

February 11, 2022

*Mayor Justin Elicker
City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510*

Dear Mayor Elicker,

As you know, local businesses continue to be severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Across every sector, employers have operated under considerable uncertainty for two years now, finding new ways to operate while also keeping their employees and customers safe. These changes have been particularly difficult for restaurants, which were among the first and most directly affected by the pandemic as well as the subsequent emergency restrictions on their businesses.

As New Haven restaurant owners and operators, we have been proud to proactively partner with local elected officials at every level during these difficult times, both directly and collectively through the efforts of the Connecticut Restaurant Association. Rather than hastily opposing any restrictions on restaurants during the pandemic, Connecticut restaurateurs have publicly and consistently acknowledged our responsibility to help protect public health. Leaders from our industry have worked continuously with Governor Lamont and his team at every step of this crisis, offering our insight and ideas for putting public health first while still allowing local businesses to remain open and keep people employed.

It's in that spirit of cooperation that we write to you today. As members of the New Haven community, we respectfully ask for your support and partnership as our industry recovers. Specifically, we would like to meet with you to discuss potential action on the following fronts:

- 1) **Engage and Involve New Haven Restaurants in the City's COVID Recovery.** New Haven is not just the pizza capital of the world, it's also the birthplace of the hamburger, the home of America's first cooking school, and so much more. Our culinary community is deeply tied to the history of this city, and we want to be part of its future. We appreciate and value the difficult job you have as Mayor in managing both public health and economic development concerns, among many others. As we turn a corner from COVID, we ask to have a seat at the table with your administration as you balance those demands, so that the experience and knowledge of restaurant owners and their employees can be shared.
- 2) **Allocate additional American Rescue Plan funds to directly support New Haven restaurants, including marketing initiatives.** We appreciate that the city plans to use \$10 million of the \$116 million in ARPA funding for various initiatives to support small businesses, arts and culture organizations, and more. However, we feel this amount cannot adequately support all of these different small businesses, especially the New Haven restaurant industry, which was so uniquely and singularly harmed by the pandemic. We believe a larger pool of funding can and should be added to help our industry survive, as the economic cost of letting more small businesses fail will far outpace the cost of a modest grant program. This work can and should include specific funding for marketing efforts focused on the culinary aspects of New Haven.

- 3) **Partner with restaurants to bolster consumer confidence.** Finally, we ask that you and your administration lead by example to demonstrate to the New Haven community that local restaurants need local support in order to keep their doors open and keep local residents employed. This could be as simple as using your voice and podium as mayor to speak positively about local restaurants and the value they play in our city. We encourage you and all officials in your administration to hopefully use the local media and social media platforms to promote supporting restaurants – even a single story/post can have the ability to set a tone and instill a sense of community pride in local dining. Just this week, Gov. Lamont highlighted New Haven’s restaurant industry on social media, something that was noticed and appreciated by restaurateurs.

Connecticut has been a national leader in combating the COVID-19 crisis, and has prioritized public health without losing sight of its economic future. We ask that this same strategy and focus be put to use at the local level in New Haven, so that restaurants like ours can not only remain open, but also be part of our great city’s continued economic recovery in the years ahead.

Thank you for your consideration. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss these ideas further.

Sincerely,

Danielle Ginnetti
**116 Crown
Meat & Co.**

Richard Agamie
Amarantes Sea Cliff

Monica Freeman-Greene
The Anchor Spa

Sonia Salazar
**Barracuda Bistro & Bar
Te Amo Tequila Bar**

Val Capobianco
Brazi’s Italian Restaurant

Stacey Porrello & Giovanni Morra
Caffe Bravo

Trish Perrotti
Consiglio’s

Adil Chokairy
Crepes Chouquette

Kevin Printz
Frank Pepe’s Pizza

Zino Carr
Garden Catering

Sara Manrique
**Harvest
South Bay**

Duncan Goodall
Koffee

Allison DeRenzi
L’Orcio

Billy Pustari
Modern Apizza

Manuel Romero
Olea

Craig Hutchinson
Olmo Bagelry

Mark & Michael Sincavage
Skappo

Andres Cordido
Somos Handcrafted Arepas

Jesus Puerto
Soul de Cuba Café

Emily Mingrone & Shane McGowan
Tavern on State

Joe Maiorano
Tre Scalini

Christina Fitzgerald
Union League Café

Carmela Buono
Ward 9

Michael Egan
ZINC