September 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer & Leader McCarthy:

The undersigned brands thank you for your efforts in Congress to strengthen our national economic recovery. As you negotiate a final “Phase 4” COVID-19 legislative relief package, we also specifically thank you for considering liability protections for our small business franchisees. Our franchised businesses have served and protected America in countless ways during this devastating pandemic. With great respect for your leadership, we urge you to serve and protect those same small businesses like ours by enacting reasonable legal protections to incentivize their constructive conduct and mitigate the economic fallout due to COVID-19.

Our companies and franchisees have been serving their communities in unprecedented ways since the pandemic began. Whether they have been deemed essential or not, businesses throughout this crisis have been providing to our communities critical products and services, including food, water and beverages, health care, medication, PPE, cleaning services, auto care, child care, fuel, shelter, and many more. Many have even been giving away food and other products to essential workers and the hungry during this historic period. They have been true “Good Samaritans.”

To operate in recent months, businesses have overcome numerous hurdles, including abiding by the patchwork of evolving local, state and federal guidelines. They have also faced government-imposed shutdowns, monitored constantly changing health information, navigated critical supply shortages and absorbed demand shocks – all while trying to preserve as much of their payroll as possible. They are a big reason why the economy has added 10.6 million new jobs since April.

Despite these contributions during a historically difficult time, small businesses are deeply concerned about unpredictable COVID-19 liability exposure in the current environment. One law firm tracking claims finds there have been more than 4,800 COVID-19-related lawsuits. We believe that small businesses that have taken responsible steps to mitigate the spread of the virus should not be penalized simply because they are open to the public. Rather, businesses that made reasonable, good faith efforts to keep their doors open with measures in place to help stop the spread of the virus in their communities should be protected from liability claims.
Furthermore, to better empower our franchise small business owners to prevent the spread of COVID-19, our brands have also been regularly disseminating health updates, compliance information and operational “best practices.” Franchisees are true small business owners, and they have benefitted greatly from receiving these resources during a period that no one has navigated before. But the other beneficiaries are employees and customers, who are consequently experiencing heightened cleaning and operational standards at nearly every franchise small business they visit.

Thus, we support the *SAFE TO WORK Act* (S. 4317), which would cover all businesses that make reasonable efforts to help stop the spread of the virus, to protect employees and guests of businesses from unfounded lawsuits from December 2019 through December 2024. Importantly, the *SAFE TO WORK Act* provision clarifying that no joint liability is created whenever a business provides COVID-19-related assistance to a franchisee or that franchisee’s employees is important to promote information sharing and practices that best protect the workforce and the public.

To emphasize, we are not asking Congress to shield bad actors. Liability protections should not be given to any business that willfully ignored the risks of the spread of COVID-19 and committed gross negligence. These businesses made substantial investments to protect individuals from exposure following the latest health and safety guidelines, implementing unprecedented virus mitigation protocols, such as enhanced cleaning and sanitation practices as well as social distancing measures. It is only appropriate that Congress should protect such companies from claims of liability based on alleged virus exposure despite their best efforts to stop the highly contagious disease.

Now we need Congress to act. Franchise job growth led the previous economic recovery beginning in 2009, and franchise businesses are poised to do so again if Congress can provide common sense, short-term, COVID-19-focused liability protections. With each passing day, it is more important that Congress protect the businesses that have taken necessary precautions to help protect their employees and customers while serving the country during the crisis. It would be tragic if businesses that have mightily struggled to keep their doors open were forced to close because of the high costs of dealing with frivolous lawsuits.

For all these reasons, we urge passage of the *SAFE TO WORK Act* in the next congressional COVID-19 relief package.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Abrakadoodle
Adventure Kids Playcare
Aire Serv
Allegra Marketing · Print · Mail
Alliance Franchise Brands
Alta Mere
Always Best Care Senior Services
Amazing Lash Studio
American Pizza Community
American Speedy Printing Centers
Anago Cleaning Systems
Any Lab Test Now
Anytime Fitness
Arooga's Franchising LP
Auntie Anne's
Aussie Pet Mobile
Basecamp Fitness
BeLocal
Big Mama's & Papa's Pizzeria
BNI®
Body Bar Pilates
BrightStar Care
Bud's Place
Byrider Franchising
California Closets
Carl's Jr.
Carvel
CD One Price Cleaners
CertaPro Painters
Cinnabon
Closet & Storage Concepts
Coffee Beanery
COIT Cleaning and Restoration
College Hunks Hauling Junk
College Pro
CorporateConnections®
Coverall
Creative Colors International
Cruise Planners
Culver's
Daekyo America, Inc. (dba "Eye Level")
Dairy Queen
Dr. Nick's Transmissions
Dryer Vent Wizard
EarthWise Pet
ECP-PF Holdings Group, Inc.
Edible Arrangements
Egg N' Joe
Elements Massage
Elmer's Breakfast·Lunch·Dinner
EventPrep, Inc.
Express Employment Professionals
Famous Recipe Group, LLC
Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping
FASTSIGNS International
Figaro’s Pizza
FirstLight Home Care
FirstService Brands
Fish Window Cleaning
Fitness Together
Five Star Painting
FlannelJax’s
Floor Coverings International
Focus Brands
Fuzz Wax Bar
Glass Doctor
Goddard Systems, Inc.
Golden Corral
Great Clips
Green Burrito
H&R Block
Hair Saloon
Hand and Stone Massage and Facial Spas
Hardee’s
Hilton Worldwide
Home Clean Heroes
Home Instead Senior Care
HomeTask
Hooters of America
Hot Feet Fitness
Hounds Town USA
HouseMaster
Hungry Howie's Pizza and Subs Inc.
Image360
Insty-Prints
InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG)
InXpress
Jamba
Janarus - The Good Janitors
Jazzercise, Inc.
Just Between Friends
Kinderdance
KKP
LearningRx
Lemon Tree Hair Salons
Lendio Franchising
Lightbridge Academy
M Squared Franchise Consulting
Maid Brigade, Inc.
Maple Bear Global Schools
Marriott International, Inc.
Massage Heights
McAlister's Deli
Metal Supermarkets
Milex Complete Auto Care
Moe’s Southwest Grill
Molly Maid
Moran Family of Brands
More Space Place
Mosquito Joe
Mr. Appliance
Mr. Electric
Mr. Handyman
Mr. Rooter
Mr. Transmission
Multistate Transmission
N2 Publishing
Nick-N-Willy's Pizza
Office Pride Commercial Cleaning Services
OrangeTheory Fitness
OXXO Care Cleaners
Painting with a Twist
Palm Beach Tan
Pancheros Mexican Grill
Paul Davis Restoration
Payroll Vault
Petland, Inc.
Pillar to Post Home Inspectors
Pizza Schmizza
Planet Fitness
Precision Door Service
Profile by Sanford
PuroClean
Qualicare
Rainbow International
RE/MAX Holdings Inc.
Real Producers
Real Property Management
Recruiting in Motion
Red Burrito
River Street Sweets
Roy Rodger's Restaurants
RSVP
Schlotzky's
Self Esteem Brands
Servpro Industries, LLC.
Shoney's Restaurants
Signarama
Signs By Tomorrow
Signs Now
SmartView Window Solutions
Snapology
Sola Salon Studios
Sport Clips
Stratus Building Solutions
SuperSlow Zone
Taco John's International, Inc.
The Bar Method
The Barre Code
The Good Feet Store
The Grounds Guys
The Lash Lounge
The Salt Suite
The Woodhouse Day Spas
Tropical Smoothie Café
Tru REST Franchising
TSS Photography
Tutor Doctor
Two Men and a Truck® / International , Inc.
UCMAS
Vitality Bowls
V's Barbershop
Waxing the City
Wayback Burgers
Wellbiz Brands
Whataburger
Window Genie
Wings Etc
Wisdom Senior Care
Woofie’s, LLC
Workout Anytime Franchising Systems, LLC
World Gym International
Wow Wow Hawaiian Lemonade
WSI Digital
Yellow Van Handyman
Your Pie Franchising
Ziebart International