



December 11, 2014

Dear Members of Congress:

When the 114th Congress convenes in January, it will include a record 101 women in its ranks. That's good news, but even more impressive numbers can be found in the restaurant and foodservice industry, where the real-life success stories show there is no limit to personal dreams and hard work.

Restaurant jobs provide opportunities for women of all backgrounds and experience levels, helping them gain the experience they need to jumpstart careers or the ability to advance toward management or executive positions more quickly than most other industries.

Today, I join over 600 women in an open letter to policymakers hailing the value of restaurant jobs and careers. The statement that follows, signed by women from around the country at all levels within the industry, tells the story of how women contribute to the economic recovery and growth of economies small and large. Some highlights include:

- **61% of women have worked in the restaurant industry.**
- **37% of women say the first job they ever held was in a restaurant**, providing a first start and career advancement for millions of people.
- **45% of restaurant managers are women** compared to an average of 38% in other industries.
- **More than half of U.S. restaurants are owned or co-owned by women.**
- **Women-owned businesses are growing at a faster rate** than the overall restaurant industry.
- **92% of women who have worked in a restaurant say the industry is a good place to get a first job and learn valuable skills.**

As the largest trade association representing restaurants nationwide, the National Restaurant Association looks forward to working with you to promote policies that allow our industry to continue its significant role of providing opportunities to all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Sweeney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dawn Sweeney
President and CEO
National Restaurant Association



Statement on the Restaurant Industry's Opportunities for Women

Like no other sector, restaurant jobs provide opportunities for women of all backgrounds and experience levels by helping them gain the experience they need to jumpstart careers or the ability to advance toward management or executive positions more quickly than most other industries.

Women have undeniably helped to shape the recovery and economic growth of this nation. Success stories are plentiful in the restaurant industry, and we are incredibly proud of the leadership role that women play in our industry, making it a field where women succeed more quickly and in larger numbers than most other industries.

Our industry provides opportunities to women of all ages and at all stages of their careers, from high school and college students to managers and owners. In fact, 61 percent of adult women said they have worked in the restaurant industry at some point during their life, while 37 percent said the first job they ever had was in a restaurant. Through this experience, they have honed skills that stick with them throughout their careers.

There are scores of women who have grown within the restaurant industry even transitioning from what were part-time jobs into successful careers. The restaurant industry has more women in management and ownership positions than virtually any other industry. Forty-five percent of managers are women compared to an average of 38 percent in other industries. A majority of restaurant businesses are at least half-owned by women—more than a quarter are majority-owned by women.

Women-owned businesses are thriving in our industry, growing at a faster rate than the overall restaurant industry. In a decade's time, the number of women-owned restaurants jumped 50 percent. During the same 10-year period, the total number of restaurant businesses in the U.S. rose by 36 percent.

The restaurant and foodservice industry is the nation's second-largest private sector employer—providing jobs to nearly 10 percent of our workforce—and women hold a majority of these jobs. Ninety-two percent of women who have worked in a restaurant say the restaurant industry is a good place to get a first job and learn valuable skills, while 75 percent say they would recommend that a family member or friend get a job in the restaurant industry. That's because workers recognize the opportunities for advancement to help them get ahead and the stability to secure fulfilling careers.

We are proud of our role in providing good-paying jobs and opportunities for women to advance their careers, while also providing all of our workers with flexible schedules that allow them to balance their family or education priorities with their work.

As a result of these flexible schedules and opportunities for growth, the restaurant industry spawns more than successful careers for women; it also gives many the chance to give back while working



at the same time. Many of our restaurants have an important impact on the community, and many of the small business owners are recognized as leaders in their communities.

Millions of women across the country demonstrate the impact restaurants have made on their local communities. We are proud of our industry – one that gives employees the chances and the skills they need to build successful careers to support themselves, their families and our communities.

For these reasons, we encourage policymakers to support our industry and the opportunities these jobs provide—for workers, their families and our nation’s economy.