

MOTION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOBS

Los Angeles is a global cultural and economic powerhouse, and its restaurant industry plays a pivotal role in shaping the city's identity and vitality. With over six thousand restaurants employing hundreds of thousands of workers, the restaurant sector serves as the backbone of one of Los Angeles's most dynamic local economies and contributes to its global reputation as a culinary capital. The workforce behind this industry is largely immigrants from other countries, including Mexico, El Salvador, and South Korea, among others.

As Los Angeles continues to grow as a tourist and entertainment destination, small businesses and their workers across the city are experiencing heightened financial insecurity. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with intensifying gentrification and rising living costs and low wages, have exacerbated the economic precarity faced by many restaurant workers and small restaurant owners. A study by the UCLA Labor Center and Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates of Southern California (KIWA) highlights the challenges facing small restaurants, including high operating costs, limited access to business resources, and unfair labor practices like low wages, tip theft, and wage violations. These structural barriers restrict economic mobility and make it difficult for small business owners to offer competitive wages or remain in operation.


Addressing these issues is essential not only for the economic security of Los Angeles residents but also to prepare the city for major upcoming global events, including the 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Olympic Games. With the influx of investment and tourism, the City of Los Angeles must ensure that its workers and small business owners, many of whom are immigrants and people of color, are supported, valued, and protected. Preserving culturally significant, independently owned restaurants is critical not only for maintaining Los Angeles's unique identity but also for ensuring an inclusive, resilient economy.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Office of Wage Standards (OWS) and Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD), with the assistance of the City Attorney and in collaboration with the Restaurant Equity Alliance, to develop recommendations to expand the eligibility for the City of Los Angeles Legacy Business Program to include restaurants and other small businesses that have operated continuously in the City for at least 10 years and that have a proven record of complying with local labor standards, as well as demonstrated at least three or more of the criteria currently being used for the existing legacy program. The report should also include recommendations for developing a Citywide Restaurant Protection Ordinance (CRPO). The CRPO should: 1) provide targeted, supportive measures such as education, outreach, and technical assistance for small and immigrant-owned businesses who contribute to Los Angeles' cultural identity; 2) additional support and expedited application processing for restaurants that have a strong track record of complying with local labor standard and health and safety codes and 3) establish partnerships with community-based organizations that support immigrant entrepreneurs and restaurant workers. The report should be presented to the Economic Development and Jobs Committee within 90 days.

PRESENTED BY:

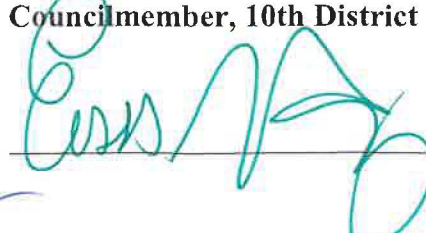


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