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The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

Thank you for your forward-thinking leadership as we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and protect our nation's economy. As you are aware, our communities are struggling to balance appropriate public health safety measures with keeping small businesses afloat. While no sector is untouched by this crisis, I write to highlight the challenges faced by restaurants, bars, and the hospitality industry. These businesses are central to communities of all sizes, and without further aid are at risk of mass closures during this unprecedented time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how fragile the restaurant industry is to public health emergencies. While restaurants have shown impressive creativity and ingenuity in changing their operations to maintain safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, adaptations like take-out and limited capacity cannot compensate for a full dining room or crowded bar. The nature of their business model is incompatible with safety measures such as social distancing and mask-wearing. As such, restaurant revenues have decreased by 40%, while expenses have remained level and in some cases increased due to items like personal protective equipment and outdoor dining adaptations. 372,000 restaurant jobs were lost last month alone according to the December 2020 jobs report.

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and other aid programs have helped local businesses navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, but restaurants have a unique funding structure and require a fund of their own. In order to provide restaurants, bars, and the hospitality industry the assistance they desperately need, we must pass the RESTAURANTS Act expeditiously, either in the next COVID-19 relief package or as a stand-alone bill. Led by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), the bipartisan legislation would establish a \$120 billion grant program as a lifeline to restaurants. A 2020 study estimates the legislation would generate at least \$183 billion in primary benefits and \$65 billion in secondary benefits, as well as save essential service industry jobs and beloved community institutions.

We have this opportunity to protect restaurants, places around which our community, traditions, and cultures are centered. We must seize it before it is too late. Thank you for your consideration of this most important matter.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress