



Text File

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Bill No: 2021-1341, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2021, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced that, effective April 4, 2021, self-certified restaurants, which include those that have agreed to comply with all relevant public health safety guidelines, may increase indoor dining occupancy capacity from 50 percent to 75 percent, while those that don't self-certify may raise capacity to 50 percent, in addition to increases in permitted occupancy for various other related industry sectors, including service and hospitality businesses; and

WHEREAS, according to the current vaccine distribution schedule and eligibility guide issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, workers in the restaurant, service, and hospitality industries are slated to become eligible to receive Covid-19 vaccinations during Phase 1C, which is the second-to-last Phase currently planned; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has remained in Phase 1A of vaccine distribution for approximately three months, indicating that workers in the restaurant, service, and hospitality industries who currently won't be eligible for the receipt of vaccines until Phase 1C, will most likely remain ineligible at the time of the occupancy capacity increase the state will permit effective April 4, 2021; and

WHEREAS, many individuals in need of the vaccine are currently eligible, including the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions that make them especially susceptible to Covid-19, as well as essential workers from a variety of industries, such as health and healthcare delivery, childcare, education, home care, transportation, agriculture, and more. These individuals and groups have rightly been prioritized for many reasons; and

WHEREAS, countless in the restaurant, service, and hospitality industries, many of whom were deemed essential staff for essential businesses during the pandemic, have fared poorly in the last year as they faced of significant loss of income, greatly reduced job security, and, according to a recent study by the advocacy organization One Fair Wage, hostility from customers while trying to enforce public health safety protocols. Per the study, 83 percent of respondents indicated a decline in tips, with a full 66 percent going on to say that tips received dropped by more than 50 percent. What's more, 78 percent of those in the food service industry who participated in the study reported either being the subject of or witness to hostile, adversarial interactions with customers after trying to maintain public health requirements, with another 59 percent saying that it was a weekly occurrence at the very least; and

WHEREAS, local organizations such as Pittsburgh Restaurant Workers Aid, Pittsburgh Restaurant Opportunities Center, Pittsburgh Chapter of United States Bartender's Guild, and more have rightly called on the Pennsylvania Department of Health to add workers in the restaurant, service, and hospitality industries to the Phase 1A eligibility pool, especially in light of the state's moves to increase permitted occupancy in these establishments, which will permit additional in-house activity and will, in turn, inherently increase these risk to

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these essential workers, who have helped to keep this sector of the economy afloat during the pandemic, of contracting Covid-19; and

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh City Council must join the calls and advocacy for the well-being of workers in the restaurant, service, and hospitality industries.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh calls on Pennsylvania Acting Department of Health Secretary Alison Beam and the Department of Health to expand the Phase 1A eligibility pool to include workers in the restaurant, service, and hospitality industries, and to take all appropriate efforts to ensure that there's sufficient supply, distribution, and administration of vaccines for these individuals and those who are already eligible under state criteria; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council recognizes the essential work performed by those in the restaurant, service, and hospitality industries through the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as those organizations that continue to advocate for their well-being and security.