April 9, 2020

US Senator Rob Portman
US Senator Sherrod Brown
US Rep Steve Chabot
US Rep Brad Wenstrup
US Rep Joyce Beatty
US Rep Steve Stivers
John Barker, CEO – The Ohio Restaurant Association
Marvin Irby, Acting CEO – The National Restaurant Association
Sean Kennedy, Exec VP, Public Affairs, The National Restaurant Association
Ohio Governor Mike DeWine
Lt. Gov Jon Husted
Speaker Nancy Pelosi
US President Donald J Trump

Dear Senator Portman,

My name is Britney Ruby Miller and I am the President of Jeff Ruby Culinary Entertainment: a 40-year-old restaurant group and family business. My father founded the company and is still Chairperson. My brothers and I have grown up in the business and, in the last several years, we spearheaded our initiative to scale and grow our company into what it is today—7 steakhouses throughout Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee with 650 employees. We have been blessed with incredible national accolades including being listed in Travel + Leisure as one of the Top 25 Best Steakhouses in America, USA Today Top 10 Best Steakhouses, Top Steakhouses in America by Food Network, and others.

The restaurant industry in Cincinnati is not only robust, but it is also a close knit web of people. When Governor DeWine closed all dine-in restaurants on March 15th, I reached out to some close ties and leaders in the restaurant and bar industry in Cincinnati, and formed a Cincinnati Alliance of restaurateurs and bar owners. Collectively, this group owns and operates more than 70 restaurants and bars in 10 states and employs nearly 4,200 people. This letter is on behalf of my family, and my company, but also on behalf of the following group who are, in effect, standing in for all restaurant and bar owners in Ohio and beyond. This group consists of a big group of Cincinnati restaurant and bar owners, however more are joining by the day. For reference, this Cincinnati Alliance consists of the following people:

- Britney Ruby Miller, Co-Owner of Jeff Ruby Culinary Entertainment
- John Lanni, Co-Owner of Thunderdome Restaurant Group
- David Falk, Owner of Boca Restaurant Group
- Cristian Pietoso, Owner of Via Management Group
- Dan Wright, Founder of Queen City Hospitality Group
- Dean Gregory, Owner of Montgomery Inn
- Jean Francois Flechet, Owner of Taste of Belgium
- Bob Deck, Co-Owner of Four Entertainment Group
- Molly Wellmann, Owner of Japp's
- Jean Robert de Cavel, Owner of Jean-Robert French Restaurant Group
- Pat Lanni, Owner of Paesanos Restaurant
- Jose Salazar, Owner of Salazar Restaurant Group

As of March 15th, because of all the activity surrounding COVID-19, we were all forced to furlough nearly all of our employees. We really do appreciate the hard work being done by the government during this devasting time. But while Phase 3 of the CARES Act was a good start, it was **not** designed for the restaurant industry. I assume that as in any business plan, it will take some time to cross the T's and dot the I's. Without significant changes or additions, however, our industry [as it is now] may not survive the current turmoil.

Since all of the negative actions surrounding the pandemic started to manifest a few months ago, my colleagues and I have been in multiple, thorough discussions about the possibilities of what we would be facing in the future—and that future is here. Now that we know what is in the CARES Act, one thing is very clear: it will absolutely take the expertise and guidance of those in the restaurant industry to share whether it is enough to significantly affect our businesses in any meaningful way(s).

I want to make three points very clear in the remainder of this letter: 1.) How absolutely critical our industry is to the food supply chain in America; 2.) Our significant contribution to the US workforce; 3.) Supplemental amendments to the CARES Act must emerge, and soon, so that one day we can all reopen our restaurants in Ohio and across the nation. I'll put it bluntly: without the amendments, we are confident the vast majority of restaurants as we know it today will catastrophically fail.

To put our industry into perspective, the restaurant industry's annual revenue is $863 billion and we employee 15.6MM or 10% of the US workforce. That number is doubled when you consider the ancillary businesses that surround our industry (farmers, suppliers, vendors, etc.) The domestic airline business is $185 billion with 750,000 people. We agree with the President, that the airline business is important to our economy and the infrastructure of our nation as the major form of rapid transportation. I would argue that the restaurant industry is just as if not more important because it's a necessity — **we supply 51% of the food supply chain in America.** Quite frankly, if you take that away, it's concerning—especially at a time when grocery stores are already overwhelmed.

Our succinct ask regarding the CARES act pertaining to the PPP:

- Provide **full forgiveness for rent, suppliers, and professional services [in addition to Payroll].**
- **Eliminate the 75/25 provision.** We are open to 50% being used for payroll, but beyond that it just doesn't make sense operationally.
- Lengthen the forgiveness period for payroll **to 6 months or when fully operational,** instead of 8 weeks from loan origination. This simply isn't enough time for us. It will be 6 months to 1 year before things are somewhat back to normal — whatever the new "normal" for restaurants is.
- Eliminate the provision about **forgiveness being reduced** based on previous rates of employment. We will have a much slower ramp up in business because of COVID restrictions, unlike manufacturing, or other small businesses.
- Provide a longer **maturity of 10 years** for the loaned portion, 2 years is completely undoable.

Thank you for your time and we welcome sitting down at the table to speak on behalf of Cincinnati restaurateurs.

Respectfully,

Britney Ruby Miller
President
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