

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

February 10, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader, United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader, United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

The economic relief provided by Congress throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has proven vital and propelled our economy to grow at its fastest pace since 1984. But we know that this progress has not been linear, and some businesses are still feeling the effects of the pandemic two years later – some closing all together. This uneven recovery hit Washington State restaurants especially hard as highly transmissible COVID-19 variants, staff shortages, freezing weather, supply chain issues, and inflation compounded existing challenges that have brought many to the brink of closing their doors for good. We respectfully urge you to replenish the Restaurant Revitalization Fund or provide some form of additional relief to restaurants.

These businesses are often neighborhood anchors and/or family owned. They are a critical part of Washington State's economy and the communities we represent. While we have made progress addressing the pandemic, the long-term effect on these neighborhood businesses must be addressed.

Not only have restaurants lost two years of revenue, but it will take years for them to financially recover and repay the debt they've accrued to keep the lights on during this time. According to the Washington Hospitality Association, the average full-service restaurant in Washington State reports being \$160,000 in debt and it would take them over 3 years to repay it.

While they are incredibly appreciative of Congress' infusion of funding for restaurants through the Restaurant Revitalization Fund in 2021, there has been little to no movement on renewed efforts to replenish this fund or provide additional relief to restaurants despite the new COVID variants and public health orders that have dramatically impacted business. Restaurants cannot afford to wait any longer. This past fall, 243 restaurants in Washington State went out of business in addition to the 3,355 that previously closed during 2020 and 2021.

Congress created the Restaurant Revitalization Fund to help the businesses most in need but fell short of providing a sufficient level of funding – leaving many eligible businesses shut out from ever receiving critical relief. In Washington, 3,989 restaurants did not get funding, a shortfall of more than \$1 billion in our state alone. The funds from this program were a lifeline for

Washington restaurants and we must carry out our mission to help these employers in need. We must get some form of additional relief for restaurants over the finish line right away.

We look forward to working with you to further support restaurants in Washington State and across the country. Thank you for your consideration and leadership.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress