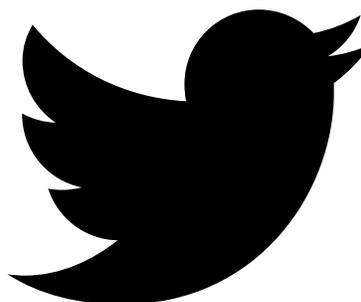


LABOR LAWSUITS

Lawsuit Alleges Several Chicago Bars Withheld Over \$30M in Tips

Four Corners denies the allegations and looks forward to its day in court

by [Ashok Selvam@Shokdiesel](#) Jul 23, 2018, 1:05pm CDT



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Federales is a Four Corners bar. Four Corners [Official Photo]

Four Corners, the owners of several Chicago bars — including **Benchmark**, **Brickhouse Tavern**, and **WestEnd** — **have been hit with a class-action lawsuit** by workers with an attorney alleging the company has withheld **more than \$30 million in tips** from servers and bartenders from 2011 to 2018. The lawsuit names 17 Four Corners' establishments and could affect as many as 800 employees.

The lawsuit details alleged practices where Four Corners would withhold tips as means to avoid paying taxes. While the lawsuit has been expanded to include other employees, the primary plaintiff was a bartender at Benchmark in Old Town. He alleged that he wasn't paid

the amount he was entitled. Bar employees log their tips nightly before leaving. That \$30 million figure isn't in the lawsuit and is from the plaintiff's attorney who's encouraging more employees to join his lawsuit.

A hearing is scheduled for November 16 in Cook County circuit court. Attorneys asked for a jury trial in the 107-page suit filed on Thursday.

The company called the claims “without merit and based on a misunderstanding” in a widely distributed statement. Four Corners, after 17 years, recently dropped the “tavern group” portion of its name as it prepares **for a national expansion**. They've explored new strategies in recent years including collaborating with Brendan Sodikoff's Hogsalt Hospitality, the owners of **Au Cheval**.

Matt Menna, a Four Corners co-founder and principal at Sterling Bay, was also named as a defendant in the lawsuit. Sterling Bay is one of the city's biggest developers and last week unveiled its \$1 billion proposal for Lincoln Yards. That's the project to develop the former Finkl Steel plant and the area along Elston Avenue around Lincoln Park and Bucktown. Sterling Bay's fingerprints are all over the city including in the West Loop and Fulton Market — a trendy area for restaurants in Chicago.

- **Chicago Servers, Bartenders Swindled Out of More Than \$30M in Tips by Restaurant Group: Lawsuit** [NBC Chicago]
- **Chicago Bars Allegedly Took Tips From Servers** [CBS Chicago]