July 23, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
Senate S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
The Capitol S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, H-232
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, H-204
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the below organizations, we are requesting the inclusion of the State Emergency Restaurant and Vendor Enhancement (SERVE) and COVID-19 Anti-Hunger Restaurant Relief for You (CARRY) Act in the next COVID-19 recovery package. This legislation was crafted in partnership with a unique coalition that includes the restaurant industry, food banks, and the anti-hunger community, and would expand food access points to Americans in need, while keeping restaurant doors open throughout the pandemic.

In light of COVID-19, Americans are facing extreme challenges related to food access and preparation. At the same time, restaurants are following official orders to close or restrict foodservice establishments, limiting food options for communities across the United States. The SERVE and CARRY Act proposes a solution to the negative effects of the pandemic on the issues of both hunger and the restaurant economy by allowing individuals who receive nutritional assistance through federal nutrition programs to purchase prepared food at participating restaurants. Paired with increases in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which should be seen as complimentary and separate than our request, the SERVE and CARRY act would reduce nationwide hunger, particularly amongst families with children, and lead to increased support for local restaurants. It would also stimulate local economies and assist in the economic recovery.

Specifically, the SERVE and CARRY Act allows states and territories a range of options to choose from to help them respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by:

- Creating and administering a SERVE program (separate from existing programs) that authorizes funding to states to contract with restaurants and provide nutrition benefits to low-income participants via Electronic Benefit Transfer following the approval of a plan to USDA during the period of the pandemic;
- Establishing a CARRY program that expands the population of people eligible for benefits under the Restaurant Meals Program and make it easier for states and restaurants to get involved in the program; and
- Starting a State Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (SCFAP) that would authorize funding for states to purchase commodities directly for donation to food banks.
We believe this legislation is an important step to helping feed Americans and support businesses. Therefore, we respectfully request inclusion of the SERVE and CARRY Act in the next COVID-19 package.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to address this ongoing health crisis.

Sincerely,

Arizona Food Bank Network  
Arizona Restaurant Association  
California Association of Food Banks  
California Community Economic Development Association  
California Restaurant Association  
Colorado Center on Law and Policy  
Connecticut Restaurant Association  
End Hunger Connecticut  
Feeding Texas  
Foodshare  
Food Bank of Northern Nevada  
Hunger Free Oregon  
Kentucky Equal Justice Center  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI)  
National Restaurant Association  
Northwest Harvest, Washington State  
Share Our Strength  
Shriver Center on Poverty Law  
Texas Restaurant Association  
Washington Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition  
Western Center on Law and Poverty

cc:  
The Honorable Pat Roberts  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry United States Senate

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry United States Senate

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Chairman  
House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Michael Conaway  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee