

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 4, 2022

J. Brett Blanton
Architect of the Capitol
SB-15 U.S. Capitol
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Gary Green
Chief Executive Officer
Compass Group
2400 Yorkmon Road
Charlotte, NC 28217

Joe Sargis
Chief Financial Officer
Restaurant Associates
132 W 31st Street, Suite 601
New York, NY 10001

Dear Mr. Blanton, Mr. Green, and Mr. Sargis:

We write to urge you to work together to ensure our Senate cafeteria workers receive fair wages and benefits that reflect their substantial contributions to our Capitol community.

As you know, the Architect of the Capitol has received funds to protect Senate food service workers' jobs. This critical relief comes after Restaurant Associates, the contractor, announced a series of layoffs a few weeks ago, just as the Senate is taking steps to reopen to the public. After these dedicated employees faced down a violent insurrection at the Capitol and continued to serve through more than two years of a pandemic, layoffs should never have been on the table.

We understand that the ongoing public health crisis and security measures have led to financial challenges in Senate restaurants. While steps to reopen the Capitol are already underway and additional measures are being considered subject to the approval of the Capitol Police Board, foot traffic in the Senate cafeteria has been a fraction of what it was pre-pandemic and catering operations have ceased.

The timing of the announced layoffs was also concerning. The announcement was made after Senate food service workers obtained union recognition—represented by UNITE HERE Local 23 following a majority card count and voluntary recognition—but before they entered into a collective bargaining agreement with Restaurant Associates. Dozens of workers were scheduled

to lose their jobs before they were protected by a collective bargaining agreement and just as the Capitol Complex was beginning to reopen, which will undoubtedly increase revenue for Senate restaurants.

The current pay and benefits available to Senate cafeteria workers are already shameful. Of all cafeteria workers in federal buildings around Washington, D.C., Senate cafeteria workers are the least likely to be enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance or retirement—only 18 percent 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.

On January 13, 2022, the Senate unanimously passed Resolution 490 honoring Capitol custodial and service workers for their bravery and service 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. The resolution also reaffirms a commitment to achieving “higher pay, collective bargaining rights, paid sick and vacation leave, and comprehensive health insurance with mental health resources” for personnel. We urge you to prioritize the needs of the essential workers of the United States Senate in line with the criteria set forth by the resolution.

Now that the immediate threat of layoffs is behind us, we encourage the Architect of the Capitol to work with all stakeholders, including Restaurant Associates and UNITE HERE, to ensure that the Senate food services contract reflects a commitment to a collective bargaining agreement with quality pay and benefits for all workers.

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

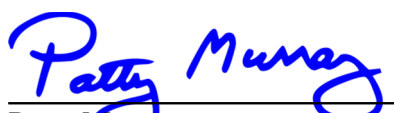
Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



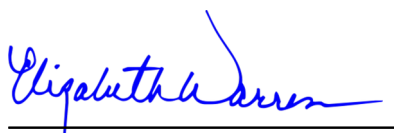
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator
Chairwoman, Committee on
Rules and Administration



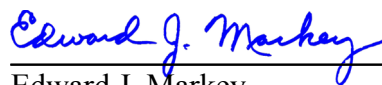
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



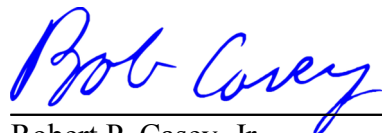
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



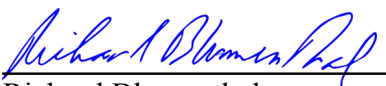
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



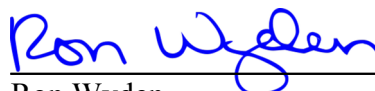
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



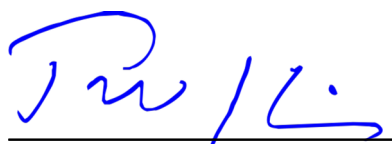
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



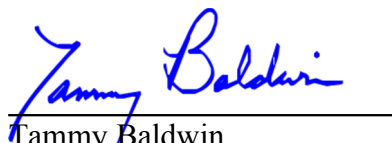
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator




Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator