

Waitresses' Action Committee
112 Spruce St.
Toronto, Ontario
April 17, 1977

Dear Sisters and Friends,

Hi. The response to our brief, "The Minimum Wage and a 'Tip Differential'", has been fantastic! We have received endorsements from 31 groups to date and support from five others, including the Ontario Status of Women Council and the Equal Pay Coalition. And more waitresses have become involved. A full list of endorsers is included on the back of this letter. Support has come from diverse groups -- women's, community, legal clinics, employment centres, etc. Most are Toronto-based organizations, but alot of interest has come from northwestern Ontario and London, Ontario, where we have been invited to speak at a public meeting in May on waitressing and how to organize for more money. Women from the Wages for Housework Campaign have been critical in helping us work out our position and demands and in organizing this support.

A number of us just returned from an international conference on Wages for Housework in Chicago, where we presented the fight we are making here. We got whole-hearted support from all the delegates and were able to speak with and get information from waitresses from other countries.

Media coverage has been very good, bringing news and information to many people we couldn't otherwise reach with our limited funds and resources. Enclosed are two recent articles from Toronto newspapers. Other coverage has included:

1. Interview on Canada AM, national television, March 29
2. Lynne Gordon Show - CKEY Radio (Toronto) - about our organizing, aired twice on March 31
3. Two interviews on Thunder Bay CBC Radio, March 23, April 5
4. Interview for CHUM AM Radio news (Toronto), March 30
5. Interview for a show called 'Time Frame', CFTR Radio (Tor.) Apr. 9
6. Interview for CBC-TV Twenty-Four Hours (6 pm news show), with response to our position by Claude Bennett, Minister of Industry and Tourism, April 7
7. Interview on Betty Kennedy Show, CFRB Radio (Tor.), April 18

As you can see, interest has been considerable. Not only have we reached waitresses in many parts of the country, but we have begun to provide a voice for the anger many women are feeling as we see our options for getting money of our own dwindle (by drastic cuts in the number of unemployment insurance recipients less access to welfare; inflation, etc.). Many women who are not waitresses at the moment have supported our fight so they too will be protected if they have to work as waitresses at some point in their lives. And we have shown how we are among many women who refuse to let the government help industry profit any further at our expense. An attack on one group of us is clearly an attack on us all.

We have requested a meeting with the Minister of Labour, Bette Stephenson. We are planning to take a large delegation of waitresses, friends, and supporters with us to put our case as strongly as possible. Please call us or send the coupon on the back if you would like to be part of the delegation. We don't know yet when it will be. Letters of support can also be sent to the newspapers and the Minister of Labour, Queen's Park, Toronto.

A last work -- about money (of course!). So far our printing and mailing costs have come from a few personal pockets and from donations by the Wages for Housework Campaign and the Law Union of Ontario. Travel and phoning cost money as well, so any amount you could spare would be greatly appreciated and put to good use! Thanks.

Sincerely,

Ellen Agger
Ellen Agger

Waitresses' Action Committee
921-9091, 466-7457

Endorsements from the following organizations:
(all are Toronto-based unless otherwise indicated *)

Black Education Project - Erica Mercer
Christian Resource Centre
Hassle Free Clinic
Housewives' Initiative
Immigrant Women's Centre
Interval House
Law Union of Ontario
Metro Work Group
Mother-Led Union
Neighbourhood Legal Services
Nellie's Women's Hostel
Northwestern Ontario International Women's Decade
Co-ordinating Council *
Ontario Anti-Poverty Organization
Organized Working Women
Parkdale Jobs Office
Rape Crisis Centre
Staff at People and Law
Status of Women Committee - Local 79, CUPE
Students' Legal Aid Society
The Independent Association of Ontario Waiters
Times Change Women's Employment Service
Trigger-Centre for Unemployed Youth - Anne Ayres, Staff
Steve Oltuski, Staff
Barbara Weissleder, Staff
Wages Due Lesbians
Wages for Housework Committee
Women and the Law
Women Like Me
Women Present Women
Women's Caucus, Osgoode Law School
Women's Centre, Sarnia, Ontario *
Women's Counselling Referral and Education Centre

Support has also been received from:

Equal Pay Coalition
Ontario Committee on the Status of Women
Ontario Status of Women Council
Women's Development Centre
Working Women's Alliance, London, Ontario *

I am interested in being part of a delegation to present the demands of the Waitresses' Action Committee to the Ontario Minister of Labour.

----- Donation enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Organization _____

or individual _____