

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Garret Graves
2402 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry Cuellar
2372 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Graves and Congressman Cuellar,

Thank you for introducing H.R. 7528: The Get America Back to Work Act of 2020 to address the issue of liability during the COVID-19 pandemic. Representing industries designated as essential critical infrastructure by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the undersigned associations believe that it is vitally important for lawmakers to protect businesses that took necessary precautions to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus from unfounded lawsuits. For that reason, we were pleased to see you introduce this bipartisan bill.

Throughout this crisis, essential businesses and their employees have worked hard to ensure their fellow Americans had access to necessities including food, water and beverages, medication, fuel, and other goods and services, including financial services. In short, these businesses heeded the call to serve their communities during this pandemic and overcame numerous obstacles to do so. They should not be punished just because they kept their doors open for the public.

No one is asking lawmakers to protect bad actors, such as businesses that willfully ignored the risks of the spread of COVID-19, committed gross negligence, and did not attempt to adhere to the recommended health and safety guidance. Businesses that made reasonable, good faith efforts to comply with government guidance, however, should be shielded from liability. Despite ever-changing health guidelines, these companies invested significant amounts of energy and resources to implement virus mitigation protocols. It was not easy, but they did so in order to ensure they could serve the American people during this crisis. Congress should protect these essential businesses from claims of virus exposure.

Thus, we thank you for your effort to protect businesses who are doing what they can to protect against COVID-19 exposure while serving their neighbors—and urge all House members to co-sponsor this legislation.

Sincerely,

American Bakers Association
American Beverage Association
American Frozen Food Institute
Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA)
ATM Industry Association
Coalition of Franchisee Associations

Convenience Distribution Association
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States
Electronic Funds Transfer Association
Electronic Transactions Association
FMI - The Food Industry Association
Franchise Business Services
Global Cold Chain Alliance
Healthcare Distribution Alliance
Independent Lubricant Manufacturers Association
International Dairy Foods Association
International Foodservice Distributors Association
International Franchise Association
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Association of Convenience Stores
National Association of Professional Employer Organizations
National Association of Truckstop Operators
National Beer Wholesalers Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Chicken Council
National Community Pharmacists Association
National Confectioners Association
National Fisheries Institute
National Franchisee Association
National Grocers Association
North American Meat Institute
Petroleum Marketers Association of America
SNAC International
Society of Independent Gasoline Marketers of America
United Fresh Produce Association