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The Cornerstone of the Economy, Career Opportunities and Community Involvement
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National Restaurant Association Hails U.S. Sen. Landrieu's Pro-Small-Business Health Care Amendment, Commends Her Leadership

(Washington, D.C.) – National Restaurant Association President and CEO Dawn Sweeney made the following statement today regarding the introduction of an amendment to the U.S. Senate's health care reform bill by Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) that will help the nation's small businesses and restaurants:

"The National Restaurant Association strongly supports Senator Mary Landrieu's amendment for a 90-day waiting period for employers in the Senate health care legislation. This pro-restaurant amendment would eliminate the onerous fees currently in the Senate bill for waiting periods of less than 90-days.

"Senator Landrieu's pro-small-business, pro-worker amendment will enable restaurant operators to provide our employees the highest quality benefits at the most affordable price. On behalf of the nation's nearly one million restaurants and its 13 million employees, we thank Senator Landrieu for her outstanding leadership.

"Due to the restaurant industry's average annual turnover rate of 75 percent of the workforce, a 90-day waiting period is critical. Restaurateurs want to offer affordable health coverage for our employees and lower the cost of that coverage. By allowing a 90 day waiting period, restaurant operators will be able to keep the cost lower for premiums of their employees that stay with the restaurant long term.

"We strongly believe a 90-day waiting period before coverage requirements begin could have a significant impact on lowering health care costs our restaurateurs provide their employees – for both new and current employees. This reasonable waiting period will mitigate the resources spent to cover employees who have no intention of staying with the organization for an extended period of time.

"We are working hard in this debate to protect our industry and the men and women who work in it, and we truly appreciate Senator Landrieu's efforts on their behalf."

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Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which is comprised of 945,000 restaurant and foodservice outlets and a work force of 13 million employees. Together with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, the Association works to lead America's restaurant industry into a new era of prosperity, prominence, and participation, enhancing the quality of life for all we serve. For more information, visit our Web site at www.restaurant.org.