

Take off
your mask
so I know
how much
to tip you.

**Illinois Service Workers'
Experience of Health & Harassment
During COVID-19**

DECEMBER 2020

ONE FAIR WAGE

THE UC BERKELEY FOOD LABOR RESEARCH CENTER

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I. OVERVIEW



COVID-19's devastation of the service sector has been well documented, including the closure of thousands of independently-owned restaurants¹ and the unemployment, underemployment, and impoverishment of thousands of food service workers in Illinois.² Destitution among workers can be traced in large part to the subminimum wage for tipped workers, still \$2.13 an hour at the Federal level. A legacy of slavery,³ the subminimum wage for tipped workers persists in Illinois and in 42 other states, which has subjected a largely female workforce of servers, bartenders, bussers, and others to economic instability and the highest rates of sexual harassment of any industry for decades.⁴ Thus far through the pandemic, 60% of tipped workers report being unable to access unemployment insurance because their subminimum wage was too low to meet minimum state thresholds for benefits qualification.⁵

Now, thousands of tipped service workers in Illinois are returning to work as many restaurants have re-opened for indoor dining. No previous study, however, has thoroughly documented service workers' experiences of returning to work in restaurants during the pandemic. Understanding these workers' experiences is critical not only to addressing the needs of these workers and their families, but also to stemming the growing public health crisis. The CDC reported in September 2020 that adults are twice as likely to contract the virus after eating in a restaurant.⁶ Food service workers have become essential workers and de facto public health marshals, enforcing critical mask and social distancing protocols in one of the pandemic's most dangerous spreading environments. Unfortunately, unlike all other essential workers, they are not routinely guaranteed a standard minimum wage and thus live at the mercy of customers' tips.

This report is based on 1,675 surveys of food service workers conducted online and over the telephone from October 20 to November 10, 2020 in 5 states — New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Illinois, Pennsylvania — and Washington, DC. We emailed the surveys to the 61,392 applicants to the One Fair Wage Emergency Fund in these states on October 20, 2020, and collected responses until November 9, 2020, by which time 2,621 workers had already responded. Of those who responded, 1,575 reported that they were currently employed, and were thus able to answer most of the questions. Another 100 survey responses were collected by telephone in these states. Specifically, 563 of total respondents were Illinois workers. The analysis in this report is solely based upon Illinois based respondents. Please visit the One Fair Wage website for our national findings.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Food service workers in Illinois and their communities are at high risk of contracting COVID-19.

- ❖ One-in-two workers (53%) reported that at least one or more of their co-workers in their restaurant had contracted COVID-19 – a rate 10% points higher than the national average.

- ❖ Nearly 90% (89%) of workers reported knowing someone who contracted COVID-19, and of those workers, 38% reported knowing someone who died from the virus.
- 2. Restaurant service workers do not have adequate protection or work under proper safety protocols for COVID-19.**
- ❖ Almost four-in-ten workers (38%) reported that their employer had not conducted a mandatory training on COVID safety protocols.
 - ❖ Most workers (83%) report being within six feet of at least one person who is not wearing a mask in every shift, and 24% report being within six feet of 30 or more maskless individuals on every shift.
 - ❖ Two-thirds of Illinois workers (67%) reported that their employer is not consistently following all COVID safety protocols.
- 3. Most workers who responded to the survey report that their tips have declined significantly with the pandemic, and that this decline in tips is exacerbated when they attempt to enforce COVID-19 safety protocols on customers. As a result, these workers report that they are reluctant to enforce safety protocols for fear of losing more tips.**
- ❖ Over 80% of workers (84%) reported that their tips have declined during COVID-19. This decline is severe: 69% of workers reported that their tips have declined by at least half.
 - ❖ A vast majority of food service workers in Illinois (77%) report experiencing or witnessing hostile behavior from customers in response to staff enforcing COVID-19 safety protocols, and nearly 60% (57%) report experiencing such hostility at least weekly.
- ❖ Over one-half of workers (61%) report feeling reluctant to enforce COVID-19 protocols out of concern that customers would tip them less. Indeed, over two thirds of workers (68%) report having received a lesser than usual tip after enforcing COVID-19 protocols on customers, usually on a frequent basis.
- 4. Many workers in Illinois report a dramatic change in sexual harassment during the pandemic, which is compounded by having to ask customers to comply with COVID-19 safety protocols. Comments by male customers indicate that they feel entitled to demand that workers remove their protective gear, exposing them to the risk of illness or death, in order to obtain the tips they need to make up their base wage.**
- ❖ More than 40% of workers (42%) reported that there has been a change in the frequency unwanted sexualized comments from customers, and just over one quarter (26%) report that they have experienced or witnessed a significant change in the frequency of such sexual harassment.
 - ❖ Workers frequently are subjected to sexualized comments from customers, the majority of which were a request from male customers that women service workers remove their mask so that the men could judge their looks, and, implicitly, determine their tips on that basis. Many comments were even more sexually explicit: “Guys came in and harassed one of servers and tried to touch her.” These comments have been provided in their entirety in Table 5 in Section III of this report, “Sexual Harassment of Illinois Restaurant Workers In the Time of COVID,” which begins on page 13.



Analysis of the survey responses from Illinois demonstrate that workers are being subjected to shockingly high rates of exposure to the virus and increased sexual harassment on top of an already high rate, in a context of a subminimum wage and already vastly reduced tips due to less indoor dining. The survey results demonstrate that workers' vulnerability and dependence on tips, since they do not receive a full minimum wage, prevents them from serving as the public health marshals they are expected to be and subjects them to a potential deadly health threat simply in order to scrape by economically for themselves and their families.

All of these experiences at the intersection of public health hazards and sexual harassment point to a clear minimal solution: requiring all restaurants in Illinois pay One Fair Wage: a full minimum wage with tips on top. Paying workers a full minimum wage with tips on top would reduce their dependence on tips and thus their vulnerability to harassment. Previous studies have indicated that the 7 states with One Fair Wage have half the rate of sexual harassment compared to states with a subminimum wage. Paying workers in Illinois a full minimum wage would empower them to enforce safety protocols on customers and to reject sexual harassment and the life-threatening demands on women to remove their masks for the sexual pleasure of customers.

TABLE 1

**Summary of COVID-19 Health and Customer Harassment
Impacts on Restaurant Workers in Illinois**

Restaurant Employee Exposure to COVID-19

9% Has personally contracted COVID-19.	83% Employees are within 6 feet of an unmasked person at least once during their shift.
89% Knows someone who has contracted COVID-19.	27% Employees are within 6 feet of an unmasked person 30 or more times during their shift.
38% Of those who know someone infected, percent who knows someone who has died from COVID-19 or COVID-19 complications.	53% Employees who interact with 10 or more unmasked people during their shift.
53% Employees who report that one or more employees at their restaurant has contracted COVID-19.	24% Employees who interact with 30 or more unmasked people during their shift.

TABLE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

TABLE 1

Employer Implemented COVID-19 Safety Protocols

- 38% Employer has not conducted a mandatory training about COVID-19 prior to reopening for dining or other customer-facing services.
 - 33% Employer consistently follows all COVID-19 safety protocols.
 - 84% Service tables are placed to ensure that patrons are at least six feet apart or are separated by an impermeable physical barrier.
 - 68% Designated areas/markings indicate 6-foot distancing for patrons in various settings (e.g. waiting to order, waiting for restroom, or waiting to be seated).
 - 70% Customers are advised before seating that they are required to wear face coverings any time they are not eating or drinking and when personnel approach their table.
 - 86% Tables and chairs are wiped down and sanitized between use.
 - 49% Advises customers that they must remain outside the Outdoor Dining Establishment, and may enter the establishment only (1) to access a bathroom, (2) to access an outdoor space that is only accessible by traveling through the restaurant, or (3) to order or pick up food at an indoor counter.
 - 55% Encourage reservations to prevent crowds from gathering. Timing of reservations allows sufficient time to disinfect customer seating areas.
-

Employee Safety Protocols Instructed by Employer

- 24% Employer consistently instructs employees to follow all COVID-19 safety protocols.
 - 91% Requires all personnel to wear masks at all times.
 - 86% Requires all personnel to wash hands frequently.
 - 57% Requires all personnel to maintain a distance of 6 feet at all times when possible.
 - 74% Provides employees with Personal Protective Equipment.
 - 61% Before an employee begins shift a designated supervisor will perform a COVID-19 symptom and temperature check.
 - 73% If an employee reports COVID-19 symptoms or has a fever at or above 100.4 °F [38 °C], supervisor or employer will immediately send them home, and require them to quarantine and get tested before returning to work.
 - 73% Employer encourages employees who have possible exposure to COVID-19 to quarantine and get tested before returning to work.
 - 33% Employer gives employees who have possible exposure to COVID-19 paid time off to quarantine and pays for them to get tested before returning to work.
-

Customer Harassment and Impact on Tipping

- 69% Supervisor has said they will support workers to tell a guest or coworker to put on a mask when you are within six feet of employees.
 - 84% Report that tips have decreased since COVID-19.
 - 69% Report that tips have decreased since COVID-19 by at least 50% or more.
 - 78% Experienced or witnessed hostile behavior from customers in response to staff enforcing COVID-19 safety protocols.
 - 58% Experienced or witnessed hostile behavior on a weekly basis from customers in response to staff enforcing COVID-19 safety protocols.
 - 61% Felt reluctant to enforce COVID-19 safety protocols upon customers out of concern that customer would tip less.
 - 64% On a weekly basis has received a decreased tip from a customer in response to enforcing COVID-19 safety protocols.
 - 42% Has experienced or witnessed a noticeable change in overall levels of unwanted sexualized comments from customers.
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II. SERVICE WORKERS AND COVID-19 PROTOCOLS IN ILLINOIS

With significant effort, communities in Illinois suppressed the spread of COVID-19 through the summer and early fall 2020. However, as studies predicted, COVID cases have risen dramatically in later fall 2020, with over 4,600 new cases reported each day in November according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).⁷ Enforcing public health guidelines in locations that are at high risk for transmission is critical to significantly curtailing the spread of the virus at this time. There is almost no place as high risk as restaurants; the CDC reports that adults testing positive for COVID-19 were approximately twice as likely to have eaten at a restaurant.⁸

A HIGH RISK ENVIRONMENT FOR A VULNERABLE POPULATION

Illinois food service workers are well aware of the risk they face every day while working at a restaurant during the pandemic. Nearly 90% (89%) of responding workers surveyed reported knowing someone who has contracted the COVID-19 virus. Of those workers, 38% know someone who has passed away due to COVID-19 or COVID-19 complications. **And five-in-ten workers (53%) report that at least one coworker in their restaurant has contracted the virus — a rate 10% points higher than the national average.** In such a high-risk environment, these workers are being asked to serve as the first line of defense against the virus by enforcing public health guidelines among themselves and with customers. However, the fact is that tipped service workers may be paid a subminimum wage in Illinois, and are thus reliant on customer tips for a majority of their wage. This reality has rendered them unable to uphold the health and safety measures that benefit all of us.

TABLE 2

Restaurant Employee Exposure to COVID-19 in Illinois

9%	Has personally contracted COVID-19.	83%	Employees are within 6 feet of an unmasked person at least once during their shift.
89%	Knows someone who has contracted COVID-19.	27%	Employees are within 6 feet of an unmasked person 30 or more times during their shift.
38%	Of those who know someone infected, percent who knows someone who has died from COVID-19 or COVID-19 Complications.	53%	Employees who interact with 10 or more unmasked people during their shift.
53%	Employees who report that one or more employees at their restaurant has contracted COVID-19.	24%	Employees who interact with 30 or more unmasked people during their shift.

PROTECTIONS AND PROTOCOLS

While nearly 70% of workers who responded from Illinois (69%), reported that a supervisor told them that they would be supported when asking customers to follow public health guidelines, such as wearing a mask or sitting six feet apart, the conditions in which employees work reveal a different reality. When asked about the restaurant policies that their employer consistently follow, only a third (33%) of employees described working conditions in Illinois restaurants that met all the CDC's guidelines for restaurant operations during COVID-19. Even fewer workers, **not even a quarter (24%)** described employee-focused policies that met required health-safety guidelines. Indicative of this negligent hands-off approach is the fact that almost four-in-ten service workers (38%) state that their employers have not conducted a mandatory training about COVID-19 prior to reopening their businesses for dining or other customer-facing services.

TABLE 3

Employers and COVID-19 Safety Protocols in Illinois

Employer Implemented COVID-19 Safety Protocols

- | | |
|---|---|
| 33% Employer consistently follows all COVID-19 safety protocols. | 86% Tables and chairs are wiped down and sanitized between use. |
| 84% Service tables are placed to ensure that patrons are at least six feet apart or are separated by an impermeable physical barrier. | 49% Advises customers that they must remain outside the Outdoor Dining Establishment, and may enter the establishment only (1) to access a bathroom, (2) to access an outdoor space that is only accessible by traveling through the restaurant, or (3) to order or pick up food at an indoor counter. |
| 68% Designated areas/markings indicate 6-foot distancing for patrons in various settings (e.g. waiting to order, waiting for restroom, or waiting to be seated). | 55% Encourage reservations to prevent crowds from gathering. Timing of reservations allows sufficient time to disinfect customer seating areas. |
| 70% Customers are advised before seating that they are required to wear face coverings any time they are not eating or drinking and when personnel approach their table. | |

Employee Safety Protocols Instructed by Employer

- | | |
|---|--|
| 24% Employer consistently instructs employees to follow all COVID-19 safety protocols. | 73% If an employee reports COVID-19 symptoms or has a fever at or above 100.4 °F [38 °C], supervisor or employer will immediately send them home, and require them to quarantine and get tested before returning to work. |
| 91% Requires all personnel to wear masks at all times. | 73% Employer encourages employees who have possible exposure to COVID-19 to quarantine and get tested before returning to work. |
| 86% Requires all personnel to wash hands frequently. | 33% Employer gives employees who have possible exposure to COVID-19 paid time off to quarantine and pays for them to get tested before returning to work. |
| 57% Requires all personnel to maintain a distance of 6 feet at all times when possible. | 69% Supervisor tells you they will support you to tell a guest or coworker to put on a mask when you are within six feet of them. |
| 74% Provides employees with Personal Protective Equipment. | |
| 61% Before an employee begins shift a designated supervisor will perform a COVID-19 symptom and temperature check. | |

These statistics make evident that the restaurants in Illinois to which workers are returning to work are not providing the necessary conditions to safeguard the health of their employees, far less the public they serve. Instead, workers are required to not only face the risk of contracting the virus but also to enforce COVID-19 protocols on the very same customers from whom they must obtain tips to make up their base wages. For instance, more than one quarter (26%) of surveyed workers indicated that their employer does not provide them with any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to wear that would keep them or their customers safe. Should a worker contract COVID-19 while employed by a restaurant, only a third (33%), would be offered paid time off by their employers.



INCREASED HOSTILITY AND DECREASED TIPS

A major source of restaurant workers' inability to protect themselves and enforce critical health and safety protocols with customers in Illinois and in 42 other states is the subminimum wage for tipped workers, because it requires workers to derive a substantial portion of their income from customer tips. During the pandemic, these workers' reliance on tips from customers has made it difficult to nearly impossible to enforce critical social distancing and mask rules on these same customers.

The pandemic has increased workers' vulnerability and dependence on customer tips. After nearly 1 in 4 workers in the restaurant industry lost their jobs in the first wave of the pandemic,⁹ those who are returning to work find themselves under significant economic burdens from months of unemployment during which they lacked access to unemployment benefits, be-

cause their sub-minimum wage was too low to qualify.¹⁰ As a result, many workers find that they have no choice but to work regardless of risk, and are even more reliant on customer tips than they were before.

More than three quarters (78%) of the workers with whom we spoke to in Illinois reported that they have experienced customers becoming hostile to staff for following public health guidelines, such as insisting upon wearing a mask. One worker recalled a time when "the supervisor went to tell a guest that he needed to wear a facemask or he wouldn't get any service and he called her a [whore]." This kind of hostility is not unheard of from the workers we spoke with in Illinois, but instead speaks to the common refrains of abuse that food service workers endure while attempting to stay safe in their workplaces.

Unsurprisingly, over 60% of workers (61%) report feeling reluctant to enforce COVID-19 protocols out of concern that customers would reciprocate with aggression, hostility, and lesser tips. This feeling is based on real experience; two-thirds of workers (67%) reported having received a lesser tip than normal after enforcing COVID-19 protocols on customers, and 64% reported that receiving a lesser tip for enforcing these protocols is a weekly experience. Simultaneously, restaurant workers are presented with the impossible task, and losing battle, of policing the customers who directly subsidize their wages.

Workers' inability to enforce public health protocols that would protect themselves and the public in Illinois is exacerbated by the fact that tips are generally vastly diminished because sales are diminished, thus increasing workers' dependence on whatever customer tips they are able to obtain, enhancing their vulnerability to abuse by customers. More than 80% of workers (84%) surveyed report receiving less tips overall since the start of the pandemic. Among these workers report-

TABLE 4

Customer Hostility and Impact on Tipping in Illinois

69% Supervisor has said they will support workers to tell a guest or coworker to put on a mask when you are within six feet of employees.	58% Experienced or witnessed hostile behavior on a weekly basis from customers in response to staff enforcing COVID-19 safety protocols.
84% Report that tips have decreased since COVID-19.	61% Felt reluctant to enforce COVID-19 safety protocols upon customers out of concern that customer would tip less.
69% Report that tips have decreased since COVID-19 by at least 50% or more.	64% On a weekly basis has received a decreased tip from a customer in response to enforcing COVID-19 safety protocols.
78% Experienced or witnessed hostile behavior from customers in response to staff enforcing COVID-19 safety protocols.	



ing a decline in tips, 69% describe their tips decreasing by over 50%. As a consequence of this reality, if workers hope to receive the diminished tips upon which their livelihood depends, they are too often forced to tolerate customer behavior that threatens their health or even threatens their immediate physical safety. To provide for themselves and their families, workers are routinely forced to forgo their physical wellbeing in favor of even a modicum of economic security because the subminimum wage they earn alone cannot sustain them. Workers who receive a full minimum wage with tips on top would be better positioned to enforce the public health guidelines with customers that keep everyone in Illinois safe.

Increased hostility from customers and a general reduction in tips during the pandemic has compounded pre-existing race and gender bias in the restaurant industry to create a significantly worse experience for workers of color, women of color in particular. A \$4.79 per hour national wage gap exists between Black women and white men in tipped restaurant positions.¹¹ This gap is due both to workers of color being segregated into lower-tipping casual restaurants so denied access to employment in higher-tipping fine dining restaurants, and to the fact that customers tip white servers at higher rates than their equally qualified Black coworkers.¹² For these women workers of color especially and for all restaurant service workers generally, a full minimum wage would decrease their dependence on tips and vulnerability to customer harassment, and increase their ability to enforce critical public health measures necessary to stop the spread of the pandemic.

III. SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF ILLINOIS TIPPED WORKERS IN THE TIME OF COVID

The subminimum wage for tipped workers requires restaurant service workers — a majority of whom are women and disproportionately women of color — to tolerate inappropriate and degrading customer behavior in order to obtain tips that comprise the majority of their income. Prior to the pandemic, food service workers nationwide reported experiencing the highest rates of sexual harassment of any industry.¹³ Significantly, this experience of sexual harassment varied widely based on whether workers worked in one of the seven states that require One Fair Wage — a full minimum wage with tips on top — or in a state with a subminimum wage for tipped workers such as Illinois. In a 2014 report, tipped workers in the seven One Fair Wage states reported one half the rate of sexual harassment working in restaurants compared with tipped workers in states that require employers

to pay the federal subminimum wage for tipped workers of just \$2.13 an hour or a slightly higher state minimum wage for tipped workers. (Consider that: \$2.13 an hour.) Because workers in subminimum wage states, like Illinois, are reliant on customer tips to survive, they have far less power to reject customer harassment, including sexual harassment, which is often racist; workers in One Fair Wage states can depend on a regular wage from their employer and are thus more empowered to reject such harassment.¹⁴



As described in the previous section, the pandemic has exacerbated this power dynamic for workers. Workers report that their tips have declined precipitously, making them more dependent on the meager customer tips that do remain and therefore even more vulnerable to have to tolerate harassment that is now compounded with a threat to their physical safety, even life. Several participants in our fall 2020 survey explained how dependence on tips made them vulnerable to increased sexual harassment during the pandemic. One worker explained that customer “asked me to take my mask off so they could see my face and decide how much to tip me.” Being sexually objectified to make a living wage is hard enough; having to risk health or life on top of that adds a whole additional dimension of threat.

Participants in our fall 2020 survey were asked a number of questions about the comparative levels and types of behaviors that amount to sexual harassment that they have experienced at work since the pandemic, and restrictions responsive to it, began in earnest in March 2020. Overall, 41% of the participants indicated that they had seen a noticeable change in the level of unwanted sexual comments they received from customers since this date, and over one quarter (26%) report that they have experienced or witnessed a significant change in the frequency of such sexual harassment.¹⁵ As described below, Illinois workers shared new unwanted sexual comments and forms of sexual harassment that they had received during the pandemic.

Workers who responded to the survey frequently reported that received or witnessed unwanted sexual comments specifically related to COVID-19 protocols, such as masks or physical distancing.

Mask comments were particularly common. For example:

- *“Customers [ask] what we look like without our mask on”*
- *“Men have said “I can’t tell if you’re smiling” or “I can’t tell if you’re pretty” because of the masks.”*
- *“Pull that mask down so I can see if I want to take you home later.” — That’s a pretty common one.”*

Male customers would frequently demand that their server take off her mask, as if the woman server stripping came with the meal:

- *“Take off your mask I want to see your face.”*
- *“...Another man creepily said “Come on sweetie lemme see that pretty face under there, take it off for me will you? Just a quick flash” I felt like he was asking me to take my shirt off or something.”*
- *“Take that mask off let me see your beautiful face”*

When servers refused, patrons often became hostile and intensified their aggression and pressure:

- *Men ask me to take my mask off all the time. They try to touch me inappropriately, and often tell me that “distance doesn’t matter.”*
- *A man cut a whole in the mouth and asked a coworker if she sat on his face would he get Covid*

Table Patrons reportedly often become particularly hostile when told that they themselves must wear a mask, often explicitly connecting a request that they protect themselves and the worker to a prostitution-like situation. Others aggressively sexualize the mask or use it as a platform for more unwanted sexual attention. It is as if they thought they bought the woman with the meal. .

- *“Male Customer took mask out from inside his pants next to genitals and waved in the face of female customer telling her to put it on him.”*
- *“Customers telling other female bartenders they have another head they need help putting the mask on...when told about social distancing, customers reply in a manner along the lines of “my pocket rocket can still reach you” ...bartenders that wear face shields constantly get told “those are made for easy clean up” with the context being if a man were to ejaculate on it.”*

While mask comments were the most common, sexualized remarks about social distancing were common as well, making overt the sexualized undertone that women restaurant workers often have reported feeling in relation to customers:

- *“Men ask me to take my mask off all the time. They try to touch me inappropriately, and often tell me that “distance doesn’t matter”*
- *“Multiple times male customers [have] stated how they can’t stand 6 feet away but has six feet of penis for me if I take off my mask*
- *[Comments about] having to “cover up so much,” or “oh social distancing so I can’t touch you anymore huh”*

These experiences are not uncommon and are daily occurrences for workers in the food service industry. When asked about sexual harassment from customers, one worker told us plainly, *“It just happened.”*

Table 5 provides the comments workers shared regarding how sexual harassment was exacerbated by COVID-19 safety protocols such as masks and social distancing.

The comments indicate a dangerous escalation in the power dynamic between customers and women tipped workers during the pandemic. Before, these workers’ dependence on customers for their income resulted in sexual harassment, sometimes including sexual assault. Now, in addition to and linked with that, these workers’ reliance on customer tips has resulted in customers demanding that women risk their lives by removing their masks or coming within six feet of a maskless man.

TABLE 5

Unwanted Sexualized Comments Received by Employees from Customers

Comments have been provided verbatim as submitted without correcting grammar or spelling.

They were upset because I asked them to put on a mask before I take they ordered

Guest commented on my butt and how black women have big butts.

work with mostly males, but seeing the “sweetheart” thing with the female employees.

Men ask me to take my mask off all the time. They try to touch me inappropriately, and often tell me that “distance doesn’t matter”

Male Customer took mask out from inside his pants next to genitals and waved in the face of female customer telling her to put it on him.

The owner has made derogatory comments to myself and co-workers.

I have seen people make unwanted sexual comments towards passing customers about their mask and helping them take them off

I wish i could see your pretty lips if they match ur eyes

It just happened

I have seen sexual comments being said to passing customers that were not wanted

Multiple times male customers has stated how they can’t stand 6 feet away but has six feet of penis for me if I take off my mask

Customers asking what we look like without our mask on

Just making dirty inappropriate jokes

they either flirt or talk inappropriately towards me and then stiff because of my lack of response to their inappropriateness.

Ask if my body matches the face under my mask. If my smile is as bright as my eyes

Prettier without a mask on/take your mask off around me

Inappropriate touching

TABLE 5

He asked me to take my mask off so they could see my face and decide how much to tip me. I kicked them out.

I would rather not. Thank you

Someone suggested that I should take my mask off bc I looked cute but they couldn't tell for sure because of the mask.

Comments about taking the mask off to see me or coworkers smile, being prettier without the masks, etc.

They don't like me because I make them wear mask

"Take that mask off let me see your beautiful face"

Just men making sexual comments about us wearing mask

People begging me to take my mask off so they can see my face.

Customers telling other female bartenders they have another head they need help putting the mask on... when told about social distancing, customers reply in a manner along the lines of "my pocket rocket can still reach you" ...bartenders that wear face shields constantly get told "those are made for easy clean up" with the context being if a man were to ejaculate on it. Just an onslaught of disgusting comments over it all.

I have on multiple occasions gotten comments about masks covering my "pretty face" and asking me to "flash them" a smile or take off my mask.

Two customers at a table of mine, told me to take my mask off so they could take a picture with me because of "how beautiful I am" and that I shouldn't have to wear a mask because of how beautiful my smile is. He also kept touching my arm multiple times and took a picture of my tattoo on my arm.

I hear customer demanding to see your face.

A customer asked me to remove my mask so they could see my facial features

Unnecessary sexist comments

People will ask if I'll take off my mask so they can see my lips and mouth, they'll ask if the rest of my face matches my beautiful eyes, they'll tell me that they're glad the mask only covers up a small part of me, etc

asks to see "pretty" face — I say no — he doesn't tip

'If you didn't wear a mask I'd see your pretty smile'

'You'd be prettier without that mask hiding your beautiful face'

Majority are sexually suggestive comments regarding oral or downplaying because majority are female workers.

please take the face mask off I want to see your lips

a man cut a whole in the mouth and asked a coworker if she sat on his face would he get covid

Lewd comments are often made about removing the mask so they can see my mouth for various reasons

As a female server/bartender/ manager the way men act towards me/ and their sexual comments is still the same pre covid. Asking if I'd hook up with them etc...

A guy was mad about the mask I asked him to wear and was provided by me and he asked would I come back to his house and give him a tutorial on how to really used the mask and nodded his head toward his private area

Like if i am walking or standing i can hear comments containing to I should have stayed in home and customers feeling uncomfortable after entering the restaurant!!!

Now, I will hear things about my dress or outfit or how nice my mask is or how it matches my dress or how hard I'm working. I definitely hear from these men a lot more now that I'm working so hard. If anything, it's gotten worse.

People requesting me to take my mask off, only to become more persistent when I refuse. Most of them become offended.

TABLE 5

Sometimes The customer would not like to comply with the circumstances of what's going on

They complain about masks

Was asked if I could pull my mask down to see if my smile was as pretty as my eyes.

Some customers and employees don't believe in COVID-19 and they just don't care about other people. They sexualized wearing a mask is for and they also use political terms for wearing a mask.

"The supervisor went to tell a guest that he need it to wear a facemask or he wouldn't get any service and he called her a "puta"

Men have said "I can't tell if you're smiling" or "I can't tell if you're pretty" because of the masks.

Making very dirty jokes and meaning things which I do not find appropriate

"Pull that mask down so I can see if I want to take you home later." — That's a pretty common one.

Men often ask me to take of my mask so they can "see my face"

Comments about "can't see smile and women look better when they smile"

Comments like "take off the mask so I can see your face"

Unwanted, and uncalled for derogatory and demeaning comments

Do not want to repeat

Always looking to touch you inappropriately being too close

A customer told me I looked good in a mask, and then said "I guess that could also be an insult, I guess this is the new keeping the bag over her head" and then just laughed by himself. Another man creepily said "Come on sweetie lemme see that pretty face under there, take it off for me will you? Just a quick flash" I felt like he was asking me to take my shirt off or something.

Having to "cover up so much" or "oh social distancing so I can't touch you anymore huh"

Mostly asking to see my pretty smile and other various comments. Asking to go home with them etc

i receive significantly more hostility for enforcing policies than male coworkers. it's noticeable and remarkable.

I've heard it all. I can do so much from six feet away. If I keep my mask on how so you know I'm not your husband...

Customers approaching you asking if you are single and asking for a phone number... or asking what time is my shift over

Just comments about put holes in masks etc

Accusation of rudeness or being less attractive and friendly due to the mask as well as enforcing the mask protocol.

Take off your mask so I can see your face/smile

Customer told me that "I had a fat ass."

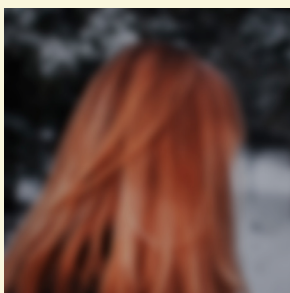
Making passes/flirting

I witnessed someone become "handsy" while purposely walking into another person's space



WORKER PROFILE

Madelyn Carey



“As a female working in America, it should be on all job applications: how do you handle sexual harassment?,” says Madelyn Carey, a 28-year-old full-time student who has long worked in the service industry. Originally from Florida and now living in Chicago, Carey returned to her restaurant job after being furloughed, terminated,

and rehired in May. Madelyn worked a short two weeks in May, however, before her employer placed her on an unpaid leave of absence.

Due to COVID Madelyn’s restaurant only opened for takeout and delivery, forcing Madelyn to provide both for customers and delivery drivers with little tips in return. Before COVID she worked a tipped position where regular customer interaction provided higher wages through tips, but after the change she delivered food directly to vehicles or waiting guests. She described the time she worked as stressful, hostile, and frustrating.

Madelyn would constantly have to ask drivers and guests to put their mask on, and many shouted at her in response, or pleaded with her that it was only a few seconds. “I have never experienced that level of hostility – I mean they would throw stuff at me.” Many delivery drivers would accost her when she enforced the mask policy. Five minutes later, she would have to deal with the same driver again for another order, repeating the process of pleading with them to comply with their safety measures amidst a backdrop of declining wages. “I would be so exhausted.”

Many guests would complain that she asked them to wear their masks. They would point to delivery drivers or other guests who refused and ask her why they were allowed to go maskless. Madelyn tried in vain to explain that some people endlessly fought back against the policy, and it wasn’t worth her

energy to continue to pester them. “It wasn’t worth the risk,” she says of enforcing mask-wearing with angry male customers.

On top of this, Madelyn was bringing in little to no tips during this time. Some guests, particularly regulars, who stopped by for takeout often tried to offer extra financial help to the staff by leaving large tips. However, tips were never distributed to the staff, instead management collected them and did not inform the staff where the money was going. “My restaurant is in a nice part of town... People that live there are usually wealthy and patrons are able to spend 7-8 bucks on a cup of coffee. There were some people who would drop 20’s. But I never saw any cash tips.”

Increasing hostility, past experiences with sexual harassment, lack of consistent tips, and increased safety risks has sadly forced Madelyn to swear off working in the service industry for good. She described her entire 8 years experience working in customer service facing jobs as similar to prostitution: “The whole industry is just low grade prostitution – you are selling an emotional connection to these people, they don’t care about the food or the service, they want to think that you like them.” She firmly believes that a subminimum wage system based on tips feeds into a workplace culture that thrives on harassment, whether its the aggressive entitlement she dealt with during the onset of the pandemic, or the constant sexual harassment she has experienced and witnessed throughout her time as a server. The worsening conditions for service workers since March 2020 has finally pushed her over the edge. Given the sharp spike in harassment, daily potential exposure to COVID and unstable wages based on the subminimum wage, Madelyn has finally decided to leave an industry that has become too dangerous for her health and well-being.

WORKER PROFILE

Kristina Magro



Kristina Magro has worked as a bartender for over thirteen years, spending the last eleven in Chicago, ten in bar management. “I love Chicago,” she says of her hometown. But unfortunately the pandemic hit Chicago as it did much of the US, leading to closures in the hospitality industry, and unprecedented layoffs, including many who work with Kristina. “We got back to work in July,” she says. “In Chicago, there is no indoor dining allowed... It’s getting cold out, so I’ve had to lay off my staff [that she manages], and they are coming to pick up their last paycheck.” She says they will reopen when they can return to outdoor dining, or when indoor dining is safe.

Reflecting on the few months in which her formerly busy tavern in the West Loop was open, she remembers the first day back on the job. A group of six young men wanted to drink bourbon while dining outdoors, but complained that their drinks were served in plastic cups, which is required by the city. She says these complaints marked the beginning of difficult interactions that only got worse from there. “When it came time to drop off the check, one gentleman was like, ‘Um, excuse me miss, I’m going to need you to take your mask off so we can see your face so we know how much to tip you.’” This kind of thing was not unusual. Kristina says every time she works the floor she faced sexual harassment. Because her staff is mostly male, she was sometimes the only female staff member on shift. But she says the rate at which women sexually harass her male staff has also greatly increased. “People are just being very aggressive in their advances... Never in my life have I seen my staff disrespected over and over again.”

An even more intense moment occurred recently. A man who was dining outdoors wanted to use the restroom. When he entered the restaurant without a mask, Kristina asked him to comply with the policy. “I’m the least worried I’ve ever been about what the consumer is going to take away from the experience — the most important thing is to know that staff feel

comfortable coming to work.” Although disgruntled, the man complied and went to the restroom. After returning, he closed his check and handed his bill to Kristina’s hostess, who is Jewish. “He wrote that we are a bunch of communists and Nazis and drew swastikas all over the check.” She banned him from the establishment but didn’t feel that was enough. She chose to notify his employer of his abusive behavior in hopes of stopping a similar incident from happening elsewhere.

“I think the pandemic has really brought to the forefront the dehumanization of the service industry. Eighty-five percent of the people in the service industry are uninsured, so these people are risking their lives so these people can unnecessarily dine and feel some sort of normalcy.” Kristina says they have always faced these issues in their industry, especially while working in such a wealthy area of the city, dealing with privileged clientele. But she believes the pandemic has exacerbated the already present problems for tipped restaurant workers, including a sense of entitlement. “There is just a lack of tact that was there before — people have been so pent up inside their house that they think they deserve the right to do and act how they please.”

To combat this, Kristina has implemented a surcharge at her restaurant, which is used to pay staff. “I don’t feel like my staff’s income should be contingent on these people’s generosity.” They have also brought on door staff to specifically deal with angry customers who do not want to comply with COVID safety protocols. She checks in with her team weekly to see how staff are feeling about their safety and morale. The recent incident greatly impacted her team: “My whole staff was shaken up by that. Every single one reached out to me and said, how are we going to handle this because this guy can’t get away with this.”

She feels that relying on tipped wages make many restaurant workers hesitant to confront and stop bad behavior, and that tipping gives guests an unearned sense of power over servers, bartenders, and front-of-house staff. “If everyone was just paid a collective rate that this type of behavior would not be allowed.” She hopes this increase in harassment has a silver lining, and leads to meaningful policy changes that bring a fair living wage to tipped workers.

IV. CONCLUSION



Service sector workers in Illinois are facing a clear crisis, unable to protect themselves or enforce the safety protocols needed to protect the public. This report shows that this vulnerability and inability to protect themselves and others is due to their dependence on tips as a majority of their wage. This challenge can be easily overcome. Seven states — CA, OR, WA, NV, MT, MN, and AK — all require restaurants to pay a full minimum wage with tips on top; it is time Illinois join them.

There is increasing momentum for the country to follow these states' lead. Over a dozen other states have introduced legislation to eliminate the subminimum wage for tipped workers, and several states — NY, DC, MI, ME, and MA — have held hearings on the subject or even advanced One Fair Wage legislation. In July 2019, the U.S.

House of Representatives passed a bill calling for One Fair Wage (HR582), and in fall 2020 then-Presidential candidate Joe Biden named One Fair Wage in three different parts of his campaign platform.¹⁶

Enacting One Fair Wage in Illinois and nationwide has become a COVID-19 crisis concern, both for service workers and for the public health. If we do not want Illinois or any other state to become a COVID hotspot once again, we must ensure that these workers are paid a full minimum wage and can thus enforce safety protocols and reject dangerous and demeaning sexual harassment from customers. Since harassment and illness will persist beyond the pandemic, states like Illinois must enact One Fair Wage as permanent law now.

To help advance this policy, the consuming public can take several steps.

1. Support restaurants that are already moving to pay their workers a full minimum wage with tips on top. These restaurants can be found at www.highroadrestaurants.com
2. Encourage any restaurant you dine at or order from to transition to One Fair Wage, by asking to speak with the manager or owner, telling them that you would feel more safe as a customer if the workers were all paid the full minimum wage with tips on top, and asking them if you can connect them with RAISE High Road Restaurants, at www.highroadresaturants.com
3. Call on your state and federal legislators to enact One Fair Wage legislation now, by going to www.fightdontstarve.com

Together, we can empower workers to enforce critical COVID-19 safety protocols, reject dangerous, life-threatening sexual harassment, feed their families, and survive the crisis by ensuring that they are paid a full, livable minimum wage in Illinois.

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Take off your mask
so I know how
much to tip you.

**Illinois Service Workers’
Experience of Health & Harassment
During COVID-19**

ONE FAIR WAGE

THE UC BERKELEY FOOD LABOR RESEARCH CENTER

PROFESSOR CATHARINE A. MACKINNON

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