



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 11, 2015

Contact: Justin Winslow
MICHIGAN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION
(517) 482-5244

MICHIGAN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS HOUSE BILL 4017

Passport Pizza Owner Offers Testimony in Lansing

LANSING, MI – Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) member Sue LaTour, owner of Passport Pizza in Macomb County, offered testimony today in support of House Bill 4017. The legislation, introduced by Jeff Farrington (R-Utica), amends the Michigan Food Law of 2000 to provide immunity from criminal and civil liability to certain persons donating food to non-profit organizations which then distribute the food.

The legislation represents necessary progress for a cause to which LaTour has dedicated her life. Last year, she won the National Restaurant Association's prestigious "Restaurant Neighbor Award" for her role as a conduit for restaurants, vendors, and grocery stores to donate leftover food that LaTour then distributes to non-profits, shelters, and soup kitchens throughout Macomb County.

Passport Pizza takes pallets of food that may only have a three day shelf life and distributes that food to local partners who can immediately give it to those who need it most. Passport Pizza's relationships extend to a broad span of business leaders, non-profits, and community based organizations to help countless people, including youth, families, students, churches, single mothers, and the homeless.

"Over 1.6 million people in Michigan are food insecure, meaning they don't know where their next meal is coming from or when. I feel blessed to be able to play a role in addressing that need in Macomb County, but our efforts have hit a wall that has nothing to do with food supply," said LaTour. "The food is available, but company policies designed to avoid legal liability limit the scope and type of food available, which in turn limits what we can distribute to those in need. This legislation will go a long way to address that shortfall and provide a balanced meal for those that need it most."

Under the bill, a retail food establishment, farmer, wholesaler, wholesale processor, distributor, or other person who donates food for use or distribution by a non-profit organization would not be subject to any criminal or civil liability resulting from the nature, age, condition, or packing of the food. The exception would be if the donor knew, or reasonably should have known, when the food was donated that it was adulterated or not fit for human consumption.

"Sue LaTour and Passport Pizza are the embodiment of a giving spirit present in so many community restaurants across the state," said MRA President and CEO Brian DeBano. "Restaurants are often the first to step up when someone in their community needs help, and in Sue's case, she knows she can help end hunger in her community. House Bill 4017 provides important protection for people like Sue who are simply doing the right thing."

To view a video about LaTour and Passport Pizza's food donation efforts, [click here](#).

The Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is the recognized leader of Michigan's hospitality industry, providing essential services to the foodservice community. Founded in 1921, the MRA represents nearly 4,500 Michigan foodservice establishments. The industry plays an integral role in Michigan's economy, employing more than 415,000 people and creating nearly \$14 billion in annual sales.

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