



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

BRANDON JOHNSON  
MAYOR

March 25, 2026

Office of the City Clerk  
Anna Valencia, City Clerk  
121 N. LaSalle Street, Room 107  
Chicago, IL 60602

To the Honorable, The City Council of the City of Chicago and City Clerk Valencia:

I return herewith, without my approval, an ordinance passed by the City Council on March 18, 2026 (SO2025-0017549), amending the Municipal Code regarding the minimum hourly wage in occupations receiving gratuities.

This ordinance would deprive tipped workers of desperately needed financial stability across the city of Chicago by maintaining a subminimum wage. This ordinance would harm an estimated 80,000 tipped workers in Chicago. The impacted tipped workers are disproportionately Black and Brown women. The ordinance would make the income of such workers dependent on unpredictable tips rather than stable, guaranteed pay. The impact of this ordinance is compounded by the cost of living that continues to rise due to tariffs, inflation, and war in the Middle East. At a time when real wages are not keeping up with inflation, we cannot punish those that are most vulnerable to economic precarity.

Despite the claims made by the proponents of this ordinance, data indicates that the implementation of the One Fair Wage ordinance has no adverse impact on the growth of the restaurant industry. In fact, the retail food establishment license renewal rate has strengthened under One Fair Wage, with a consistent 81% of yearly issued licenses being renewals from 2022–2024 and rising to 83% in 2025 after the second step raise was instituted. Far more retail food establishments are staying open rather than closing. The sector is growing, adding a net 680 Retail Food Establishment licenses in 2024 and another 664 in 2025.

I am committed to protecting the stability which has been granted to tipped workers through the One Fair Wage ordinance and continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with hard-working Chicagoans as they seek security, opportunity, and dignity in the workplace.

For the above-stated reasons, it is my duty to veto this ordinance. Madam Clerk, please read this letter at the April 15, 2026, City Council meeting under the heading of "Reports and Communications from the Mayor and other City officers."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Brandon Johnson".

Brandon Johnson, Mayor

Chicago City Clerk - Council Div.  
2026 MAR 25 PM2:31