



August 20, 2020

Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie,

The restaurant industry needs immediate relief, and needs to address long-standing racial inequities in our industry at the same time. We, the undersigned restaurant owners and hospitality professionals, agree that our industry is in desperate need of economic support: to recover, to reopen, and to reimagine a future in which our team members are all paid a full minimum wage plus tips. This is how we survive this crisis and thrive.

To survive this crisis and thrive, we recommend a relief package that ensures a strong restaurant industry recovery: tip-sharing; a modest recovery surcharge for restaurants that follow a gold-standard of virus-related precautions; payroll tax relief; and the elimination of the subminimum wage.

In April 2018, Congress passed a bill allowing restaurant employers nationwide who pay the full minimum wage to share tips with kitchen staff. This has helped owners in other states manage labor costs and create greater pay equity in regards to race, gender, and position in their restaurants. Many New York restaurant employers are prepared to move to a full minimum wage if tip sharing becomes permissible—along with a recovery surcharge, and modest tax relief only applicable to increased wages.

Modest tax relief coupled with a wage increase for tipped workers would pay for itself. We have done fiscal analysis that shows that income taxes coming into the state from a \$5 wage increase for tipped workers would bring in far more in revenue than would be lost through moderate payroll tax relief for struggling restaurant owners. And of course, it would allow restaurant workers to survive in a time when a subminimum wage is not livable, as tips are down 75-90%.

It has become clearer than ever that hospitality professionals' economic futures are deeply insecure, with many facing hunger, housing destabilization, and additional debt. Being forced to rely solely on tips, creates a system that encourages rampant sexual harassment of women, reinforces a wide delta of inequity of race, mass disenfranchisement of immigrants, people of color and working poor. With tips vastly down in this climate already, it's clear that having to rely on tips alone could never be sustainable.

New York must take this opportunity to ensure a sustainable and just future for all. In this case, that means government working hand-in-hand with hospitality professionals—both front line team members and owner/operators—to ensure that we have a living wage, and that the hard-hit restaurants New Yorkers love have the tools needed to lead our industry and thrive.

Sincerely,

NEW YORK RESTAURANT OWNERS

Jose Andres, ThinkFoodGroup

Dennis Meheil, Buffalo Wild Wings

Tom Collicicco, Craft

Danny Meyer, Union Square Hospitality Group

David Chang, Momofuku

Russell Jackson, Reverence

Amanda Cohen, Dirt Candy

Evan Hanzcor, Egg

Michael Fuquay, The Queensboro

Yency Perez, Barepas

Maria Simon, Corazon de Mexico

Dragan Ristovski, Marlow Bistro

Yajaira Saavedram, La Morada

Claire Sprouse, Hunky Dory

Beejhy Barhany, Tsion Cafe

Peter Cheung, Hide-Chan Ramen

Mary Cleaver, Cleaver Co, The Green Bottle, and Table Green

Elena Barcenés, Rincón Salvadoreño

Soogil Lim, SOOGIL

Chaim Mischa Mishulovin, Sushi Tokyo

Elizabeth Murray, The Marlow Collective

Marjanne Motamedi, Cibo E Vino

Zachary Sharaga, Dear Mama

Melissa Morales, Pomp and Circumstance Hospitality

Giselle Malave, Sapoara

Mutale Kanyanta, LOCALS BKNY

Elisa Lyew, Love Bites Dessert Atelier

Stephanie Gross, Wonderville

Ioana Hercberg, La Cantine

Ingrid Ammann, Mad Tropical

Leo Tineo, The Sampler

Greg Curley, Abe's Pagoda Bar and The Double Windsor

Scott Hawley, Otis

Paul Cacici, Carmenita's Italian Specialties

Julian Mohamed, The Wandering Barman

Darren Grenia, Yours Sincerely
Gavin Morse, Darkness Ventures
Henry Glucroft, Sunrise/Sunset and Petra
Rachel Allswang, Le Garage
Jae Lee, Nowan
Sabrina De Sousa, Dimes
Laura Regan, Outerborougharts LLC
Latoya Anderson, Caribbean Starr Restaurant
Matthew Hamilton, Rosalu Diner
Josh Morales, Slick Willie Table & Bar
Koorosh Bakhtiar, Jajaja Plantas Mexicana
Marie Tribouilloy, Ops
Brian Keyser, Casellula
Christopher Bates, FLX Table
Molly Fisher, 232 Bleecker
Michael Van Camp, Amali
Wei Dong Yie, Baodego
Shannon Kimball, Bar Bruno
James Mallios, Bar Marseille
Hollis Barclay, Bleu Fin Bar & Grill
Donna Drake, Brooklyn Beso
Yvon Lemoine, Casa Nomad
Helen You, Dumpling Galaxy
Brian Chunton, Eat Gai
Tiffany Bowen, Harlem Hookah
Tomoyuki Iwanami, Kaikagetsu NYC
Barbara Sibley, La Palapa
Cassandre Davilmar, Lakou Café
Emmeline Zhao, Little Tong Noodle Shop
Alex Antimisiaris, Loi Estiatorio
Ana Medrano, Q44 Bar & Grill
Frantz Metellus, Rustik Tavern
Davis Alexander, Savannah Café
Leah Abraham, Settepani
Jesus Caicedo-Diaz, Skäl
Wiki Wang, Spicy Moon Vegetarian Szechuan
Jess Li, Stand Up Café
Ioannis Berbeis, Telio
Raphael Benavides, The Cecil Steakhouse
Brett Isbell, The Corners
Andrew Ding, The Expat
Stephen Young, Tsismis NYC
Ricky Dolinsky, Tzarevna
Kurt Gutenbrunner, Wallse Restaurant Group

Bryan Chunton, Zen Yai

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