



December 1, 2020

To Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senator Rob Portman, Senator Sherrod Brown and Members of Congress,

**Restaurant Industry Requests Congress Address
a New Federal Relief Bill and Passage of Targeted Proposals**

We are writing to you as Ohio's restaurant industry's trade association representing 23,000+ foodservice locations and 585,000 employees.

After being allowed to reopen patio and indoor dining in late May, Ohio's restaurant owners and their teams have safely operated foodservice locations for more than eight months. They've operated with limited capacity due to dine-in restrictions, social distancing requirements, curfews and stay-at-home advisories. Now, as winter has arrived, we are observing an escalation of temporary and permanent closures, including sad news about Ohio's Iron Chef, Michael Symon, shutting down the celebrated Lola's Bistro in Cleveland.

Many sectors within our industry are suffering sales losses of -20% to more than -70%, and this situation is getting worse due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, additional restrictions, and weak consumer confidence. Restaurant sales are deteriorating weekly in most categories, especially independent family, casual and fine dining, plus breweries and bars which rely on table service and hospitality.

This is devastating for both the foodservice industry and America's economy as "mom-and-pops" and independents make up about 43% of restaurant industry market share. Smaller restaurant chains make up another 20% of market share. As you can imagine, the pandemic has exacerbated challenges for independent and small operators that don't have deep pockets and access to capital.

For these reasons, we implore you to return to bipartisan negotiations to complete a new federal relief bill and a second round of the Paycheck Protection Program. The need is urgent for an industry that is the lifeblood of cities and neighborhoods all over the United States and accounts for 51% of the food dollar.

**We Request Congress Take Immediate Action – Targeting Proposals
that Already Have Extensive Bipartisan Support:**

- 1) Authorize an additional round of PPP funding with a 20% revenue loss threshold for any 3-month period in 2020, with similar caps as the first round and consideration for businesses that opened in 2020;
- 2) Ensure restaurants can deduct business expenses paid with PPP loans;
- 3) Provide a tax credit for investments that enhance the safety of customers and employees; and,
- 4) Expand the Employee Retention Tax Credit.

We appreciate the eight weeks of financial support Congress provided earlier this year. However, the pandemic and state-mandated government shutdowns have ravaged our industry for more than eight months. The restaurant industry, the second largest in the nation and Ohio, needs help right now more than ever — to survive and keep 15.6 million people employed.

Sincerely,

John Barker
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