



## Connecticut Retail Merchants Association

January 14, 2022

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of Connecticut's retail businesses, the Connecticut Retail Merchants Association requests that you help small retailers rebuild their businesses and serve their communities by replenishing the Restaurant Revitalization Fund and expanding eligibility to small retailers to receive RRF grant funding.

The retail and restaurant industries were two of the hardest-hit sectors of the economy by the COVID-19 pandemic. Small retailers and restaurants alike were deemed "nonessential" and faced government-mandated closures and restrictions on operations, which led to substantial revenue losses.

Even though small retailers experienced comparable challenges, Congress only created a direct aid grant program for restaurants, leaving behind Main Street retailers that serve communities alongside restaurants all across our state.

Connecticut retailers – from Main Street businesses, many of them family operated, to national businesses operating here – are located in communities all across Connecticut, and interact with residents on a daily basis. Connecticut's roughly 41,900 retail establishments support more than 470,000 jobs and contribute more than \$34 billion to the state's economy.

Since the onset of the pandemic, our retail industry has worked closely with the appropriate state and local agencies to ensure that precautions were put in place and protocols observed, in the best interests of employees and customers. Connecticut retailers are active participants in community life, and share a commitment to the health and safety of customers and neighbors.

Small retailers continue to face challenges that slow their economic recovery, including rising inflation, supply chain backlogs and labor shortages. They deserve the same opportunity as restaurants to rebuild their businesses and serve their communities.

Please support continued funding for the Restaurant Revitalization Fund and expand eligibility to small retailers. If we can be of assistance to you on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Sincerely,

Tim Phelan  
President  
Connecticut Retail Merchants Association