

RAMW Board Members in the news...

Our local restaurateurs' voices are heard as they testify before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on two vital issues which impact our restaurant industry:

Geoff Tracy (Chef Geoff's, Lia's) expresses his concern over the increasing wholesale food and commodity prices. "Congress should foster the development and transition to renewable fuels from non-food sources as quickly as possible."

<http://www.restaurant.org/pressroom/pressrelease.cfm?ID=1637>

Recently, Washington, D.C. restaurateur Geoff Tracy, a member of the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and the National Restaurant Association, testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business about the detrimental impact the continuing, steep climb in food prices is having on restaurants and how Congress can provide relief.

The National Restaurant Association urges Congress to examine the impact of federal mandates and subsidies in the context of national and global priorities, said Tracy, owner and proprietor of Chef Geoff's, Chef Geoff's Downtown and LIAS restaurants.

Congress should foster the development and transition to renewable fuels from non-food sources as quickly as possible.

The Food Before Fuel Campaign was created to urge public officials to revisit and restructure mandates, subsidies, and tariffs to reduce our dependence on food as an energy source and to accelerate the development of alternative fuels that do not pit out energy needs against the needs of the hungry and the environment. Visit www.foodbeforefuel.org for more information.

Oren Molovinsky (Mie N Yu) speaks in support of legislation on Credit Card Interchange Fees which would provide retailers greater flexibility in card acceptance. "Choice and variety are cornerstones of the restaurant business, but choice and variety are virtually non-existent in electronic retail payment options."

<http://www.restaurant.org/pressroom/pressrelease.cfm?ID=1640>

http://www.drinksmediawire.com/afficher_cdp.asp?id=3367&lng=2

Washington, D.C. restaurateur Oren Molovinsky, a member of the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and the National Restaurant Association, joined

U.S. Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) as he introduced a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives aimed at shedding more light on the interchange fees credit card companies charge and providing retailers greater flexibility in card acceptance. Molovinsky, area general manager of Mie N Yu restaurant, spoke in support of the legislation and shared his concerns over credit card rules and interchange fees.

We very much appreciate what Congressman Welch is trying to do in introducing this legislation today. It will be a real help to small businesses like mine, said Molovinsky, who sits on the board of directors of the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington. Choice and variety are cornerstones of the restaurant business, but choice and variety are virtually non-existent in electronic retail payment options. Visa and MasterCard control an overwhelming amount of the credit card market, to the point where I have virtually no choice whether or not to accept their cards or risk losing business. I have to accept Visa and MasterCard if I want to stay in business.

Rarely, if ever, do I or my fellow restaurant-owners ask the government to intervene in the way we run our business, but there seems to be no end in sight to Visa and MasterCards unfair and unreasonable practices, continued Molovinsky. If I agree to accept one type of Visa or MasterCard card, I have to accept all types of Visa cards and all types of MasterCard cards under their rules. I find myself in a take-it-or-leave-it situation: I have to take the cards and whatever rate they charge me because I cannot negotiate with them.

These credit card companies will not negotiate over interchange, said Molovinsky. I negotiate over every other aspect of my business, but not credit card fees. Overly complex interchange fee schedules make it virtually impossible for me as a small-business owner to sort through the fees I am charged on my balance statement each month to know whether they are appropriate.

The goal of Cong. Welchs bill is to provide transparency and flexibility for retailers that accept credit cards. Specifically, the bill would address the higher interchange rates associated with premium cards, the honor all cards rule, and the ability to set a minimum charge for a credit card transaction. The bill also seeks to shed light on the credit card acceptance agreements and would require the disclosure of interchange fees to the Fed and to the consumer.