

The Boston Globe

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To the judges of the Pulitzer Prizes:

In 2014, editorial boards and policy makers debated ways to reverse the worrisome rise of income inequality. The Boston Globe's Kathleen Kingsbury zeroed in on the single most effective step the country could take — raising the salaries of the nation's 13.5 million restaurant workers.

Kingsbury laid out a slate of proposals that, taken step by step, would raise millions of American families out of poverty at only a modest cost to diners. Yet Kingsbury's editorial series, "Service Not Included," was more than policy prescriptions: It was a work of investigative reporting, as she sketched out in shocking detail how workers at many classes of Massachusetts restaurants were being treated abysmally.

Restaurants lie at the heart of the 21st-century American economy, a cornerstone of economic development plans and employment strategies. At the low end, fast-food joints are a regular source of meals for millions of families. At the high end, chefs get celebrity treatment on reality TV and in the food press.

Yet the franchise system also allows well-known fast-food brands to keep employees from organizing. At restaurants with table service, existing laws and consumer habits enable, and even encourage, the payment of below-subsistence wages. The under-the-table nature of many restaurants camouflages significant wage-and-hours abuses — sometimes even the abuse of basic human rights.

In response, Kingsbury offered targeted, achievable solutions. In February, she called for letting fast-food workers organize across independently owned franchises; subsequently, the National Labor Relations Board adopted just such a standard in a case involving McDonald's. Kingsbury also urged Boston's mayor, Martin Walsh, to take a restaurant's labor practices into account in licensing decisions. He later signed an order doing just that.

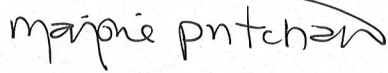
The second installment of the series, I should note, includes one factual correction. Sources whom Kingsbury consulted about a proposed reform believed the Massachusetts Legislature had never even considered it; we published a correction upon learning that, in fact, one chamber had passed a similar measure in a previous year.

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Regardless, the Globe believes that "Service Not Included" remains worthy of strong consideration for the Pulitzer's Editorial Writing award. Amid broad concern about growing inequality in America, Kingsbury zoomed in on the powerlessness of workers in one ubiquitous industry. Her series is a vital response to a source of injustice in Massachusetts and nationwide. I proudly nominate Kathleen Kingsbury for this honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "marjorie pritchard". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style. A long, thin horizontal line is drawn above the signature, starting from the right side and extending towards the left, ending under the 'd'.

Marjorie Pritchard
Deputy Managing Editor, Opinion