FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 21, 2020

Ohio Restaurant Association Announces New Restaurant Industry Blueprint for Revival

Comprehensive plan needed for operators, 73% say they will not break even in 2020

COLUMBUS, Ohio - The Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) is joining with the National Restaurant Association to announce a new Restaurant Industry Blueprint for Revival, a comprehensive program designed to help the restaurant industry and its members survive the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Congress considers their next-round of recovery programs, the Blueprint for Restaurant Revival outlines specific and immediate action the federal government should take to stabilize the restaurant and foodservice industry, both in the short-term and long-term, and the ORA has implemented an aggressive advocacy plan to promote it.

“Our goal is to gain support from our government leaders to offset the ongoing, devastating financial pressure our industry faces,” said John Barker, president and CEO of the ORA. “From government-mandated dining room closures, capacity limitations, social distancing and consumer reticence to visit businesses like restaurants, bars, catering locations and food trucks to rising costs for personal protection equipment (PPE) and other COVID-related expenses, the industry needs assistance now more than ever.”

This plan is critical as 73% of owners/operators in Ohio do not expect to break even in 2020, according to the ORA’s most recent survey data from the business week of June 29 – July 5. This is up from 68% in the previous ORA survey and a result of a complete loss of sales for months for many operators and significantly reduced sales for others (56% of restaurants continue to struggle with sales down by 20% to 70% versus 2019).

“In Ohio, 80% of operators report that they are open and 5% plan to open soon, but 14% say they do not plan to reopen,” said Barker. “Operators are also facing payments for deferred rent, insurance and taxes, which is creating tremendous pressure on their P&Ls and balance sheets.”

The Restaurant Industry Blueprint for Revival outlines the following:

**Short-Term Relief to Restart the Restaurant Industry**

- **Build on the success of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the PPP Flexibility Act** by enacting a second round of application eligibility to initial eight-week loan recipients and make other changes to help extend and sustain this successful program. “This is the most important request from the ORA,” said Barker. “The first round of the PPP enabled foodservice operators to keep employees on
the payroll and remain open for business. Those funds are running out and without support, we could see more closures and rising layoffs in an industry that employs 585,000 people in Ohio.”

- **Make PPP loans tax deductible** so that small businesses can deduct eligible expenses paid with a forgiven PPP loan, and eliminate the substantial tax liability many face for taking these loans in the first place.

- **Establish a long-term loan program beyond PPP** so restaurants can rehire, retrain and retain valued employees by providing up to six-months of operating costs and additional support.

- **Expand the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC)** to help restaurants get support after a PPP loan has run out.

- **Improve Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs)** by replenishing funding for EIDLs and advance grants to support businesses with major revenue reductions due to COVID-19.

- **Provide customer and employee wellness tax credits** to help with significant capital investments for employee and guest safety.

- **Address business interruption insurance claims for small businesses** with a federal backstop to cover losses due to a pandemic and so that insurance remains available and affordable. The ORA has advocated for this earlier in the year.

- **Provide liability protection for American businesses** because COVID-19 is a global pandemic and is not caused or spread by any one type of business or employee. Congress should enact temporary and targeted protections to stem frivolous or fraudulent lawsuits, but allow claims based on willful misconduct by bad actors. The ORA is advocating for this in Ohio.

- **Create a Restaurant Recovery Fund** for structured relief to help restaurants get the liquidity they need, adapt, rehire and eventually reopen. This includes passage of the RESTAURANTS Act proposed by the Senate

**Ensure Stability of America’s Food Supply Chain from Farm to Table**

- **Prioritize testing + vaccine distribution for food supply chain employees** (after health care, first responders and vulnerable populations) to help the entire food and restaurant industry continue growing, selling and serving healthy food even in times of crisis.

- **Enact payroll tax relief for essential employees** to help keep frontline workers in vital sectors on the job and serving the public.

**Help Restaurants Support At-Risk Communities**

- **Provide support for restaurants feeding vulnerable populations** by providing incentives and payment when restaurants partner with government and nonprofits to prepare meals for seniors, children and other vulnerable populations.

- **Broaden access to restaurant meals for low-income Americans** by creating state-run programs that increase food access-points during times of crisis and by expanding the population of people eligible for restaurant meal service via the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

“With almost one million foodservice locations nationwide (23,000+ in Ohio) and an employee base of 15.6 million, the restaurant industry is the nation’s second-largest private sector employer,” said Barker. “Our record of advancement for people of color, for women, and for minority groups is unmatched by any other industry. The industry remains a critical part of the food supply chain — a hard-charging engine for the nation’s economy — and generates 51% of the U.S. food dollar. But this industry that provides the average owner with only 16 days of cash on hand has fought through months-long closures and capacity restrictions to stay open and serve communities.”
Barker said total restaurant industry losses are on track to top $240 billion by the end of 2020 — more than any other industry — and the impact on most independent restaurant owners, franchisees, chains and foodservice operators is unprecedented in modern times.

###

**About Ohio Restaurant Association:**

For 100 years, the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) has proudly served Ohio’s restaurant and foodservice industry, with their members always being their number one priority. Founded on thought leadership and focused on finding sound business solutions for their members, the ORA offers advocacy and education, events and programs. For more information, visit [ohiorestaurant.org](http://ohiorestaurant.org).

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**
Ohio Restaurant Association
Homa Moheimani
[hmoeheimani@ohiorestaurant.org](mailto:hmoeheimani@ohiorestaurant.org)
614.315.0572

---

**Inspire. PR GROUP**

**Susie Dunlea**
*Account Coordinator*
Inspire PR Group
[susie@inspireprgroup.com](mailto:susie@inspireprgroup.com)
c: 513.317.7024
a: 614.532.5279
6120 S. Sunbury Road | Westerville, OH 43081
BLUEPRINT for
RESTAURANT
REVIVAL

With almost one million foodservice locations nationwide and an employee base of 15.6 million, the restaurant industry is the nation’s second-largest private sector employer. Our record of advancement for people of color, for women, and for minority groups is unmatched by any other industry.

The industry remains a critical part of the food supply chain — a hard-charging engine for the nation’s economy. But an industry that provides the average owner with only 16 days of cash on hand has fought through months-long closures and capacity restrictions to stay open and serve communities. Restaurant industry losses are on track to top $240 billion by the end of 2020 — more than any other industry.

The National Restaurant Association offers this Blueprint for Restaurant Revival to guide Congress and the Administration as officials work to craft next-round recovery programs:

**SHORT-TERM RELIEF TO RESTART THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY**

Create a Restaurant Recovery Fund for structured relief to help restaurants get the liquidity they need, adapt, rehire and eventually reopen. This includes passage of the RESTAURANTS Act proposed by the Senate.

Build on the success of PPP by enacting a second round of application eligibility to initial eight-week loan recipients and make other changes to help extend and sustain this successful program.

Make PPP loans tax deductible so that small businesses can deduct eligible expenses paid with a forgiven PPP loan, and eliminate the substantial tax liability many face for taking these loans in the first place.

More information: RestaurantsAct.org
BLUEPRINT for RESTAURANT REVIVAL

Establish a long-term loan program beyond PPP so restaurants can rehire, retrain and retain valued employees by providing up to six-months of operating costs and additional support.

Expand the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) to help restaurants get support after a PPP loan has run out.

Improve Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) by replenishing funding for EIDLs and advance grants to support businesses with major revenue reductions due to COVID-19.

Provide customer and employee wellness tax credits to help with significant capital investments for employee and guest safety.

Address Business Interruption insurance claims for small businesses with a federal backstop to cover losses due to a pandemic and so that insurance remains available and affordable.

Provide Liability Protection for American Businesses because COVID-19 is a global pandemic and is not caused or spread by any one type of business or employee. Congress should enact temporary and targeted protections to stem frivolous or fraudulent lawsuits, but allow claims based on willful misconduct by bad actors.

ENSURE STABILITY OF AMERICA’S FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN FROM FARM TO TABLE

Prioritize testing + vaccine distribution for food supply chain employees (after health care, first responders and vulnerable populations) to help the entire food and restaurant industry continue growing, selling and serving healthy food even in times of crisis.

Enact payroll tax relief for essential employees to help keep frontline workers in vital sectors on the job and serving the public.

HELP RESTAURANTS SUPPORT AT-RISK COMMUNITIES

Provide support for restaurants feeding vulnerable populations by providing incentives and payment when restaurants partner with government and nonprofits to prepare meals for seniors, children and other vulnerable populations.

Broaden access to restaurant meals for low-income Americans by creating state-run programs that increase food access-points during times of crisis and by expanding the population of people eligible for restaurant meal service via the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

More information: RestaurantsAct.org