

Dear Senator or Representative:

I am a restaurateur and live in \_\_\_\_\_. My restaurant employs XX individuals. Overall, the restaurant industry represents 13 million employees, serving 133 million guests in 945,000 restaurant and food service locations each day.

The health care reform package currently being considered by the Senate demonstrates meaningful progress toward protecting jobs and small businesses while taking steps toward providing access to high quality, affordable health care for Americans.

While key improvements have been through the legislative process, the restaurant industry is continuing to work to ensure the conference final bill improves job creation and entrepreneurship, and does not weaken the improvements included in the Senate bill.

I support three key provisions in the Senate's legislation that must be maintained in the final bill. The part-time worker exemption is critical especially as it addresses the nature of our business models and takes into account the economic realities facing my business and industry. The provisions that help protect small businesses are also essential as many restaurateurs like me are small business owners with tight profit margins of just 4% in good economic times. Also the legislation preserves the ERISA framework to allow larger, multi-state employers to continue to offer coverage. All of these must be maintained in the conference report.

However further adjustments are needed in the final bill. I ask you to support and urge Leadership to include the following amendments in the conference report:

**A 90-day waiting period** for new hires so I can provide my committed full-time employees the highest quality benefits at the most affordable price. The restaurant industry is unique, with an extremely flexible work environment and higher than average turnover rates. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 75 percent of our employees leave their jobs annually – a rate 25 percent higher than the overall private sector at 49 percent. **Support the Landrieu/Shaheen Amendment No. 3011.**

**A modified the definition of full-time employee** to 390 hours per calendar quarter (13 weeks) instead of the current 30 hours per week on average, with respect to any month. The modified definition takes into account fluctuations in hours an employee works, and would help reduce the impact of employer requirements for restaurateurs like me. **Support Cantwell Amendment No. 3112.**

It is essential we take steps to rein in health care costs and expand coverage. However, without these modifications and exemptions, the industry will face tremendous hardship and decline.

Before this legislation is finalized through conference, please consider the restaurant industry's economic profile and structure so that we as employers can truly offer - and employees can truly benefit from - the goals this reform seeks to achieve. I look forward to working constructively with you to reach that outcome.

Sincerely,