Legislation Text

File #: 200334, **Version:** 0

..Title
Resolution authorizing the joint City Council Committees on Public Safety and Commerce and Economic Development to hold public hearings on the safe re-opening of small businesses along commercial corridors, particularly restaurants that were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

..Body
WHEREAS, COVID-19 has reshaped many business models globally, and those hardest hit include tourism and hospitality. With new social distancing guidelines put in place by the Centers for Disease Control, the previous standard of operating a restaurant could simply no longer exist. As we continue to evaluate the current losses in that industry sector, we must also look to the future to ensure we can reopen these establishments safely for staff and patrons; and

WHEREAS, In April of 2020, 2 out of every 3 restaurant employees in America were laid off-- a figure extraordinarily higher than any other American industry. It is estimated that in March of 2020, the food service industry lost $30 billion in revenue, with an additional projected $50 billion in losses by the end of April 2020; and

WHEREAS, About half of Pennsylvania's restaurants are operating in some form of "take-out only" capacity due to statewide shutdown orders and new guidelines on essential businesses. Many restaurants simply do not have the capacity to pivot to take out only, and for others, a change to this format would result in more expenditures than revenue generated; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, over 330,000 people in the restaurant industry have been laid off or furloughed since the beginning of March 2020. Philadelphia restaurateurs have been forced to make the difficult decisions of laying off employees, or, in some cases, shutting their doors permanently; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately, we have seen many restaurants unknowingly serve their last meals due to COVID-19. Mad River Bar and Grille on Main Street in Manayunk, who has served the local community for over a decade, was forced to shut down. Additionally, Farmicia in Old City and Sate Kampar in East Passyunk have permanently closed their doors; and

WHEREAS, We must work to help guide the hospitality industry, including restaurants, through the COVID-19 pandemic, and prevent the permanent closure of as many of these businesses as possible. These establishments are the backbone of the Philadelphia experience, and are a major tax generator for the City as well; and

WHEREAS, A concerted plan established by the Philadelphia Health Department, the Commerce Department and the Department of Licenses and Inspections regarding post-COVID-19 insurance guidelines, licensing, training, sanitizing and safety protocols is needed to assist small restaurant owners in adjusting to our "new normal;" now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the joint City Council Committees on Public Safety and Commerce and Economic Development to hold public hearings on the safe re-opening of small businesses along commercial corridors, particularly restaurants that were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

..End