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February 3, 2021

House Small Business and Information Technology Committee
Chairman Phillip Pratt
702 Capitol Ave.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Chairman and Members:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many restaurants found a lifeline to survive by selling "raw foods", i.e., grocery products, out of their establishments. We are pleased that House Bill 190, that would make this allowance permanent, is being heard in committee.

The Kentucky Restaurant Association supports House Bill 190, which simply extends permissions that were temporarily afforded to restaurants to sell "raw foods", i.e., grocery products (milk, eggs, bread, toilet paper etc.) which were originally granted last year in SB 150. House Bill 190 removes any need for additional permits or licensing to execute these sales. The temporary lifting of restrictions was a godsend for restaurants with excess product and limited capacity to serve prepared food. We hope restricted capacity of restaurants will be lifted soon, but in any case, this rule needs to be extended in perpetuity.

There are countless examples of restaurants who took advantage of this rule change, to help make ends meet during the pandemic:

- Panera Bread opened a "Panera Grocery" website where patrons could order, or contactless pick-up fresh produce and dairy;
- River House Restaurant offered daily pickup of meat, seafood and fresh produce as grocery stores battled shortages;
- Jeff Ruby's has had multiple specials during the pandemic where customers could order their steaks for cooking at home;
- Texas Roadhouse similarly offered steaks and their rolls for sale to be prepared at home;
- Waffle Houses and Frisch's Big Boys sold produce and dairy products, including through drive thrus where available.

Even as we all hope to return to some sort of normal from the pandemic, restaurants believe their ability to sell these goods would be helpful in the long road back to recovery after a tumultuous year of operation under the shutdowns and capacity restrictions.

This commonsense piece of legislation will extend a helping hand for Kentucky restaurants who continue to reel from this past year of COVID restrictions, and will for several years. We want to thank Rep. John Blanton for sponsoring House Bill 190 and Chairman Phillip Pratt for hearing this important piece of legislation in committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy Roof". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stacy Roof
President & CEO