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For more information, contact

Bob Bonney, CEO

(636) 432-9506, bbonney@morerestaurants.org

New Polling Data Shows 3 out of 4 Missourians Support Restaurants Selling Alcohol To Go and for Delivery

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Newly released polling data shows that three in four Missouri adults favor allowing customers to purchase alcoholic beverages with their takeout and delivery food orders from restaurants permanently.

To help restaurants cope with dining rooms being closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Parson issued an executive order allowing restaurants to sell alcohol to customers for off-premise consumption when paired with food. Survey data reveals that customers are taking advantage of this new regulation as approximately one in four Missouri adults age 21+ who purchased takeout or delivery for dinner last week said they included an alcoholic beverage with their order.

Adam Tilford, CEO and co-founder of Mission Taco Joint expressed the importance of the matter. "I can only imagine what the post COVID-19 restaurant scene will look like - and it's a bit frightening. Even before the shutdown, the past few years, the dining scene has been shifting away from people dining-in to placing online orders to go and using delivery services. Restaurants are the backbone of communities, and we need help. The ability to sell alcoholic beverages to go gives us a fighting chance, in an industry with already razor-thin margins."

Mike Whatley, Vice President of State and Local Affairs at the National Restaurant Association, indicated the issue is national in scope. "Across the country, elected leaders have taken action to allow restaurants to sell beer, wine, and mixed drinks to customers via to go and delivery. These new regulations have been an essential lifeline for local operators during COVID-19 shutdowns. As restaurants face the long road to recovery in the coming months and years, we encourage elected leaders in Missouri to extend these popular regulations going forward."

In suburban St. Louis, Benjamin Brown, who owns and manages Satchmo's Bar and Grill, emphasized the importance of this lifeline. "The restaurant industry, among other aspects of our economy, must change to survive in a post COVID-19 world. Many restaurateurs find themselves

scrambling to find ways to adapt their business models to adjust for reductions in restaurant capacity due to social distancing requirements, waning public sentiment that is sure to last long past any government-imposed restrictions are lifted and many other unforeseen challenges that lie ahead.”

“I realize that as a small restaurant owner with limited resources, my survival depends on my ability to maintain as much of my business as possible by supplementing takeout and delivery orders to make up revenue lost by decreased dining room attendance. As we adjust to the "new normal" and pivot more of our sales towards take out, restaurants must maintain the ability to sell their most profitable items.”

“It is clear that a percentage of the population will simply not be comfortable sitting in a public dining room for the foreseeable future. The temporary waiver allowing cocktail sales has provided my business with a desperately needed lifeline, allowing us to bring back members of our staff that had been furloughed and providing us a 50% increase in gross sales since it's issuance. I am certain that if this additional revenue stream were to be eliminated before the underlying public fear caused by COVID-19 has completely faded, it would mean disaster for independent restaurant owners like me around the state.”

According to Bob Bonney, CEO of the Missouri Restaurant Association, "It's critical to the state and national economy that restaurants re-emerge from the effects of the pandemic. As an industry employing ten percent of the Missouri workforce, over 300,000 people, restaurants provide jobs and enrich the fabric of every community in the state. The creation of middle-class jobs in the restaurant sector consistently outpaces that of the overall economy."

The survey was fielded as part of an online omnibus study conducted by Engine among a demographically representative sample of 500 adults ages 21 or older living in the state of Missouri. This survey was live on May 8-12, 2020.



About MRA:

With origins tracing back to 1916, the Missouri Restaurant Association serves as an indispensable resource to the foodservice and hospitality industry by promoting, educating, empowering, and protecting the Missouri restaurant community.

About the restaurant industry:

The restaurant industry in America creates 1,000 jobs a day. One in three Americans gets their first job in a restaurant. From historical data, we know that from this group that begins in an entry-level, hourly position will come 90% of tomorrow's restaurant managers and 80% of future owners. Over the last five years, when the overall number of restaurants in the nation increased by 12%, the number of minority-owned restaurants grew at a rate over four times greater. The growth in middle-class jobs in the restaurant sector over the last five years has been four times that of the economy as a whole.

In Missouri, restaurants employ 10% of the state's workforce – over 300,300 people. We are an industry where an individual can begin with no experience and no formal education and reach the middle class and beyond. The industry is the second-largest private-sector employer in America and Missouri and employs more women and minorities in management positions than does any other. Restaurant job creation consistently outpaces the overall private sector by a wide margin – and has for each of the last 19 years.