

March 11, 2020

The Honorable -----  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C.

RE: Support of Georgia's Restaurants Impacted by COVID-19

Dear -----:

The Georgia Restaurant Association (GRA) is writing with concern on the recently confirmed COVID-19 cases in Georgia. As the second largest private employer next to agribusiness, Georgia's restaurants employ 500,000 people, roughly 10% of our state's workforce. Two thirds of our restaurants are small businesses that encompass the almost 19,000 locations in our state.

You may have heard that restaurants are being negatively impacted due to misinformation and fear about COVID-19 having foodborne origins. This is a myth and is scientifically unfounded. Unfortunately, patronage and sales have dropped for our industry as a whole.

The GRA has been diligent in distributing information from the Centers for Disease Control, Georgia Department of Public Health and the National Restaurant Association. We are also working with the food service community in tandem to ensure our restaurants are up to date on preventive measures in ensuring safety for their employees and patrons.

While our Executive Branch has offered broad brush solutions for economic relief, we wish to offer additional industry specific suggestions that could positively impact our restaurants:

1. **Mortgage Payment Deferrals:** Provide temporary assistance that would allow businesses and employees to defer mortgage payments in the event that restaurant traffic declines even more due to local closure mandates.
2. **Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans:** Allow for temporary interest-only payments on SBA loans currently in payment.
3. **Cost-Sharing Barriers:** Request that the IRS consider tax breaks to individual business owners or restaurants that have suffered a 30% or greater decline in business since January 1, 2020.
4. **School Meal Temporary Facilities:** Many food insecure children are dependent on school meals as part of their daily nutrition. To support our communities,

restaurants could easily open their doors as official school meal pick-up facilities for families impacted by mandatory school closures. Restaurants are already regulated by the FDA and would be able to meet sanitation and safety requirements.

Thank you for your continued support of our industry and your consideration. We welcome a dialogue and are happy to be a resource for your office.

Sincerely,



Karen Bremer, CAE  
CEO  
Georgia Restaurant Association

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