ILLINOIS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

June 11, 2021

The Honorable Stephanie Mendoza
City Clerk
City of Evanston
2100 Ridge Ave.
Evanston, IL 60201, #1200

Clerk Mendoza,

On behalf of the Illinois Restaurant Association (IRA), I'm reaching out to express our opposition to Ordinance 60-O-21, which mandates hazard pay for certain employees in the city of Evanston.

The restaurant industry has been decimated by COVID-19. It is estimated that 20% of restaurants may not reopen, and the state of Illinois has lost more than 90,000 foodservice jobs since February 2020. While we have just now reached Phase 5, it will be a very long road to recovery for restaurants of all sizes in Evanston and across the state.

Even during the best of times, 95 to 97 cents of every dollar a restaurant takes in goes back into the food, employees, and everything else that comes with running the place. That means that restaurants have very little room to absorb massive labor cost increases and stay in business. Imposing a retroactive hazard pay requirement on small franchisees in Evanston would be devastating to neighborhood operators that are just trying to keep their doors open and their team members employed.

We urge the City Council to oppose this ordinance, and work with the local business community to create policies to revitalize our economy, protect jobs, and serve Evanston residents and visitors. I appreciate your consideration on this important issue. Please contact me if I can provide any additional information or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Sam Toia
President & CEO
Illinois Restaurant Association

ILLINOIS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Cc: The Honorable Clare Kelly
The Honorable Peter Braithwaite
The Honorable Melissa A. Wynne
The Honorable Jonathan Nieuwsma
The Honorable Bobby Burns
The Honorable Thomas M. Suffredin
The Honorable Eleanor Revelle
The Honorable Devon Reid
The Honorable Cicely L. Fleming