



Top chefs urge Congress to help end restaurant tariffs

WASHINGTON (Jan. 28, 2021) -- Today, the Coalition to Stop Restaurant Tariffs -- a group of award-winning chefs, restaurant and bar owners, and their suppliers -- [wrote to Congress](#), asking lawmakers to end crippling food and beverage tariffs.

"The Trump administration's 25-percent tariffs on European wine and food are a major cost for many small restaurants that are already barely surviving the pandemic," said Alice Waters, owner of Chez Panisse, the iconic Berkeley, California, restaurant that launched the farm-to-table movement. "Lawmakers can help carry the voices of so many local restaurants to President Biden -- removing tariffs from these products will immediately help us get people back to work."

The one-two punch of tariffs and Covid-19 have clobbered America's restaurants. Almost 40 percent will fold within six months unless they receive government support, according to a December poll of restaurant owners.

Congress has a narrow window of opportunity to help. Next month, by statute, the United States Trade Representative must review the restaurant tariffs, which were originally imposed in October 2019 as part of a U.S.-EU dispute over aircraft subsidies. "The previous administration was wrong to target our products during a global pandemic. USTR's February review is policymakers' chance to fix this mistake," said Mike Lata, owner of the critically acclaimed Charleston restaurants FIG and The Ordinary. "If they don't, these tariffs will continue to damage vulnerable restaurants across the country, kicking the industry while it's down and making it harder for restaurants to bring back staff."

"The tariffs have hit local restaurants at the worst possible time," lamented Nina Compton, James Beard Award-winning owner of Compere Lapin and Bywater American Bistro (BABs) in New Orleans, Louisiana. "Congress can help by speaking up on behalf of our servers, chefs, and kitchen staff that want to return to work. Remove tariffs on these products now to help many get back to work, and in the coming weeks, deliver broader aid like the RESTAURANT Act."

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About the Coalition to Stop Restaurant Tariffs

The Coalition to Stop Restaurant Tariffs, which represents restaurants in all 50 states, is calling on the Biden administration to end all additional tariffs on European food, wine, and spirits. Led by renowned chefs and restaurant owners, the coalition seeks immediate executive action to provide tariff relief for small and independent restaurant owners who are already struggling to survive the debilitating Covid-19 pandemic.

For more information, visit StopRestaurantTariffs.org.

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