

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 2, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
US Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
US Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

We request the urgent inclusion of emergency funding in the COVID supplemental package to support the continued employment of all current Senate dining contract employees. We understand that Restaurant Associates, the contractor, announced a series of layoffs today, going into effect April 15th. After facing down a violent insurrection on Capitol grounds and continuing to serve through more than two years of a pandemic, layoffs should not be on the table. In fact, the United States Senate expressly called for the opposite: workers should be rewarded for their service to this institution, the Capitol complex, and to the people who visit us. Due to COVID related circumstances, foot traffic in the Senate cafeteria has been a fraction of what it was pre-pandemic and catering operations have ceased. We ask that the Senate work on a bipartisan basis to add additional funding in the COVID supplemental to avoid COVID-related layoffs for those who serve the Senate community.

The current pay and benefits available to Senate cafeteria workers are already shameful. Of all cafeteria workers in federal buildings around Washington, DC, Senate cafeteria workers are the least likely to be enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance or retirement; only 18% have employer-sponsored health insurance and none are enrolled in employer-sponsored pension benefits. For these workers to be laid off after serving this body throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in these conditions would be a stain on our institution. It is imperative that the United States Senate, the Architect of the Capitol, and Restaurant Associates work to resolve this situation at least through December 31, 2022, in order for these union workers to be empowered to collectively bargain for an improved standard of living.

On January 13, 2022, the Senate unanimously passed Resolution 490 honoring Capitol custodial and service workers for their bravery and service to the nation in the face of an attack by violent insurrectionists. The resolution specifically references Restaurant Associates and Sodexo staff in

its findings and expresses gratitude for and provides support to Capitol personnel. We ask that COVID supplemental funding save these Senate cafeteria jobs and avoid all possible layoffs.

We thank you for working to resolve this matter as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



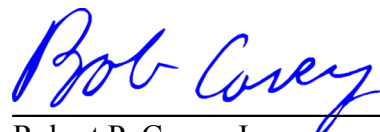
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



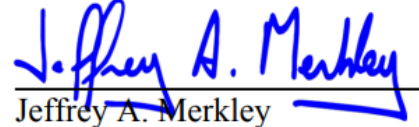
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



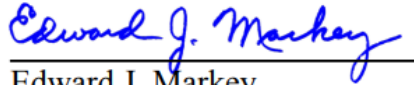
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



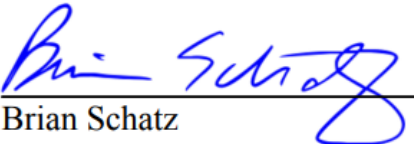
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



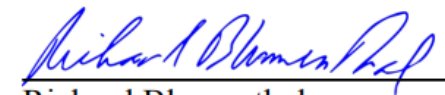
Tina Smith  
United States Senator



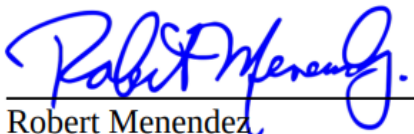
Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator