

August 6th, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building 322  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of mayors from across the country representing cities on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are submitting this letter in support of H.R.7197/S. 4012: Real Economic Support That Acknowledges Unique Restaurant Assistance Needed to Survive (RESTAURANTS) Act of 2020. This bill provides \$120 billion in grants through December 31st to non-chain food and drinking establishments who have experienced a significant drop in revenue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although many cities have allowed restaurants to operate through carry-out and delivery service since the onset of COVID-19, this sector continues to be heavily impacted by limited capacity directives and sharp declines in discretionary consumer spending prompted by the pandemic. Moreover, COVID-19 is still spreading and impacting the nation. According to the CDC, as of July 27, there were over 4 million cases nationwide and approximately 150 thousand deaths. This is nearly double the number of cases from just a month prior and constitutes 26% of cases and 23% of deaths globally. As such, many jurisdictions have reversed their reopening plans and placed further restrictions on local restaurants. Unfortunately, the trade-off for these protective public health measures has been a near decimation of the local restaurant industry. With the ongoing uncertainty around the pandemic, restaurants are in urgent need of economic support in order to avoid permanent closures.

The nation's restaurants are the cornerstone of every community and an economic engine that employs over 15 million foodservice workers according to the National Restaurant Association (NRA). The vast majority of the country's restaurant locations are owned and operated by independent proprietors who live in the communities where they serve their customers and employ more minority managers than any other industry. According to the Bureau of Labor

Statistics, food services and drinking places reported a 24.1% unemployment rate in June—more than double the nation’s aggregate unemployment rate of 11.1%. During the height of the shutdowns between March and June, the industry shed two-thirds of all jobs and lost more than \$145 billion in revenue based on NRA estimates. Furthermore, the Independent Restaurant Coalition projects as many as 85% of independent restaurants may permanently close by the end of 2020.

Though the CARES Act was a lifeline for businesses to bridge this crisis, community restaurants continue to suffer. More must be done to save our local restaurants, which already operate with pre-COVID low margins, tight cash flow, and considerable debt. Meanwhile, they are responsible for employing a workforce that is dependent on jobs with low barriers to entry for their livelihood. Unless there are bold measures taken, there will be far-reaching consequences on our local workforce and economy. We urge you to pass this bill in order to keep restaurant businesses and jobs alive during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles, CA  
Mayor Lauren McLean, City of Boise, ID  
Mayor LaToya Cantrell, City of New Orleans, LA  
Mayor Tom Schwedhelm, City of Santa Rosa, CA  
Mayor John Giles, City of Mesa, AZ  
Mayor Kirk Caldwell, City and County of Honolulu, HI  
Mayor John Cooper, City of Nashville, TN  
Mayor Steve Benjamin, City of Columbia, SC  
Mayor Robert Garcia, City of Long Beach, CA  
Mayor Michael B. Hancock, City and County of Denver, CO  
Mayor Ted Wheeler, City of Portland, OR  
Mayor Sylvester Turner, City of Houston, TX  
Mayor Buddy Dyer, City of Orlando, FL  
Mayor Libby Schaaf, City of Oakland, CA  
Mayor Regina Romero, City of Tucson, AZ  
Mayor Betsy Price, City of Fort Worth, TX  
Mayor Tom Barrett, City of Milwaukee, WI  
Mayor Rusty Bailey, City of Riverside, CA  
Mayor Steve Adler, City of Austin, TX  
Mayor Ethan Berkowitz, Municipality of Anchorage, AK  
Mayor Muriel Bowser, Washington, District of Columbia

Mayor Jacob Frey, City of Minneapolis, MN  
Mayor Dee Margo, City of El Paso, TX  
Mayor Harry Sidhu, City of Anaheim, CA  
Mayor Bill Peduto, City of Pittsburgh, PA  
Mayor Eric Johnson, City of Dallas, TX  
Mayor John Cranley, City of Cincinnati, OH  
Mayor Martin J. Walsh, City of Boston, MA  
Mayor Kevin McKeown, City of Santa Monica, CA  
Mayor Nan Whaley, City of Dayton, OH  
Mayor Sam Liccardo, City of San Jose, CA

CC:

The Honorable Roger Wicker (R-MS)  
United States Senate

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)  
United States Senate

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)  
U.S. House of Representatives