

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3302

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

We appreciate your ongoing efforts to provide relief to the devastated restaurant industry, including the \$25 billion grant program currently being negotiated in the budget reconciliation legislation.

North Carolina is home to nearly 20,000 eating and drinking locations, approximately 76% of which are independently owned - many of these by women and people of color. Food service businesses in North Carolina generate \$21.4 billion, account for 8.7% of all employment in the state, and made up 16% of the state's sales tax revenue in 2019. In short, our economy relies on the success of independent restaurants.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on these businesses. Today, over 75% of North Carolina's restaurants and other food services businesses are in danger of closing permanently. Fine dining has declined by 85% and casual dining has declined by 65%. Approximately 56% of lost jobs in North Carolina are in the leisure and hospitality industry, which includes food services. These losses reverberate throughout the economy and affect all parts of the supply chain, including North Carolina's 40,450 small farms.

As discussions regarding COVID relief continue, we urge you to make independent restaurants a top priority. We also urge you to consider longer-term solutions for the restaurant industry, such as those offered by the RESTAURANTS Act. While the \$25 billion grant program will provide a temporary lifeline, we believe additional assistance will be required to enable independent restaurants to keep their doors open until conditions improve.

Thank you for considering this request. Restaurants play a vital role in our economy and in our communities, and we must help them to bridge the gap so that they can fully reopen on the other side of the pandemic.

Very truly yours,



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



David Price
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Alma Adams
Member of Congress



Kathy Manning
Member of Congress