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For Immediate Release

**GEORGIA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SHARES  
IMMIGRATION REFORM IMPACT STUDY WITH LEGISLATORS**  
*Survey Highlights Cause for Concern, Opportunity for Collaboration*

(Atlanta, GA) – Today, the Georgia Restaurant Association (GRA) reached out to lawmakers regarding the consequences of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011. The letter from GRA Executive Director, Karen Bremer, calls upon the public and private sectors to “work together to stem current and potential labor shortages caused by attempts to reform a complex federal issue on the state level.”

In addition, the letter contains the results of a recent industry survey assessing the economic impact of Immigration Reform. “While it may be too soon to tell the true burden of this legislation on Georgia’s restaurants, the early indicators are alarming,” said Bremer.

Survey results show that when asked about current labor availability, almost half of restaurant respondents are experiencing a labor shortage. In addition, 88% are concerned that they will face a labor shortage in the future. Despite persistently high unemployment rates in Georgia, over half of the respondents are concerned that fewer workers will apply for future openings and 27% indicated that they have already noticed a decline in job applicants.

Estimates of monthly restaurant sales loss due to labor or customer shortage ranged from \$2,000-\$80,000 per month. Many restaurateurs are small business owners, with slim profit margins averaging 4%. “In the midst of our fragile economic recovery, such costs jeopardize the 385,000 jobs and \$962 million in taxes the restaurant industry provides for our state,” said Bremer.

Across the nation, the restaurant community has voiced its willingness to work with Congress to find a responsible and realistic solution to this complex and contentious issue.

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The intent of this letter is to spark open dialogue with legislators to help find a sensible and comprehensive national solution. The longer Congress fails to act, the more employers will face a growing patchwork of bewildering and punitive laws — laws that fail to resolve fundamental problems with the U.S. immigration system.

“Employers are partners in economic growth and job creation, not adversaries in the immigration debate,” said Bremer. “The more quickly we form a coalition between the public and private sectors, the more effective we can be in petitioning our federal government to take action in solving their failed policies.”

In the wake of the legislation, the Association continues to focus on educating restaurants about compliance, while advocating for a solution that keeps our state economically strong and strengthens our reputation as a leader.

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**About the Georgia Restaurant Association**

The GRA’s mission is to serve as the voice for Georgia’s Restaurants in Advocacy, Education and Awareness. The GRA is sanctioned by the National Restaurant Association (NRA) to operate Georgia’s only not-for-profit representing the state’s foodservice industry. From large chains to start-ups, the GRA helps make Georgia a better place for restaurants to do business and helps make restaurants better for Georgia.

For media inquiries, please contact the Georgia Restaurant Association at 404.467.9000.