

July 28, 2011

Dear Elected Official:

As you may be aware, the Georgia Restaurant Association recently conducted an industry survey assessing the economic impact of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011. While it may be too soon to tell the true burden of this legislation on Georgia's restaurants, the early indicators are alarming.

When asked about current labor availability, almost half of the restaurants surveyed 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.

In the midst of our fragile economic recovery, 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%. Such costs jeopardize the 385,000 jobs and \$962 million in taxes the restaurant industry provides for our state.

That is why it is critical that we work together to stem current and potential labor shortages caused by attempts to reform a complex federal issue on the state level. We want to open dialogue with you 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. These survey results are both cause for concern and opportunity for collaboration. 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.

We look forward to working with you and are available for any questions you might have.

Respectfully,



Karen I. Bremer, Executive Director
Georgia Restaurant Association