

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this conversation during the worldwide challenge we face. I feel very connected to my Oregon community and that feeling was amplified by hearing people like my former high school principle (hi Arnie) speak as the co chair of the Joint Special Committee today, amongst other familiar voices. I'm doing my best in this time to inform and support those in my community in the ways I can with information that is reliable, albeit from my home.

Along with thousands across the state, my wellbeing has become disrupted with the loss of my job as a direct result of Coronavirus. For nearly 20 years I has worked in the restaurant industry with my last eight years of employment at Portland restaurant Clyde Common who unfortunately had no option but to layoff their entire staff. In addition to my own immediate needs, I'm concerned about what assistance is on the table for small businesses as it relates critically to myself and my community's access to future employment security. I'm worried for my parent's and their ability to maintain an income with their farmstead goat cheese business as they had been relying heavily on restaurant orders to stay afloat. I can say that it was very comforting to hear that my concerns were voiced during todays special committee meeting. I stand with those voices that spoke on behalf of the restaurant industry and their calls to action - I believe Jason Brandt of Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association gave an accurate representation of what my restaurant community is going through. My (former) employer has no way of maintaining any sort of revenue stream during closure, yet has many expenses that I frankly don't know how they will cover. My (former) boss, Nate Tilden received a nomination as outstanding restaurateur in 2016 - and that he is, having provided so many opportunities to employees along the way to expand their passion and ability to start or contribute to businesses that have gone on to grow the restaurant economy. What he can do to maintain this societal contribution is directly dependent on his own ability to maintain the current expenses of his establishments. As I budget my life, eliminate any unnecessary spending, negotiate with the institutions that handle my rent and other required expenses, keep my distance from others, and maintain my own health, I need to know that the small businesses like Clyde Common in my community will be able to recover and continue to provide jobs.

In addition to loss of employment, health insurance will terminate at the end of this month for myself and my former coworkers, along with many others that are in similar circumstances. I will not be able to afford to maintain this insurance independently based on the fixed income I will hopefully be receiving as a result of filing for unemployment. Unfortunately I also fear for my health, would it be I contracted the virus. While I consider myself a healthy individual, I do have a history of asthma and repeat lower respiratory infections. I've contracted pneumonia a dozen times in my 35 years, many of which required ER visits and have resulted in multi day hospital recovery. If I'm no longer insured and do not qualify for OHP based on the amount of unemployment I expect to receive, what if any are my options if I were to need medical services?

I pose this message as an individual that is part of a community that faces similar challenges. There are undoubtedly tough choices to make and many more ahead. I thank you for reading my testimony and working toward what I hope to consider the best possible response to our current circumstances.

Stay safe,

Erika Goldin-Jones