

Opportunity Wisconsin: Senator “Not That Fond of Restaurants” Johnson blocks critical support for hard-hit industry

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MADISON, Wis.—Today, Senator Ron Johnson blocked a bill to refill the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF), a critical resource that has allowed many Wisconsin restaurants and small businesses to keep their doors open during the pandemic. However, [not all Badger State businesses were able to access those funds and are now in danger of closing](#). Senator Johnson’s obstruction comes one week after he stated he was “[not that fond of restaurants](#)” after he was asked who in history he would like to dine with and where he would take them to eat.

Meghan Roh, Opportunity Wisconsin program director:

“Senator Johnson loves to talk about his support for Wisconsin small businesses and today he had the opportunity to quite literally put his money where his mouth is. Instead, Senator Johnson chose to block a bill that would have helped protect over [288,000 jobs and nearly 13,000 small businesses](#) across the Badger State. This, unfortunately, does not come as a surprise to anyone who has been paying attention. Just last week, Senator Johnson even proclaimed he was ‘[not that fond of restaurants.](#)’ We know Senator Johnson has constantly stood in the way of bringing good-paying jobs to the Badger State, but now he’s even refusing to protect the jobs that are already here. It’s time for Senator Johnson to stop putting politics over the people of Wisconsin and start supporting policies that help Wisconsin workers and families.”

President Joe Biden’s American Rescue Plan Act established the RRF, which allocated funding to help restaurants and other eligible businesses keep their doors

open. The original [\\$28.6 billion](#) was exhausted within three weeks of the launch; during the first three weeks that the RRF application portal was open, more than [372,000](#) businesses applied, requesting more than \$76 billion in funds.

The Restaurant Revitalization Fund Replenishment Act would allocate an additional [\\$40 billion](#) in direct relief for restaurants. The bill would have enough funding to provide grants of up to \$10 million to the [177,000 restaurants](#), roughly [two-thirds](#) of applicants, who didn't receive any grant money under the initial program due to insufficient funds. The Independent Restaurant Coalition authored a letter to Senators, signed by various industry groups, noting that nearly [four out of five of those](#) nearly 200,000 businesses who were unable to access funding are now in danger of closing.

[\[Learn more about how refilling the RRF will benefit Wisconsin's economy.\]](#)

Since early 2021, Opportunity Wisconsin has been working to hold Senator Johnson accountable to his constituents and to demand he vote for policies that support Wisconsin residents. In addition to holding conversations with Wisconsin workers and families across the Badger State, Opportunity Wisconsin has [spent over \\$5 million](#) in TV ads urging Senator Johnson to focus his work in Washington on addressing the economic needs of his constituents and to stop putting his personal profits over the people of Wisconsin.