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Kari Orchard
Regional Caucus Director

325 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

717-787-6882
korchard@pahouse.net

July 28, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Gov. Wolf:

As restaurants across our Commonwealth grapple with the effects of COVID-19, we are writing to urge you to reconsider your recent mitigation efforts that are jeopardizing restaurants' ability to survive this pandemic.

We agree that targeting bad actors – bars or restaurants that have not been complying with social distancing, masking or capacity limits – is vital to slowing the spread of this disease. It is unfair, however, to crack down uniformly on all restaurants and taverns, in all areas of the state. A 25-percent capacity limit is not only unsustainable for these establishments, it is unclear whether this provides significantly better health outcomes than 50-percent capacity restrictions.

Furthermore, for those of us on or near the borders of Ohio and New York, these restrictions put our businesses at a competitive disadvantage and may be counterproductive for residents who will simply cross the state line to dine more freely. New York's indoor dining limits stand at 50 percent, while Ohio restaurants must space tables a minimum of six feet apart, which is consistent with CDC guidelines for restaurants and bars.

Therefore, we ask you to revert to your previous guidelines allowing 50 percent indoor capacity for restaurants and bars and urge you to employ the surgical approach of cracking down on noncompliant establishments rather than new blanket restrictions that are not feasible for many law-abiding establishments. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Rep. Frank Burns
72nd Legislative District

Rep. Ryan Bizzarro
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cc: John Longstreet, Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association
Chuck Moran, Pennsylvania Licensed Beverage and Tavern Association

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