



## **Ohio Restaurant Association Testimony in Support of H.B. 169**

March 10, 2021

Chair Edwards, Vice-Chair Powell, Ranking Member Upchurch and Members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee:

On behalf of Ohio's 23,000 restaurant and foodservice locations and Ohio's 585,000 restaurant and foodservice employees, the Ohio Restaurant Association appreciates the opportunity to be here today in support of H.B. 169.

Nearly one year removed from the shuttering of dining rooms and patios, Ohio restaurants are just now beginning the path to recovery. While there is more hope amongst Ohio's hospitality community than at any time since the pandemic began, the path back is long and there is no certainty that all of Ohio's hospitality businesses will survive.

This timely legislation will give more of Ohio's restaurants, bars, hotels and other foodservice and lodging businesses a better chance to recover and continue to serve and strengthen Ohio's communities. In light of the significant and lingering public health and economic crisis wrought on our state by the COVID-19 pandemic, this legislation is an important and necessary part of Ohio's economic recovery.

Ohio's restaurants are the cornerstones of our communities, and our restaurants and our communities have been devastated by this ongoing crisis. Even as restaurants begin to more fully reopen, the mandates they are operating under and a dining public that in many instances remains nervous, will lead to a slow recovery. This legislation recognizes these important facts and will give restaurants a better chance to make it through this crisis, emerge strong on the other side, and come back vigorously to help revive Ohio's economic engine, employ hundreds of thousands of Ohioans, and strengthen our communities. 51% of the US food dollar is now spent at restaurants, making restaurants not just an essential part of our economy, but essential to feeding our state, our country and our communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to support this important legislation and for all you are doing to help Ohio and Ohio's businesses on this important road to recovery.

Tod Bowen

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Ohio Restaurant Association