

As an employee of a local restaurant in Bandon, I would request that you open all restaurants for dine in. It has been unbelievably difficult year financially and emotionally. I have never requested to go back to work as many times in my life as I have this year. I struggle to write this with so many things going through my mind. Let's start with the financial impact this has had. I became unemployed in March and I wasn't able to return work until September due to a cough once restaurants reopened in May, since a cough was a covid symptom. I was able to collect the remaining balance of my unemployment along with the federal assistance of \$600 without any issues thankfully until that balance was depleted. The problem with this is that my unemployment along with the assistance was only a portion of what I normally make. I know that I am one of the few. Once that balance was depleted is when the problems began. Applying for an extension and having to speak to an individual was a challenge to say the least. I would attempt to call for hours with the number of attempts being in the high hundreds and if you were lucky enough to get through you would be on hold for over 2 hours to only get disconnected to try again. Frustrating to say the least. During those times with no unemployment assistance bills would still come due and I paid many of my bills with credit cards and cash advances. Finally the extension goes through. The federal assistance ends and I am struggling to live on my weekly benefit amount. During this time that I had a cough I accrued over \$13,000 in medical bills trying to figure out why I was coughing so that I could return to work. Even with a negative covid test I was not released for work. I had to be 72 hours symptom free. Finally at the beginning of September I made the 72 hour time frame and was released for work. Only to be shut back down in November during some of the busiest days of the year through the holidays. I have yet to return to work. The owner of the restaurant I work at has not reopened. I had to apply for a new unemployment claim only to be denied because I had not worked enough hours. Oh the struggle of calling in to speak to someone at the unemployment office all over again. Finally 5 weeks later I got through successfully and spoke to someone. During this time I have watched my credit score plummet from missing payments and maxing out all of my cards to live. I know that I am just one of thousands that have had this struggle. The emotional stress of this is challenging as well. The ups and downs that come with waiting until Monday to see what our fate is opened or closed. It's stressful and takes it toll on a person. I have not been able to find any documentation that supports restaurants being a the center of covid outbreaks especially in our small community. I do not understand why particular industries are being discriminated upon. I have watched many restaurants take a huge loss from this bizarre shut down. All businesses should have the same opportunity to be open while practicing social distancing.