



OFFICIAL STATEMENT

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Statement Attribution:

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The Illinois Restaurant Association (IRA) cannot support the COVID-19 mitigation plan presented by Governor Pritzker's office that ceases dine-in operations at restaurants across the state of Illinois. Moving backwards in this manner spells complete devastation for the restaurant industry. The extreme measures outlined by the Governor's team will result in the permanent closure of countless restaurants statewide, eliminating thousands of jobs and desolating communities inhabited by millions of residents.

Since the onset of the pandemic, the restaurant industry - which is among the most highly regulated in health and safety - has quickly implemented and enforced enhanced procedures and policies with respect to sanitation, PPE, social distancing, timed reservation blocks, face coverings, hand sanitizer stations, signage and more. It's alarming that restaurants are among the only businesses affected in the Governor's most recent announcement given our unparalleled levels of safety.

We do not agree with the order to completely eliminate dine-in operations. The IRA wants to work with the Governor's office on a pragmatic mitigation plan that supports the health and safety of our state without jeopardizing the livelihoods of the people and businesses that serve as the cornerstone of our communities. Earlier curfews and reduced occupancy levels are two examples of more reasonable measures.

We also have serious concerns over the consistency of the data the state is using to drive these devastating decisions to close our industry. By contrast, DuPage County has provided detailed statistics indicating that restaurants are linked to just 6% of outbreaks over the past seven months - yet their indoor dining was shut down. As the science surrounding COVID-19 has evolved, so must the metrics for mitigation.

Additionally, as restaurants are forced to close indoor dining and lay off their team members, they do so without any financial support. The funding opportunities currently available from the state of Illinois are only helping the smallest fraction of restaurant operations. The state needs to provide grants, waive licensing and permitting fees and delay tax payments, as well as advocate for relief at the federal level.

Conservative estimates indicate that at least 20 percent of restaurants will be forced to close their doors permanently. This means 120,000 jobs in Illinois, gone.

We cannot allow this to happen. Closing restaurants down now means closing them for good!

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[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE CALL TO ACTION ISSUED BY THE IRA URGING GOVERNOR PRITZKER AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER THIS URGENT REQUEST FOR RELIEF AND TO COLLABORATE WITH THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY TO SAFELY MAINTAIN INDOOR DINING OPERATIONS.**](#)**

****INTERVIEWS WITH SAM TOIA AVAILABLE VIA VIDEO + ZOOM****

About Illinois Restaurant Association

Founded in 1914, the Illinois Restaurant Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, protecting, educating and improving the restaurant industry in Illinois. The IRA owns and produces Chicago Gourmet – the annual food and wine festival uniting hundreds of restaurants, chefs and beverage experts for a weekend filled with food and drink tastings, entertainment, cooking demonstrations, book signings, interactive seminars and more. For more information about the Illinois Restaurant Association, visit www.illinoisrestaurants.org and follow on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.