sales.

###