HAS YOUR STATE REP AND STATE SENATOR HEARD FROM YOU?

If you have not contacted your state rep and senator to let them know how you will be impacted, we urge you to do so by clicking here.

MINIMUM WAGE: Lower and Slower

In order for business to adjust and absorb an increase, any increase in the starting wage needs to be gradual and spread out over many years.

- Massachusetts has the highest state minimum wage or starting wage in the country, the vast majority of starting wage workers are just beginning in the work force.
- The proposed ballot question would raise that number 36% in only four years. This is way too high and far too fast, as a multi-year, multi-dollar increase is unsustainable and borderline reckless.
- Wage compression: Those jobs that paid $11 only two years ago are now at $14 and $15 per hour; those jobs who were at $15 per hour, again are now at $18-$20 per hour. That is a significant increase for any employer, but especially one that is as labor intensive as the restaurant industry.
- Wage laws have historically been determined by the legislature and that should continue.

TIP WAGE: Protect the Highest Earners in the Restaurant

The tip wage works. It has allowed the highest percentage of employees in a restaurant to earn the highest average wage. It has let employers operate under a business model that has encouraged growth and created jobs and has provided the Commonwealth with increased revenue.

- The tip wage allows the highest percentage of employees in a restaurant to earn the highest average wage, with many tipped servers earning in excess of $25 or $30 per hour.
- Massachusetts tipped employee wages have increased 84% in the last 15 years and currently has among the highest tipped wage earners in the country (hourly tip wage + declared tips), topping even California which has no tip wage.
- Tipped employees benefit from a natural increase in wages through menu inflation. As food and operator costs increase, the menu cost increases and as a result the amount the customer leaves as a tip increases as well.
- Servers are not the ones asking for the increase, the change is driven by activists not in the restaurant industry, yet they will be the workers most negatively impacted with a reduction in pay and loss of hours.
- By raising the tipped wage, operators will be unable to offer potential increases to any non-tipped staff. One dollar more for the highest earner is one dollar less for other hourly employees. This will cripple the Massachusetts restaurant industry.

CREATE A TEEN OR TRAINING WAGE:
Restaurant Industry is the Training Ground for the Massachusetts Workforce

- Nearly half of all workers have worked in the restaurant industry and more than ¼ of all workers report their first job was in our industry. We are the first jobs for teenagers.
- Many studies show that the states with the highest teen unemployment rates are states with the highest minimum wages.

How labor intensive is the restaurant industry? Click here.

PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM: Complicated and Costly

- If passed this legislation would mandate all employers and employees buy short-term disability insurance. As proposed, the legislation would create a $1 billion tax, with 50% paid by employees and 50% paid by employers.
- Six states have some form of paid family leave, however in those instances the program is employee funded.
- Any legislation needs to provide flexibility and relief to employers of all sizes and industries.
Dear Members,

I will admit, usually April officially means that spring has sprung. The flowers start to bloom, it is Opening Day for our beloved Red Sox, and as usual, hope “springs” eternal! But this year, that “Spring-thing” never really happened all in April, did it? Cold temperatures, occasional snow, no buds, a lot of gray, and cool mist and rain led to a pall over our region.

Well I am here to say that May has arrived, and according to the 10 day forecast, so has spring, and maybe even summer! Our patios, windows, and garage doors are open, alive and abuzz. The Red Sox are off to the most promising of starts, the Bruins and Celtic’s appear ready for long playoff runs, and our spring/summer menus have appeared to entice our guests even a little more. The time is now to make certain our teams are at their best and winning over every guest, every shift.

Next to December, May is our industry’s most important month. We of course have Mother’s Day, our Super Bowl in the restaurant industry. Mom gets pampered and everybody is along for the ride. We cement our relationships with our best guests, and we get to impress many new ones, who will return over and over when we do our job. Many restaurants now promote Mom’s Weekend, so as to spread out the opportunity to celebrate Mom over multiple meal periods and maximize the sales opportunity.

And speaking of the Super Bowl, we all know that one game is an incredible economic driver in whatever city is lucky enough to be chosen from the fight to host it each year. But you know what, in Massachusetts, we get a month long Super Bowl every May. That is because nowhere in the country is the concentration of colleges and universities anywhere near as dense as it is in our great state. So that means we get a great flow and spread of graduation celebrations all week long, and then usually into the start of June with the high schools.

So while it may have been slow to arrive, we all need to be ready to rock, as May is the month to make it all happen. Here is to a great run with our sports teams, and more importantly, our restaurant teams in May, because #TogetherWeWin!

Pat Lee

MRA Chairman
plee@themassrest.org
SMALL BUSINESS DAY ON BEACON HILL

On April 10, the MRA partnered with other Massachusetts associations chambers to host a Small Business Day on Beacon Hill. Members of the MRA, National Federation of Independent Business, the Retailers, Food Store, Package Store associations, and Associated Industries of Massachusetts and many others joined together for an important day of advocacy. After a morning of speakers, business owners headed over to the State House to educate legislators about the severe impacts that certain legislative and ballot proposals will have on their business. More than 200 business owners took time from their business to make the trip into Boston. First, attendees heard about all the different issues that operators are facing from our panel of experts. Next, legislators, many of whom serve on the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development took questions from a fired up group of attendees. The event concluded with a keynote address from Governor Charlie Baker. Coverage of the event from the Boston Globe can be found here.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE 2018

Last month, the MRA ventured down to Washington D.C. as part of the National Restaurant Association’s Public Affairs Conference. Members of the MRA joined together with more than 500 restaurant industry professionals to visit legislators on Capitol Hill. The most pressing issues are of course healthcare and immigration, removing the threat of ADA “drive-by” lawsuits and correcting the restaurant depreciation tax credit. Additionally, members spoke about H2B visas and workforce development.

The Conference was packed with speakers who offered their insight into Washington, D.C. and the impact of local races back home. A conversation with Reince Priebus, for White House Chief of Staff, highlighted the afternoon. Additionally, attendees heard from Congressman Rodney Davis (R-Illinois), he himself a former restaurateur; and Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy (D-Florida), who has been named one of the top representatives for working across the aisle.

The MRA team met with many of the Massachusetts delegation. Meetings with the offices of Congressman Keating, Congressman Moulton, Congressman McGovern and Congressman Neal, provided a face to face opportunity to advocate for the issues that impact our restaurants.

Regarding Healthcare, we advocated for fixing the employer mandate which includes:

- Raising the definition of a full time employee to 40 hours
- Streamline the employer reporting requirements
- Clarifying the definition of seasonal workers

Immigration:

- As an industry, we continue to advocate, as we have in prior administrations, for a well-defined immigration policy that addresses existing employees that are already here on payrolls, while also offering a clear and fair process to those that want to follow a path to this country.
- Any immigration policy should also include a mandated and improved E-verify program, especially changes to the program that make it easier and more cost efficient for business owners.

Restaurant Depreciation

- 15-year restaurant depreciation was enacted into law in 2015 as part of that year’s “tax extenders” bill with strong bi-partisan support.
- Congress intended to include the provision in the tax reform legislation, however during drafting it didn’t include the new provision. Thus, depreciation defaulted back to a 39-year recovery period.

These issues are of vital importance to operators and it is important that our elected officials know how our industry will be impacted.

The NRA Public Affairs Conference provides an opportunity for state restaurant associations to come together and talk about the issues and concerns that restaurateurs are facing across the country. The MRA looks forward to returning to Washington D.C. next year.
MEMBERSHIP NEWS

While 2018 started with record cold temperatures, we are slowly seeing the signs of spring. Electricity generation resources were available to meet the system demands imposed by this extreme winter weather; however, it did require the use of generation resources that at many times of the year are idle. Under normal weather conditions, natural-gas fired electric generation units provide roughly half of the electricity consumed. During this winter’s cold snap, when natural gas prices hit all-time record prices, oil-fired electric generation was producing over one third of the electricity consumed – this is in stark contrast to a normal weather day in which oil-fired electric generation would be producing a share of electricity consumed in the single digits.

In the near term, ISO-New England – the entity that oversees the New England electric grid – has indicated that there are adequate resources on hand to meet expected generation needs. However, in its recent Fuel Security Analysis, ISO-New England identified that New England’s limited fuel infrastructure, primarily natural gas and oil, will eventually cause severe electric reliability issues if fuel security is not addressed. In addition and in recent news, Exelon Generation, the owner of the Mystic Generation Station in Everett, Massachusetts, announced its intention to retire generation units 7, 8 & 9 and a jet-fuel fired unit by June 2022. Generation units 8 & 9 are natural-gas fired units with a combined generation capacity of over 1,400 megawatts and unit 7 is a natural-gas or oil-fired generation unit with a capacity of slightly below 600 megawatts. This is a combined electric generating capacity of 2,000 megawatts, which represents approximately 7 to 10 percent of New England’s peak electric demand depending on the time of year.

As a result of this announced retirement, ISO-New England has indicated that it will seek permission from federal regulators (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) to keep two of the electric generation units, particularly units 8 & 9, online asserting that the retirement of those could put electric reliability at risk. Specifically, the closure of units 8 & 9 with a combined electric-generation capacity of 1,600 megawatts would pose an unacceptable fuel security risk in the region during the winter months. Accordingly, ISO-New England will be discussing this matter at its reliability committee meeting in late April and expects to file with federal regulators a proposal to prevent reliability risks from retirements in the future. This will likely increase electricity prices in the region, as funding for a mechanism to ensure reliability will be borne by market participants.

Recently, the Northern Pass Transmission power line project, which was to deliver Canadian hydro-power to New England, was rejected by the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee. Massachusetts Clean Energy is now working on a “replacement” project. The proposed replacement project is the $950 million New England Clean Energy Connect project and it has a 2021 projected in service date. As the information currently available is preliminary, Sprague will provide an update as soon as more information is released.

In the short term, the energy situation in New England is in relatively good shape; however, with the pending Mystic Station changes, the fuel reliability issues, and the proposed New England Clean Energy Connect project, the longer term is a bit less clear. Many factors can affect energy markets including weather-related events and operational factors affecting energy generation and delivery. These events can arise quickly and result in significant market changes that can impact your energy costs. Sprague can help you understand and manage your business in a changing energy marketplace.

Sprague Operating Resources LLC

About Sprague Operating Resources LLC:
Founded in 1870, Sprague is one of the largest independent suppliers of energy products and services in the Northeast with a network of 20 owned/controlled petroleum and materials handling terminals and an extensive network of third-party terminals. Sprague sells more than 56 billion cubic feet of natural gas annually to over 20,000 accounts located behind 45 utilities in 12 states and Washington D.C. In addition, Sprague can lock-in electricity rates for commercial electricity customers.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT EVENT AT CAPO - MONDAY, MAY 7TH

The MRA is partnering with Toast to bring the Food for Thought Event Series to Boston. This industry event, hosted at Capo on May 7th, will bring together members of the local restaurant community to connect and inspire each other. Learn more Here.

Food for Thought is a FREE, half day event for restaurant owners, operators and managers. Join us to discuss new industry trends, connect with local restaurant operators in your area and get inspired by your peers. RESERVE YOUR SEAT HERE.

APRIL CARD BRANDING CHANGES HAVE ARRIVED, NO SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Every April and October, the four major card brands (Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express) make updates to their interchange fees. This April, the card brands are also no longer requiring signatures for EMV card transactions and other EMV-related equipment. Heartland’s latest blog post covers this topic and what it means for small business owners. Check it out here.

THERE’S STILL TIME TO BECOME AN MRA BOARD MEMBER

If you would like to be involved with the MRA community and contribute to the restaurant industry, consider applying to the MRA Board. The deadline is May 11, 2018.

• Learn what affects your business and the entire food industry in Massachusetts.
• Meet and interact with others who share your values and passions.
• Be part of the MRA Board of Directors to help work on protecting, improving and enhancing the restaurant industry.

Apply now! Click here for the application.

MRA ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER TUESDAY, JUNE 19TH

Tuesday, June 19TH
4:30-7:30pm
The Colonnade Hotel

Registration is now open. Click here for more event details and to reserve your spot.

END OF SUMMER BUMMER GOLF TOURNAMENT

Tuesday, August 21ST
Pinehills Golf Club
Plymouth, MA

Mark your calendars! More details to come.
MEMBERSHIP EVENTS

THE SPIRIT OF ‘76 GRAND TASTING AND BUYING EVENT

Massachusetts’ Premier Tasting & Buying Event!

CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT OF ’76!

When: May 9th, 2018
from 3:00 - 7:00pm

Where: Lombardo’s, (Off 95) Randolph, MA

FREE Admission, Great Food, Hundreds of Tastings, One Day Specials, New Products and Surprises!

Mass Package Stores Association Inc.
Call 1-508-366-1100 for more information.

Click here for more details on the Mass Pack Event.

DON’T FORGET TO REGISTER - TICKETS ARE SELLING QUICKLY

Join us for a night of food, drink, and merriment to benefit

MAY 14, 2018
6:30-9:30PM
CAPE COD BEER
1336 PHINNEYS LANE
HYANNIS, MA

$35 - Non-members
$30 - Members
(use code MRACCC)

REGISTER HERE

Included are tastings from Cape Cod’s top chefs and craft brew from Cape Cod Beer. Musical Performance by Josh Briggs.

RESERVE YOUR SEAT FOR EMERGING TRENDS IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Wednesday, May 23rd
Gray, Gray & Gray, LLP
150 Royall Street,
Canton, MA

Registration: 2:30pm
Seminar: 3:00pm
Cocktail Reception: 5:20pm
Cost: $42.50 per person

SESSIONS INCLUDE:

• Restaurant Trends: What’s New in Restaurant Management
• Keynote: Boosting Profitability Through Food Delivery Panel Discussion
• Tax Reform and Beacon Hill Update

All proceeds benefit the Massachusetts Restaurant Association Educational Foundation Scholarship Fund.

Get Your Tickets HERE.
**WE ARE THE MRA**

**MEMBER PROFILE**

**RESTAURANT:** Ruth’s Chris Steak House  
**LOCATION:** Boston  
**YEAR FOUNDED:** Founded in New Orleans in 1965, Boston location opened in 2005  
**MRA MEMBER SINCE:** 2005  
**WEBSITE:** [www.ruthschris.com/restaurant-locations/boston](http://www.ruthschris.com/restaurant-locations/boston)  
**WHAT IS YOUR RESTAURANT SPECIALTY?** Steaks  
**WHY IS THE MRA IMPORTANT TO YOU & YOUR BUSINESS?**

The MRA has been a great partner in ensuring that we know all of the changing laws and upcoming legislation that affect the business. I love attending the round tables and hearing how different restaurants are coping with the difficult demands of our industry. I often walk away with great new ideas.

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**Fun Facts about Ruth’s Chris Steak House**

1. We are located in the Old City Hall, which was Boston’s City Hall until 1969.
2. We still have the Original Vault Door that opens into our Vault Dining room, which you can reserve for dinner for parties up to 14 people.
3. Our crazy name is because our Matriarch/founder Ruth Fertel bought Chris Steak House. There was a clause in the purchase agreement that she couldn’t open up another Chris Steak House so she named her next restaurant Ruth’s Chris Steak House.
4. We have a beautiful patio space in front of our restaurant. We can host your wedding ceremony in the Old City Hall Courtyard followed by cocktail reception and dinner on our Patio.
5. Where our bar is located used to be the Clerk’s Office of Old City Hall where you would get your Birth Certificates, Marriage licenses, etc.
6. All of our steaks are cooked in signature 1800 degree broilers to seal in the flavor, then served on 500 degree plates to ensure your last bite is as good as your first.
7. We recently added a 40 oz. Tomahawk Ribeye Steak to our menu.
8. All of our food is made from scratch at the restaurant.
9. Our recent renovation was done by Interior Designer Taniya Nayak, famous from Restaurant Impossible. She grew up locally and went to college with our COO.
10. Our team is our best asset. We strive to have employees that live by our moto of “Do What you Love, Love What you Do.”
The 2018 National ProStart Invitational was in Providence, Rhode Island April 27th – 29th. Getting to Nationals is a huge accomplishment in and of itself and both MA teams should be very proud to have made it this far.

The electric feeling of anticipation was hanging in the air as the top 5 teams in culinary and management were announced on Sunday evening. Fourth place management winners were about to be announced... “And the fourth place management team is... Carver Middle High School from Massachusetts!!” Finally, Massachusetts has made it onto the podium!

Daren Foster and Kevin Shott, both juniors, have worked tirelessly over these past few months to make it onto that podium and their hard work paid off! Congratulations to Darren, Kevin and their instructor Dan Portelance. Congratulations also goes out to our culinary team from Taunton High School. We are proud of students Brendan Rodrigues, Nicole Bliss, Andrew Carter, Derek Lewis, and Marina Nowacki as well as instructors Leigh Howlett and John Collins for their hard work and brilliant representation of Massachusetts in the culinary competition. Thank you to all who supported the team or participated in the competition, including Judge Nick Calais from The Colonnade Hotel, and Keynote Speaker and former ProStart winner Chris Coombs, from D-Bar, Deuxave and Boston Chops. A special thanks to Brenda Kelly from Mamma Mia’s and Greg Witmer from the Ninety Nine Restaurant & Pub for all their assistance in mentoring our winning management team, as well as Chef Nick Calais for mentoring our culinary team. We look forward to competing in Washington D.C. next year.
### 2018 SERVSAFE TRAINING SCHEDULE

#### SERVSAFE MANAGER
- **DATE**: May 14th & 21st
- **LOCATION**: MRA – Westborough
- **TIME**: 3-7pm

#### SERVSAFE ALCOHOL
- **DATE**: June 18th
- **LOCATION**: MRA – Westborough
- **TIME**: 4-8pm

#### SERVSAFE RECERTIFICATION
- **DATE**: June 12th
- **LOCATION**: MRA – Westborough
- **TIME**: 3-7pm

*To schedule classes call (508) 573-4180.*

**CLASS LOCATIONS:**
- **MRA**: 160 East Main St, Suite 2, Westborough
- **CAPE CODDER**: 1225 Iyannough Rd, Ste 1, Hyannis

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### 2018 MAKING THE FUTURE BRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS GALA

Registration is now open for The MRA Educational Foundation Scholarship Gala!

**Thursday, June 7, 2018**
**Danversport Yacht Club**
**Danvers, MA**

**REGISTER HERE!**

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### CURRENT CLASS SCHEDULE:

- **Thursday, June 21**
- **Thursday, August 16**
- **Thursday, October 18**
  
  *All classes are 10-11am.*

**CLASS LOCATION:**
Massachusetts Restaurant Association
160 East Main Street, Suite 2,
Westborough, MA 01581
WELCOME NEW MRA MEMBERS!

FOOD & BEVERAGE OPERATORS

Clubhouse Café
953 Williams Street
Longmeadow, MA 01106

Galliford’s Restaurant & Tavern
5 Southwick St
Mendon, MA 01756
(508) 928-0928

Tap in Bar & Grill
1059 South Branch Parkway
Springfield, MA 01118
(413) 787-6449

The Mooring Bar and Grill
117 Bridge Street
N. Weymouth, MA 02191
(781) 812-2284
Nicole Vermillion

Three Cod Tavern
141 Pleasant Street
Marblehead, MA 01945
(781) 639-3263
Chip Percy

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30 Bow Street
Somerville, MA 02143
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Matthew Boyes-Watson

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Quincy, MA 02169
(774) 219-4908
Ryan Kalathas

Hospitality Recruiting
Patrice & Associates - Western Mass
3014 Pine St., PO Box 117
Bondsville, MA 01009
(413) 310-0222
Anne Bernardin

Hospitality Recruiting
Patrice & Associates - Western Mass
3014 Pine St., PO Box 117
Bondsville, MA 01009
(413) 310-0222
Anne Bernardin

Brewery
The Wine Lab
18 High Street
North Andover, MA 01845
(978) 836-8761
Ryan O’Connor-Crowe

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Massachusetts Restaurant Association
160 East Main Street, Suite 2, Westborough, MA 01581
Phone: (508) 303-9905  www.themassrest.org

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