



January 27, 2021

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Chair
National Governors Association
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 267
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As the COVID-19 pandemic approaches one year in the United States, the outlook for restaurants remains bleak. While the industry is optimistic about the vaccine rollout and the recent federal stimulus package, operators will continue to face fundamental challenges over the short, medium, and long-term horizons. A true restaurant recovery will not begin until indoor dining can safely resume at full capacity and all consumers feel confident returning.

The most recent statistics for the restaurant industry paint a stark picture:

- 110,000 restaurants (17% nationwide) have closed permanently or long-term since the start of the pandemic. Many of these restaurants were cornerstones in their communities and had operated an average of 16 years.¹
- The restaurant industry has lost 2.5 million jobs during the pandemic. Based upon the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics data, 42 states lost additional restaurant jobs in December and 46 states have fewer restaurant jobs now than before the pandemic.²
- The foodservice industry lost \$240 billion in sales in 2020. The most recent sales data from December indicates that the industry has now entered a double dip recession.³

As lawmakers across the country begin new legislative sessions, the National Restaurant Association is calling for a one year pause on new legislation and regulations that would add increased costs, administrative burdens, or operational complexities for restaurants or would in any other way negatively impact the industry. Now is not the time for costly new mandates. Many restaurants remain on the brink of closure, and an additional regulatory burden could push them over the edge. More restaurant closures will lead to higher unemployment, lower tax revenue, vacant properties, and a continued reduction in the vibrancy of communities. A one year pause will allow restaurants to focus on surviving the pandemic and rebuilding their operations going forward.

¹ National Restaurant Association survey of 6,000 restaurant operators nationwide. *Available at:* <https://www.restaurant.org/downloads/pdfs/advocacy/covid-19-restaurant-impact-survey-v-state-results.pdf>

² National Restaurant Association analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data. *Available at:* <https://www.restaurant.org/articles/news/forty-two-states-lost-restaurant-jobs-in-december>

³ National Restaurant Association analysis. *Available at:* <https://restaurant.org/articles/news/restaurant-sales-fell-to-lowest-level-since-june>

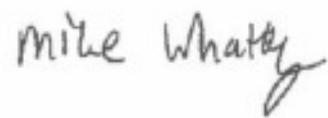
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Thank you for your continued leadership throughout this pandemic. The industry looks forward to continuing to work with you and leaders across the country on solutions that help restaurants and our employees make it through this unprecedented crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Whatley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mike Whatley

Vice President, State Affairs and Grassroots Advocacy