

United States Senate

April 5, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer,

I was recently informed that more than eighty employees who provide the Senate and Capitol Visitor Center's cafeteria services are being laid off due to lack of demand. Therefore, I write to ensure that you are aware of the negative consequences resulting from your decision to refrain from fully reopening the Capitol complex.

For nearly two years the U.S. Capitol building and facilities buildings have been closed to the American public. While others across the country found ways to fully and safely reopen, the Senate unfortunately lags behind.

Senators have already spoken against the continued closure of the Capitol campus. As you know, on March 1, 2022, the Senate passed a resolution in support of reopening the U.S. Capitol and Senate office buildings. Unfortunately, a month after the Senate approved this resolution, the Senate complex remains closed.

Its reluctance to move on from an unnecessary COVID lockdown status is not without consequence. We, as representatives of our states have not been as physically accessible to our constituents. The American people have been unable to enjoy the beauty of the Capitol buildings. And the businesses that serve the Capitol complex and its workers, have suffered.

The Senate restaurants have been acutely impacted by the Senate's reticence to return to normal. Sales are a fraction of where they were before the buildings were closed to the public. The plan to slowly open the buildings over the next six months will not restore business to normal levels, and as a result, dozens of restaurant employees will unfortunately be laid off this month.

It is time for the Senate to follow the lead of so many other Americans and return to normal. Doing so will be critical in preventing future layoffs of hardworking men and women who provide service to the Senate. I urge you to allow for increased public access to the Capitol building and Senate office buildings and to return to public visitation policies for the Capitol campus as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Mike Braun
United States Senator