



# Bryant University

HONORS THESIS

## The Recipe for Success: How Local Massachusetts and Rhode Island Restaurants Navigated and Survived COVID Restrictions

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**ABSTRACT**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the government restrictions adopted during the pandemic have had a detrimental impact on the continued survival and growth of many industries, including the restaurant industry. This study identifies critical regulations relating to COVID-19, implemented in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, as well as on a federal level, which directly impacted the restaurant industry. It is essential that certain economic and social factors are isolated as a means of establishing trends. In the case of this study, a mixed methods approach was used. The number of restaurants open, the amount of restaurant revenue, and the level of consumer spending at restaurants were utilized in this capacity for this study. In addition, interviews conducted in person at local restaurants helped ascertain which measures were implemented to adapt to the COVID-19 restrictions. In order to gather a wide-sweeping sample of the industry, multiple sectors and restaurant sizes were analyzed from both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. It was found that restrictions had a direct impact on the number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue restaurants made, the levels of consumer spending at the restaurants, and the number of innovations created in an attempt to combat the pandemic restrictions. While the direct insights relate to past events, the goal is to gain a better understanding of how businesses respond to public policies that are adopted in response to major life-altering events such as pandemics.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the world. Originating in Wuhan China, its outbreak has since induced a shock upon the world which has crippled many industries. While globally the effects of the virus have seemed to begin to dissipate with the production of numerous vaccines, the remnants of the virus continue to linger. Throughout the course of the pandemic, the effects have been devastating on the restaurant industry. Due to a significant lack of consensus from the federal government on how to deal with the pandemic, the continued survival and sustainability of this industry is holistically dependent on statewide and local regulations. Since state and local governments do not act uniformly as a single entity during the pandemic, these regulations have a tendency to vary with regards to when they were implemented and what type of policy was passed. These policies have ranged from forced closures to capacity requirements. An unintended side effect of these requirements has subsequently resulted in the inability of the restaurant industry to survive and grow.

This study identifies regulations that have been issued by the Rhode Island and Massachusetts governments, as well as policy recommendations from the CDC and the Trump and Biden administrations. This study examines economic and social factors, including restaurant revenue, the number of restaurant closures, and consumer spending levels within the restaurant industry. Establishing a correlation between the policies and these numerous factors will help determine the effect that regulations have had on state and local restaurant industries. Additionally, the interviews that were conducted provide an answer to the question of what measures restaurants implemented as a means of survival. Namely, alterations to the workforce, the implementation of better customer service, and the reliance on preexisting business ventures. By determining how restaurants are impacted by regulations, governments would therefore be able to better understand the impact of such regulations, as well as what issues can be considered when determining what measures restaurants may incorporate as a way of adapting to such regulations.

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**LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this literature review, we will be looking at several academic sources to help paint a picture of what regulations were put in place to stop the spread of Covid-19 and what immediate impacts resulted because of said regulations. Once the immediate impacts are uncovered, it would be possible to draw a conclusion on what future research on this topic might look like, as well as how this research could have future implications for the restaurant industry.

In order to examine any pandemic-era regulations or their subsequent effects, it is important to identify any factors which may have led to specific policy decisions. These were primarily psychological, institutional, and strategic. Psychological factors usually entail public opinion or governmental attention. Institutional factors include government effectiveness, social trust, and the existence of health departments. Strategic factors involve political or personal success. The significance of each factor in each state determined the construction of policies. The longer that public opinion is rested on a particular issue, the more attention by the government would be given to it. Subsequently, the more effective a government is at dealing with such restrictions, the more trust would be established within said government to implement future policies within a timely manner. Additionally, trust within a government allows a health department to recommend restrictions or policies more easily. Finally, the political or personal success of an individual may lead some to support or withhold support from certain policies (Maor et al, 2020). Improving certain aspects of these factors (i.e., policy coordination, more efficient emergency services, trust in government), policies would tend to be implemented faster (Dunlop et al, 2020).

In a recent study by Zoltan Acs et al (2016), the authors examine the motivations and effectiveness of public policies designed to encourage individuals to become entrepreneurs. Specifically, if an environment is lacking a critical necessity, individuals will come in and try to fill the void. In order to promote the filling of voids, regulations surrounding entrepreneurship need to subsequently encourage individuals to engage in this practice; regulations aimed at limiting innovation and the drive to eliminate the vacancy for a need will subsequently have the inverse effect. Additionally, regulations designed to encourage the

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practice of entrepreneurship may sometimes have the opposite effect. The study uses several examples to highlight the French Labor Market employment regulations that resulted in an informal “cap,” Small Business Administration regulations that resulted in an “information monopoly”, and a British Raj’s attempt to eliminate cobras creating a market for baby cobras instead. Most restaurants are small businesses founded by entrepreneurs. Discovering the rationale behind their continued existence, as well as identifying the motivations for certain practices are a necessary component for determining how restaurants respond to public policy (Acs et al, 2016).

The concept of policies negatively impacting a subset of an economy is present within a study that analyzed the economic impact of COVID-19 on the global restaurant and hospitality industry. Restaurants were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the total disappearance of sit-in guests. The cause of the disappearance occurred mostly due to public policies related to lockdowns. Couple this with stay-at-home orders and most restaurants were subsequently plunged into a liquidity crisis. In order for restaurants to survive, they were forced to “show care for customers and employees, plan to compete in a new world, and preserve and optimize liquidity during and post-COVID-19” (Dube, et al, 2020, p. 6). In addition to applying for aid for governmental and private sector funds, restaurants would have needed to adhere to safety regulations (Dube et al, 2020). This idea fundamentally requires policy to “include sustainable funding and [the means of] building resilience to prepare for any potential future major health threats” (Anderson et al, 2020, p. 5) that might arise in the future.

A study by Hyoung JuSong et al (2021) examined the relationship between various pre-pandemic characteristics of restaurants and their corresponding stock prices. Stock returns were generally impacted by the financial conditions of restaurants. Any “idiosyncratic pre-pandemic characteristics of restaurant firms act as significant conditions that either alleviate or aggravate the negative effect of COVID-19 on stock returns” (Song et al, 2021, p. 6). Restaurants that are larger in size and have larger cash flows are more capable of funding themselves. Additionally, a firm with more leverage may be viewed more favorably by

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shareholders and investors than restaurants with less leverage. As such, restaurants with more favorable pre-pandemic financial conditions were more likely to see less severe drops in stock returns and have a higher chance of survivability (Song et al, 2021).

An extension of this idea was found in a study that discussed several of the economic impacts COVID-19 regulations had on the restaurant industry. Specifically, these impacts include assessing the industry's current level of financial fragility, analyzing the extent of temporary closures and laid off employees, determining expectations about how long the crisis will last and how this will affect any business decisions, and identifying decisions by small businesses to seek funding through government aid. A significant pattern explained throughout discussion of each case emerges. Specifically, the more businesses suffered from one or more of the conditions, the more likely they were to lay off employees or close their business. These conditions were a direct result of government attempts to halt COVID-19 (Bartik et al, 2020).

Similarly with the restaurants themselves, the workers often suffered from a lack of income as a result of the policies implemented during COVID-19. Labor markets decreased drastically as the amount of liquid assets available to these individuals followed a similar pattern. As a means of handling this problem, short-term and long-term solutions would need to be implemented. In the short term, liquidity options would be necessary. However, to avoid a collapse of an entire sector of the economy, income and employment support would be necessary to keep this sphere of workers afloat (Piyapromdee et al, 2020).

While some policies have a direct economic impact, they can also promote societal changes as well. An article by Haitham M. Ahmed (2009) discusses the health consequences of fast-food consumption, as well as the historical and legal contexts of fast-food regulation in the United States. The study discusses the negative health impacts of fast food. As such, the implementation of regulations to discourage the practice was implemented. The regulations, including nutrient display, advertising restrictions, and taxation resulted in a decrease in the consumption of fast food (Ahmed, 2009). Additionally, if more resources are dedicated to the implementation of a policy, the more likely the enforcement will remain in effect (Siering,

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2021). Due to consumers' reactions to this public policy, it helps identify how small businesses, and subsequently restaurants, are capable of being affected by public policy designed for consumers (Ahmed, 2009).

This concept is applicable in a study which discusses reopening policies related to restaurants and tries to establish a correlation between reopening and an increase of COVID-19 cases. The study proves that such a correlation existed. While it did not differentiate between indoor and outdoor dining, the evidence from such laws suggests that keeping restaurants closed was an effective means of limiting the total number of COVID-19 cases. However, due to the fact that in many reopening policies other venues in addition to restaurants opened at the same time, the correlation may not be as significant as the study suggests. (Schnake-Mahl et al, 2021). A similar study that discussed the impact of mitigating the risks of COVID-19 found that policies which were designed to decrease the spread COVID-19 resulted in lower fatalities. However, the conflicting nature of COVID-19 policies limited their effectiveness. (Levin, et al).

This idea is further explored in another article, which discusses the gaps in information systems that allow for timely decision making. Usually, "public health responses should be premised on an evidence base which relies heavily on the collection, assessment, and dissemination of results from standardized public health reporting" (Subbian et al, 2020, p. 5). These reporting standards were not uniform at the beginning of the pandemic. As such, public policy recommendations were delayed. Standardization of data recording practices would allow both State and the Federal governments to address problems quickly. (Subbian et al, 2020)

Finally, a study by Binzhe Wang et al (2022) from the Journal of Regional Science reviewed the heterogeneous impacts of COVID-19 on chain restaurants in post lockdown United States, from the lens of social interactions. Restaurants are invaluable social places in cities. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically interrupted the everyday interactions that people previously enjoyed in these places. COVID-19 positivity rates are negatively correlated with the number of visits in restaurants (Wang et al 2022). This also applied to fast food restaurants



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versus full-service establishments. Specifically, fast food restaurants saw a less significant decline in demand than full-service establishments. Additionally, the amount of demand decreased in areas of a significant Asian American presence, a higher percentage of Americans who skewed liberal, and with higher restaurant diversity (Yang et al, 2020). As the COVID-19 rates increased, the number of visits to restaurants decreased. As vaccination rates increased, so did the number of restaurant visits. As such, the amount of social interaction within restaurants can be correlated with the number of visits in a restaurant and the subsequent regulations on a regional basis (Wang et al, 2022).

In summary, this literature review covered how Massachusetts and Rhode Island regulations with regards to COVID-19 have had an immediate impact on the success of each state's local restaurant industry. Specifically, most of the research took a national perspective on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected restaurants. It is important to note that, as of the time of this literature review, the United States is still considering COVID-19 a pandemic. As such, regulations are constantly changing and the long-term impacts from previous, current, and future regulations are not fully comprehensible at this point. Additionally, it is important to note that at the time of this study's conclusion the amount of available literature on the topic of how Massachusetts and Rhode Island COVID-19 regulations have impacted restaurants is quite limited. While the pandemic has impacted the global market of restaurants, the regulations in question may not be applicable to other states, the country as a whole, or internationally. In order to answer how COVID-19 has impacted the global or national restaurant industry, a more thorough analysis of restaurants, regulations, and economic conditions on a global and/or national level is required.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The mixed method approach that will be adopted in the honors thesis will be a comparison between a timeline of laws, guidance, executive orders, and other relevant regulations from federal, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island regulations relating to COVID-19 and restaurants, and a series of government and private sector primary source data including COVID cases,

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restaurant revenue, the number of restaurants open, and consumer spending. The comparison utilized a correlation matrix as a means of determining the similarities between each factor. While this answered the impact of policies on the restaurant industry, it did not highlight what methods the industry used to adapt. To that end, interviews were conducted as a way of explaining certain patterns or trends that may appear as a result of the data collected. Specifically, the interviews were utilized as a means to identify measures in which restaurants were able to adapt to the pandemic. There were ten restaurants interviewed from both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The interviews covered restaurants from a variety of different sectors and sizes. This approach is relevant to the issue of how Massachusetts and Rhode Island COVID-19 regulations affected the restaurant industry. The approach establishes a direct link between the regulations and many different economic factors, and it also showcases a correlation between the regulations and the effects they have on restaurants from an economic standpoint.

The data sources that are being used for this approach include mostly private sector data from Opportunity Insights. With regards to establishing a record of regulations, the United States Department of Defense and National Archives provide a background for federal regulations. News sources, ranging from the Providence Journal, Boston Globe, NBC Boston, and WPRI, helped identify regulations occurring in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

## **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **Timeline**

In determining the criteria for regulations, a timeline of Massachusetts and Rhode Island COVID-19 restrictions was catalogued. The restrictions include executive orders, guidelines, and responses by groups within each state. For Massachusetts, the state's executive authority rested with then Governor Charlie Baker. For Rhode Island, the state started the pandemic off with then Governor Gina Raimondo. When she became a member of Biden's Executive Cabinet as the Secretary of Commerce, Governor Daniel McKee became the state's executive authority in her stead. Additionally, due to the fact that many of the state's restrictions were based on guidelines developed by the federal government, a timeline of federally implemented restrictions was also implemented. (Appendix A)

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For the timeline, the sources that were referenced include news organizations such as the Providence Journal, Boston Globe, NBC 10 Boston, NBC WJAR, WPRI, NPR, 7 News Boston, WBZ CBS News Boston, WBUR, Masslive, WCVB, East Greenwich News, Yahoo News, and briefings from the Massachusetts and Rhode Island governments. For the federal government timeline, the resources utilized were based on briefings from the Trump and Biden administrations, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Federal Reserve, and the Department of Defense.

The time analyzed was from January 7, 2020, until August 6, 2021. The first date on the timeline was when the United States began adopting a process to begin tackling the Coronavirus. The last date on the timeline was the lifting of the statewide emergency that occurred in Rhode Island as a means to deal with the Pandemic. (Appendix A)

In order to differentiate the different states and the federal government, a color code was adopted. The restrictions that occurred in Massachusetts were coded orange. The restrictions that occurred in Rhode Island were coded green. The federal government's restrictions were coded in light red. (Appendix A).

#### Numbers

Opportunity Insights is an economic tracker which tracks the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on people, businesses, and communities throughout the United States. The data is retrieved from private sector data compiled with the help of Harvard University, Brown University, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Additionally, the data is collected from point-of-contact devices, payroll, and publicly available government collected indicators. The data is collected on a national, state, and county level. The industries which are analyzed include entertainment, grocery, restaurants, retail, and transportation. Additionally, the incomes of the data set are also analyzed, with low through high incomes examined. The indicators that were utilized included consumer spending, small businesses revenue, small businesses open, job postings, employment, unemployment claims, online math participation, student progress in math, COVID-19 infections, COVID-19 vaccinations, and time outside the home (The Economic Tracker).

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The industry that was focused on was restaurants. The data that was incorporated in this study were consumer spending, small business revenue, and small businesses open. Additionally, a focus on Massachusetts and Rhode Island was essential. While national data was analyzed as well, due to the fact that there is such a significant difference between political philosophies and approaches towards dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic, the data was not incorporated outside of using it as a base. (Appendix B)

The data based on Economic Insights provided percentage changes from pre-pandemic levels. Specifically, the data originated from January 2020. However, the website did not incorporate actual figures. As such, only the percentage changes were utilized in this study. Additionally, the percentage changes from pre-pandemic levels were taken weekly (The Economic Tracker).

Application

Based on the timeline and the data that was collected, five different guideline restrictions were selected to isolate the effects of government intervention on the restaurant industry.

Massachusetts and Rhode Island both contained dates which were selected from the timeline.

For Massachusetts, the restrictions began with the initial shutdown of all restaurants on March 17, 2020. The next restriction was the slight reopening of restaurants on June 6, 2020. The reopening began to halt during the summer of 2020, and capacity limits on the number of individuals capable of being in an indoor establishment was officially lowered to ten on November 2, 2020. These limits were mostly lifted on March 1, 2021. Finally, on May 29, 2021, all pandemic-era restrictions were lifted. (Appendix A)

The restrictions selected from Rhode Island started with the initial shutdown on March 17, 2020. With a decline in Coronavirus cases, reopening occurred on May 18, 2020, with outdoor dining at restaurants relegalized. As there was an uptick in Coronavirus cases during the summer of 2020, capacity limits on the number of individuals indoors were reinstated on November 5, 2020. These limits would be loosened on March 19, 2021. Finally, on May 21, 2021, most COVID-19 era restrictions were lifted. (Appendix A)

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Rationale

Despite the inclusion of the federal government's policies early on, only Massachusetts and Rhode Island's policies were considered in this study. Aspects of the federal government, such as the CDC and FDA, determined guidelines and were used as guidance for states when their governments determined policy. That being said, the government did not directly have an impact on the ability of restaurants to stay open by implementing or enforcing restrictions on the ability of restaurants to remain open. States are managed by different governors and legislative bodies from other states. As such they do not make uniform policy. The data from states would subsequently vary depending on the decisions that were made by the governors and legislative bodies from such states.

Another factor that was considered when determining the policies was identifying regulations which afforded a large enough sample size to determine the possible impact of the policies was imperative. This means that there needed to be enough time to determine the outcome of a restriction. A period of 6 weeks was determined to be a significant enough amount of time to determine the outcome of any restrictions. Any restrictions which were implemented in a period shortly after their previous counterparts were not considered. This is in part due to the fact that gathering data from a singular restriction would be difficult due to the challenging nature of differentiating the correlating data affected from each point.

The types of restrictions chosen were a vital component of the study. While the timeline considered all policies which had an impact on the restaurant industry, some had a more quantifiable impact on the restaurant industry. The announcement of upcoming policies would not necessarily impact the number of restaurants open or business revenue due to the fact that such announcements do not have an ultimate impact on such variables. Additionally, it is difficult to determine how effective vaccine availability had on the aforementioned variables due to their indirect connection to restaurants and the amount of revenue that was generated. Only policies which had a direct impact on the number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue generated, and the levels of consumer spending were considered for this study.

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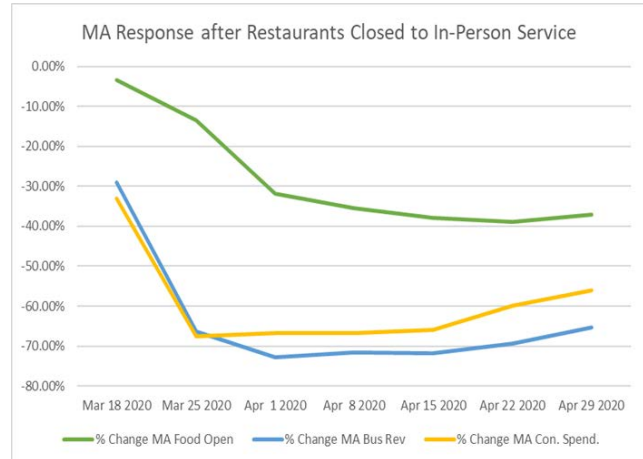
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### Results: 1<sup>st</sup> Regulation

In order to analyze the results, it is important to chronicle the policies individually. For the

closures of restaurants, as referenced in the graphs below, there was a sharp decline in restaurants open, restaurant revenue, and consumer spending for both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. For Massachusetts, restaurants were already suffering a -3.5% decrease in the number of restaurants open from pre-pandemic



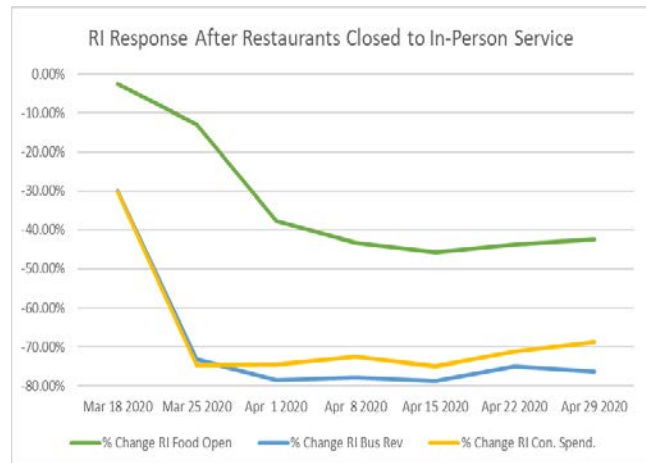
levels. Once restaurants were halted from in person service, those figures dropped to -13.5% for the week of March 25, 2020, -31.8% for the week of April 1, 2020, -35.4% for the week of April 8, 2020, -38% for the week of April 15, 2020, -39% for the week of April 22, 2020, and -37.1% for the week of April 29, 2020. For the amount of restaurant revenue, the amount of restaurant revenue was already dealing with -29.1% decrease from pre-pandemic levels. Similarly to the amount of restaurants open, those figures dropped to -66.4% for the week of March 25, 2020, -72.9% for the week of April 1, 2020, a decrease of -71.7% for the week of April 8, 2020, for the week of April 15, 2020 there was a -71.9% decrease, a -69.3% for the week of April 22, 2020, and a -65.3% drop for the week of April 29, 2020. For the levels of consumer spending, the figures began at a -33% decrease from before the pandemic. Following the closure of restaurants, there was a -67.6% decrease in consumer spending for the week of March 25, 2020, -66.8% for the week of April 1, 2020, -66.7% for the week of April 8, 2020, -65.9% for the week of April 15, 2020, -59.9% for the week of April 22, 2020, and -56.1% for the week of April 29, 2020 (Appendix B).

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Rhode Island had similar trends for the same period. The number of restaurants open in Rhode Island prior to the closures of in-person service had a -2.6% decrease relative to pre-pandemic levels. Following the forced closure of restaurants of in person service, there was a -12.8% decrease in the number of restaurants open for the week of March 25, 2020, -37.7% for the week of April 1, 2020, -43.2% for the week of April 8, 2020, -45.7% for the week of April 15, 2020, -43.8% for the week of April 22, 2020, and -42.4% for the week of April 29, 2020. For changes in restaurant revenue, there was already a decrease of -30.0% compared to pre-pandemic levels. Following the closures of restaurants, revenue dropped by -73.1% for the week of March 25, 2020, -78.5% for the week of April 1, 2020, -77.9% for the week of April 8, 2020, -78.6% for the week of April 15, 2020, -74.9% for the week of April 22, 2020, and -76.2% for the week of April 29, 2020. Finally, consumer spending levels were at -30.2% before the implementation of the shutdown order on in-person restaurant service. Consumer spending levels decreased to -74.8% for the week of March 25, 2020, -74.5% for the week of April 1, 2020, -72.5% for the week of April 8, 2020, -75.0% for the week of April 15, 2020, -71.1% for the week of April 22, 2020, and -68.7% for the week of April 29, 2020 (Appendix B).



### Analysis of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regulation

The significant drop in the number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue generated by the restaurant industry, and the levels of consumer spending were hardly surprising. During this period of time, not much was known about COVID-19. As such, a shutdown for an indefinite amount of time to slow the virus' spread was deemed a necessary course of action. Both Massachusetts and Rhode Island enacted their policies on March 17, 2020. This took place after the White House announced an initiative, "15 Days to Slow the Spread", the day prior. The policy guidelines enacted by the CDC and the White House Coronavirus Task

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Force suggested that individuals who believed they were sick to contact their medical professionals, keep those who were immunocompromised away from the virus, and encouraged the following of state and local governments' procedures (Appendix A).

Restrictions in Massachusetts were hardly as prohibitive as those in Rhode Island during the six-week period following the closure of restaurants. Then Governor Raimondo passed an executive order enacting a stay-at-home order for all non-essential workers. The order would later give Rhode Island's Department of Health the ability to fine those who did not comply with the stay-at-home order. This executive order remained in effect until May 8, 2020, despite a protest on April 25, 2020, against the stay-at-home order (Appendix A).

For both states, all three factors seem to have leveled out by the week of April 1, 2020. This could be the lower limit of restaurants who were forced to temporarily close due to COVID-19. Additionally, by the week of April 22, 2020, the amount of revenue generated by restaurants and the levels of consumer spending in restaurants from both Massachusetts and Rhode Island appear to slowly increase above their lows following the shutdown. While this may be due to an anomaly, it would suggest that individuals slowly became more comfortable dealing with COVID-19. Additionally, restaurants would have recovered from the initial shock and would have implemented measures that were designed to mitigate the effects of the pandemic (Appendixes A, B).

Results: 2<sup>nd</sup> Regulation

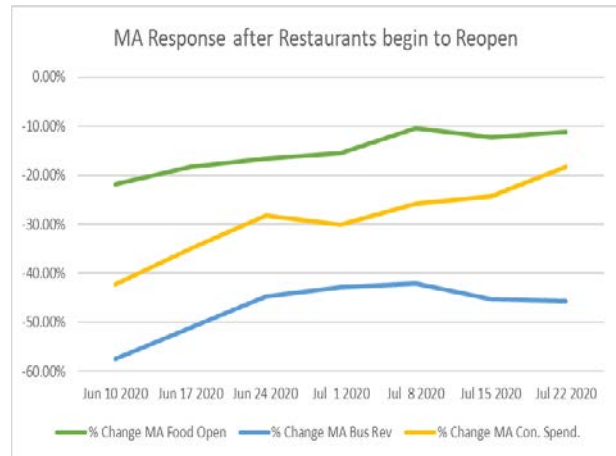
The second restriction analyzed was the ability of restaurants to reopen for outdoor dining. On June 6, 2020, Restaurants in Massachusetts were able to reopen as a part of Governor Baker's phase 2 reopening plan. Prior to reopening, the number of restaurants open was -21.8% of pre-pandemic levels. Those numbers increased to -18.3% in the week of June 17, 2020, -16.7% during the week of June 24, 2020, -15.4% for the week of July 1, 2020, and -10.5% during the week of July 8, 2020, before stabilizing to -12.3% during the week of July 15, 2020, and -11.2% during the week of July 22, 2020. The amount of restaurant revenue during this period of time followed a similar trend, with -57.4% of pre-pandemic levels once restaurants were able to reopen. This number increased to -51% during the week of June 17,



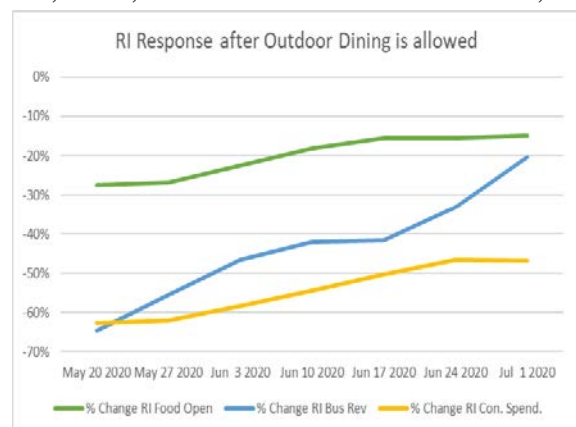
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2020, -44.6% during the week of June 24, 2020, -42.8% during the week of July 1, 2020, and -42% during the week of July 8, 2020. These figures stabilized to -45.2% during the week of July 15, 2020, and -45.7% during the week of July 22, 2020. For consumer spending levels, the number prior to when restaurants were allowed to reopen for service was -42.3% compared with the levels prior to the pandemic. These figures increased to -35% in the week of June 17, 2020, -28.3% in the week of June 24, 2020, -30% for the week of July 1, 2020, -25.7% during the week of July 8, 2020, -24.3% for the week of July 15, 2020, and -18.30% during the week of July 22, 2020 (Appendix B).



While Rhode Island’s timetable was somewhat earlier to Massachusetts’ relative to when outdoor dining was allowed, the state followed similar trends. The number of restaurants open following the reopening of Rhode Island’s restaurants was -27.6% compared to pre-pandemic levels. This number increased to -26.8% during the week of May 27, 2020, -22.4% during the week of June 3, 2020, -18.2% in the week of June 10, 2020, -15.6% in the week of June 17, 2020, -15.5% during the week of June 24, 2020, and -15% during the week of July 1, 2020. The amount of revenue generated by restaurants followed a similar trend, with -64.7% of pre-pandemic levels following the lowering of restrictions allowing for restaurant service. This amount jumped to -55.4% during the week of May 27, 2020, -46.6% during the week of June 1, 2020, -42.1% in the week of June 10, 2020, -41.5% for the week of June 17, 2020, -33.1% during the week of June 24, 2020, and -20.3% during the week of July 1, 2020. Finally, consumer spending levels in restaurants were at -62.6% of pre-pandemic levels during the



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week in which the restaurant industry in Rhode Island was allowed to reopen. Following this policy change, the levels shifted to -62% for the week of May 27, 2020, -58.3% for the week of June 3, 2020, -54.4%, in the week of June 10, 2020, -50.2% during the week of June 17, 2020, -46.6% in the week of June 24, 2020, and -46.7% during the week of July 1, 2020 (Appendix B).

Analysis of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regulation

Once restaurants were able to reopen for outdoor service, the number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue generated, and the level of consumer spending increased substantially. For restaurants who were not in a position to transition to complete take out services, this was a way for these restaurants to reopen and offer some semblance of their previous services. Additionally, outdoor dining afforded restaurants another opportunity to expand their services. By this point in time, the decrease in COVID-19 cases encouraged more people to leave the safety of their homes and take advantage of services that did not require close contact with one another. With more people visiting restaurants, the amount of revenue that would have been generated would have subsequently increased as a result (Appendixes A, B).

With regards to how the factors responded, there were numerous regulations which were implemented after restaurants were allowed to open for outdoor dining. In Massachusetts, indoor capacity limits were enacted for the first time since the shutdown. This allowed restaurants to serve people inside. Despite the implementation, only consumer spending levels increased. Both the number of restaurants which were open and the amount of revenue generated stagnated. While there could be numerous explanations for this, the most likely explanation is similar to that of the response to the first regulation; the number of restaurants open and the amount of revenue generated were not impacted by the allowance of indoor dining. It is also possible that such a change is simply an aberration which may have yielded different results if a longer analysis was done following the allowance of indoor dining (Appendix B).

Rhode Island saw multiple policies implemented once outdoor dining was allowed. Specifically, restaurants were able to serve indoors at 50% capacity on June 1, 2020, the

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restrictions on travel from out-of-state were lifted the next day, and on June 30, 2020, the number of people capable of gathering indoors increased to 25. This amount of variation would have made it difficult to correctly ascertain the impact of allowing outdoor dining. That being said, there does not appear to be any significant variations shortly after outdoor dining was allowed, save for a significant increase in the amount of revenue generated following the week of June 17, 2021. There were no policies implemented prior to said week or during it. As such, it is likely just an aberration (Appendix A).

### Results: 3<sup>rd</sup> Regulation

The 3<sup>rd</sup> regulation which was analyzed occurred once capacity limits were reintroduced.

These were implemented in response to an uptick in Coronavirus cases over the summer of

2020. The capacity limits in both Massachusetts

and Rhode Island took place on November 2,

2020, and November 5, 2020, respectively. For

Massachusetts, the number of restaurants open

prior to the reimplementing of capacity limits was -1.1% pre-pandemic levels. This number

began to decrease, falling to -3.5% during the week of November 11, 2020, -5.4% in the week

of November 18, 2020, -4.1% during the week of November 25, 2020, -5.1% for the week of

December 2, 2020, -4.7% during the week of December 9, 2020, and -3.5% during the week

of December 16, 2020. The amount of restaurant revenue saw stable results with a slight

decline. The amount of revenue prior to the policy was -37.2% relative to pre-pandemic

levels. This figure transitioned to -36.9% during the week of November 11, 2020, -34.7% for

the week of November 18, 2020, -36.7% during the week of November 25, 2020, -41.5%

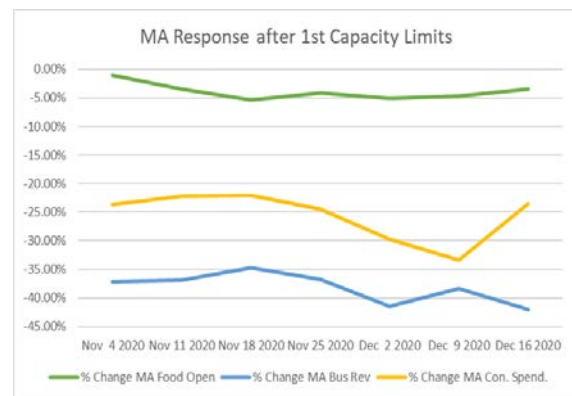
during the week of December 2, 2020, -38.3% during the week of December 9, 2020, and -

42% during the week of December 16, 2020. The levels of consumer spending in restaurants

faced an adjustment period followed by a steep decline and readjustment. Prior to the capacity

limit reimposition, the levels of consumer spending were at -23.7% of pre-pandemic levels.

This changed to -22.2% during the week of November 11, 2020, -22.1% in the week of



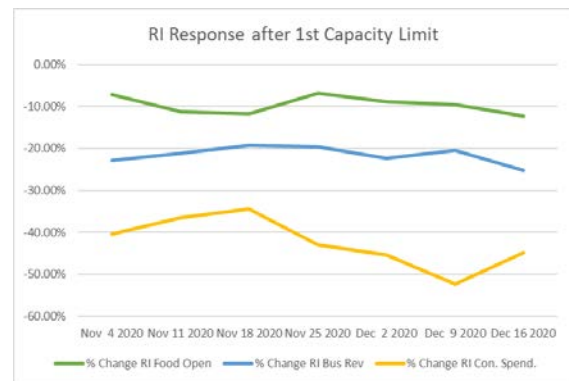
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November 18, 2020, -24.5% for the week of November 25, 2020, -29.8% during the week of December 2, 2020, -33.4% during the week of December 9, 2020, and -23.6% during the week of December 16, 2020 (Appendix B).

For Rhode Island, the number of restaurants which were open prior to the capacity limits was -7.1% that of pre-pandemic levels. Following the policy's implementation, the number decreased to -11.2% during the week of November 11, 2020, and -11.8% during the week of November 18, 2020. While there was a brief outlier during the week of November 25, 2020, at -6.8%, the number began declining again to -8.8% during the week of December 2, 2020, -9.5% during the week of December 9, 2020, and -12.2% during the week of December 16, 2020.

The amount of restaurant revenue prior to the implementation of capacity limits was -22.8% of pre-pandemic levels. There was not a significant change in the next few weeks as the number increased to -21.2% in the week of November 11, 2020, and -19.2% in the week of November



18, 2020, before slowly stagnating to -19.5% during the week of November 25, 2020, -22.3% during the week of December 2, 2020, -20.5% during the week of December 9, 2020, and -25.2% during the week of December 16, 2020. For consumer spending, the level prior to the capacity limits was -40.4% of pre-pandemic limits. This number increased to -36.5% during the week of November 11, 2020, and -34.4% during the week of November 18, 2020. This figure began to decline to -42.9% during the week of November 25, 2020, -45.4% during the week of December 2, 2020, -52.3% during the week of December 9, 2020, and -44.9% during the week of December 16, 2020 (Appendix B).

Analysis of 3<sup>rd</sup> Regulation

The reintroduction of capacity limits which had been previously lifted, only served to inhibit the success of the restaurant industry in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. With the winter months just around the corner and the weather beginning to get colder, fewer people would want to sit outdoors to be served. This would theoretically cause customers to spend

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less because that their options for seating would be limited. However, in Massachusetts, the levels of consumer spending did not significantly decrease until the week of November 25, 2020. This drop could partially be attributed to Thanksgiving the following week.

Traditionally, people are less likely to spend time in restaurants during this holiday as they would spend the holiday with friends or family. As such, it's not surprising that the numbers dropped during this week. However, levels would continue to drop until the week of December 9, 2020. During this week, Governor Baker announced that restaurant patrons would be required to wear masks indoors while not eating or drinking. Consumer spending levels immediately jumped up. While it is difficult to ascertain whether this was simply a variation, it is possible that this jump was due to customers feeling safer eating in restaurants with the new restrictions in place (Appendix A).

The amount of revenue generated within Massachusetts followed similar trends. Despite the limitations caused by the capacity limits, revenue did not substantially decrease until the week of Thanksgiving. The amount of revenue dropped inversely to consumer spending following Governor Baker's new masking restrictions. While customers might have felt safer, it appears that this did not translate into revenue generated. Furthermore, the number of restaurants open saw a minor decline once the capacity limits were reintroduced. However, such a decline leveled out within 2 weeks. By this point in time, it is logical to assume that restaurants already had a plan in place and were less likely to close as a result (Appendix A).

Rhode Island followed similar trends. The number of restaurants open saw an initial hit following the capacity limits to 50%, but quickly rebounded. Additionally, customer spending at restaurants saw a massive decline during the week of November 25, 2020, that would only recover during the week of December 16, 2020. During this time, Governor Raimondo implemented a stricter capacity limit to 33% during the week of December 2, 2020. The levels of consumer spending were already on the decline, so it is difficult to determine the impact such restrictions had, particularly when they would seemingly leap upwards 2 weeks later. Capacity limits during this period of time did not seem to have too much of an impact on the amount of revenue which was generated. In comparison to the number of restaurants open in

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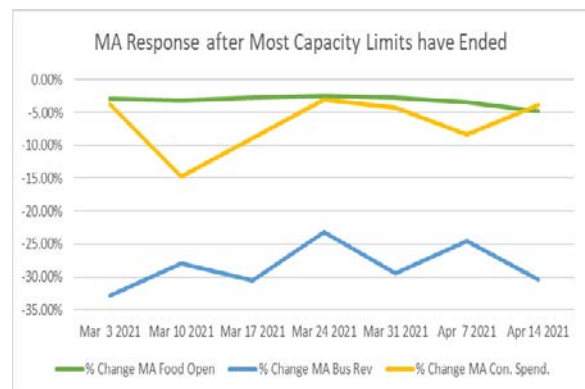
each state, it is likely restaurants determined appropriate measures to keep revenue relatively even (Appendix A).

### Results: 4<sup>th</sup> Regulation

The 4<sup>th</sup> regulation reviewed from each state that was enacted were the easing of restrictions.

These came about as a result of the reduction in COVID-19 cases and the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. For Massachusetts, this occurred on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The capacity limits were lifted, allowing restaurants to operate at 100% capacity. The immediate impact was

conflicting. For the number of restaurants open, there was a -2.9% decrease relative to pre-pandemic values prior to the easing of restrictions. These numbers shifted to -3.1% during the week of March 10, 2021, -2.7% during the week of March 17, 2021, -2.5% during the week of March 24, 2021, -2.7%



during the week of March 31, 2021, -3.4% during the week of April 7, 2021, and -4.8% during the week of April 14, 2021. The amount of restaurant revenue followed similar fluctuations, with a -32.8% decrease upon pre-pandemic levels. Following the easing of limits, the amount of revenue changed to -28% during the week of March 10, 2021, -30.6% during the week of March 17, 2021, -23.2% during the week of March 24, 2021, -29.5% during the week of March 31, 2021, -24.5% during the week of April 7, 2021, and -30.4% during the week of April 14, 2021. The most interesting response towards the easing of restrictions was the levels of consumer spending. The initial value prior to the change was -3.7% of pre-pandemic levels. However, there was a sharp decrease to -14.8% during the week of March 10, 2021. These values would normalize at -8.9% during the week of March 17, 2021, and would continue on a trend of -3% during the week of March 24, 2021, -4.20% during the week of March 31, 2021, -8.40% during the week of April 7, 2021, and -3.80% during the week of April 14, 2021 (Appendix B).

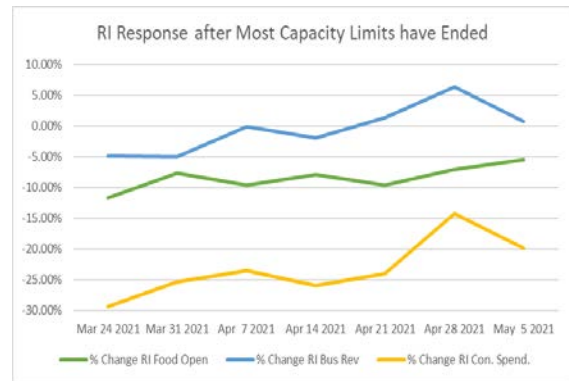
With regards to Rhode Island, most of the capacity limits were lifted on March 19, 2021. At this point in time, the number of restaurants open was -11.7% of pre-pandemic levels. These

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levels increased to -7.7% during the week of March 31, 2021, -9.60% during the week of April 7, 2021, -7.9% during the week of April 14, 2021, -9% during the week of April 21, 2021, -7% during the week of April 28, 2021, and -5.4% during the week of May 5, 2021. In terms of restaurant revenue, the amount of revenue prior to the removal of most capacity limits was -4.9% of pre-pandemic levels.

Following the implementation of a decrease in capacity limits, the amount of revenue swung to -5% on March 31, 2021, before increasing to -0.1% during the week of April 7, 2021, -1.9% during the week of April 14, 2021, 1.4% during the week of April 21, 2021, 6.4% during the week of April 28, 2021, and 0.8% during the week of May 5, 2021.



In comparison to the amount of restaurant revenue that was generated in each state, the amount of consumer spending at restaurants saw an increase. Prior to the policy implementation, the levels of consumer spending were at -29.4% of pre-pandemic levels. The levels increased to -25.4% during the week of March 31, 2021, -23.5% during the week of April 7, 2021, -25.9% during the week of April 14, 2021, -24% during the week of April 21, 2021, -14.3% during the week of April 28, 2021, and -19.8% during the week of May 5, 2021 (Appendix B)

Analysis of 4<sup>th</sup> Regulation

Following the lifting of capacity limits within restaurants, there was a massive decline in consumer spending in Massachusetts restaurants. Outside of announcements made regarding vaccine eligibility, there were no significant policies passed during this time by Governor Baker. It is possible that such a sharp decline was a simple aberration. The data would suggest such an outcome due to the fact that there was a swift rebound and consumer spending levels evening out to levels prior to the lifting of capacity limits. The amount of revenue generated followed a similar pattern of variability. The only factor which drastically changed in Massachusetts was the number of restaurants open. This value dropped slightly but remained consistent throughout. As was the case with the response for previous restrictions, it is likely

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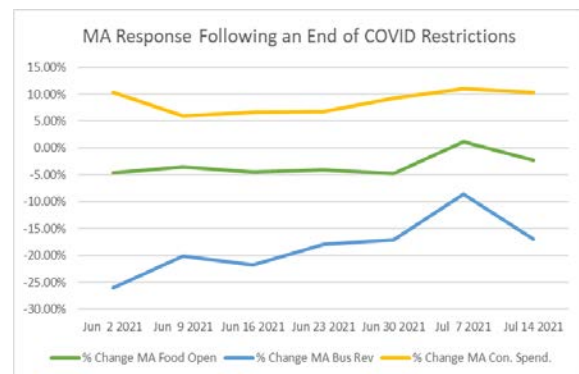
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that by this point in time, there would not be too much shifting in the number of restaurants open as a result of any regulation short of lockdowns (Appendix A, B).

Unlike Massachusetts, restaurants in Rhode Island seemed to fare better as a result of the lifting of capacity limits. While these limits would be lifted almost two-and-a-half weeks after Massachusetts, all three factors jumped up as a result of the removal of previous policy. In fact, the only decline in both restaurant revenue and consumer spending took place following the state's non-vaccine related COVID-19 update, in which fully vaccinated individuals were no longer required to mask while outdoors. This decline may have caused the decline due to mild uncertainty regarding the new policy, though it is difficult to ascertain within the window of the previous policy. Similar to Massachusetts, the number of open restaurants had a drastic change, though the number of them which were open was higher than before lifting of capacity limits (Appendix B).

### Results: 5<sup>th</sup> Regulation

The 5th regulation for both states regarded the reopening of each state. This occurred once enough people had access to the COVID-19 vaccine. For Massachusetts, reopening took place on May 29, 2021. The number of restaurants which were open at this point in time was -4.6% of pre-pandemic levels. This number slowly moved to -3.5% during the week of June 9, 2021, -4.5% during the week of June 16, 2021, -4.1% during the week of June 23, 2021, -4.7% during the week of June 30, 2021, 1.1% during the week of July 7, 2021, and -2.3% during the week of July 14, 2021. For restaurant revenue, there was -26% of pre-pandemic levels before complete reopening took place. This number would rise to -20.1% during the week of June 9, 2021, -21.8% during the week of June 16, 2021, -17.9% during the week of June 23, 2021, -17.1% during the week of June 30, 2021, -8.6% during the week of July 7, 2021, and -16.9% during the week of July 14, 2021. Consumer spending at restaurants was a little more sporadic, with 10.3% of pre-pandemic levels prior to the complete reopening. This dropped to 5.9% during the week of June 9, 2021,





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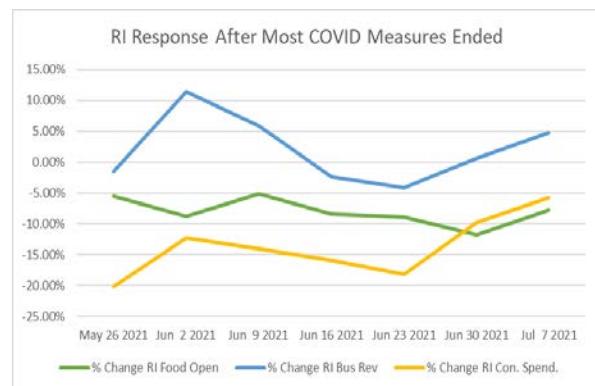
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before rising to 6.6% during the week of June 16, 2021, 6.8% during the week of June 23, 2021, 9.2% during the week of June 30, 2021, 11% during the week of July 7, 2021, and 10.4% during the week of July 14, 2021 (Appendix B).

For Rhode Island, most of the state's pandemic restrictions were lifted on May 21, 2021. The number of restaurants which were open during this period was -5.5% of pre-pandemic levels. This value changed to -8.8% during the week of June 2, 2021, -5.1% during the week of June 9, 2021, -8.4% during the week of June 16, 2021, -8.9% during the week of June 23, 2021, -11.8% during the week of June 30, 2021, and

-7.7% during the week of July 7, 2021. The amount of revenue that restaurants were bringing in when reopening occurred was -1.5% of pre-pandemic levels. This spiked to 11.4% during the week of June 2, 2021,



before returning to 5.9% during the week of

June 9, 2021, -2.4% during the week of June 16, 2021, -4.1% during the week of June 23, 2021, 0.7% during the week of June 30, 2021, and 4.8% during the week of July 7, 2021.

Customer levels were at -20.1% when reopening was initiated. This value went to -12.2% during the week of June 2, 2021, -14% during the week of June 9, 2021, -15.9% during the week of June 16, 2021, -18.1% during the week of June 23, 2021, -9.8% during the week of June 30, 2021, and -5.8% during the week of July 7, 2021 (Appendix B).

### Analysis of 5<sup>th</sup> Regulation

The reopening of the country returned the country to a period of time which had not been seen since before the pandemic. Despite the near normalcy, not everything returned to such levels.

In Massachusetts, the levels of consumer spending were significantly above pre-pandemic levels. This suggests that people were more eager to spend money once the pandemic had mostly ended. While there was a mild decrease in consumer spending a week after

Massachusetts reopened, such levels would stabilize. The amount of revenue generated and the number of restaurants open would increase as a result of reopening, though the number of restaurants open increased slower than the amount of revenue received. Both factors suffered

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a slight decrease during the week of July 7, 2021. While there is nothing to suggest that such a change was nothing more than an aberration, it is possible that the July 4, 2021, holiday may have impacted such rates (Appendix B).

With regards to Rhode Island, the factors were a little more chaotic than Massachusetts. The amount of revenue generated, and consumer spending levels spiked following reopening. However, these factors would dip back down the following week. Aside from the ending of mask mandates on June 1, 2021, there does not seem to be any significant factors which would have caused such variation. It would appear that the state took a little bit of time adjusting to the reopening before stabilizing. This was highlighted when all factors finished with an upwards trajectory on July 7, 2021 (Appendixes A, B).

Correlation

In order to determine the similarities between the number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue generated by the restaurant industry, and consumer spending levels in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island, a correlation table was set up. Correlation is a measurement which analyzes how many fluctuations certain variables have with one another. A correlation of 1 between variables would equate to them increasing and decreasing parallel to one another, whereas a correlation of 0 would equate to one variable increasing while the other decreases.

	% Change MA Food Open	% Change RI Food Open	% Change MA Bus Rev	% Change RI Bus Rev	% Change MA Con Spend.	% Change RI Con Spend.
% Change MA Food Open	1					
% Change RI Food Open	0.949311078	1				
% Change MA Bus Rev	0.86178185	0.871844012	1			
% Change RI Bus Rev	0.852162223	0.858669662	0.882686273	1		
% Change MA Con Spend.	0.860013326	0.844294247	0.900082357	0.902165937	1	
% Change RI Con Spend.	0.828407566	0.855335733	0.945100053	0.893458127	0.942214678	1

Figure (A) – Correlation Table

In this table, there does appear to be some variation in the levels of correlation each factor has with one another. That being said, all factors were relatively close to 1. This means that the

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number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue received, and consumer spending levels at restaurants, regardless of the state, were significantly correlated with one another.

## **INTERVIEWS**

### Examination of Interviews

While the impact regulations had on the restaurant industry is evident as a result of the analysis of the number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue from the restaurant industry, and the levels of spending by consumers at restaurants, it does not examine how individual restaurants were able to survive the pandemic, nor what measures said restaurants implemented as a way to survive. To this end, 10 interviews from both Massachusetts and Rhode Island restaurants were conducted. The restaurants selected for this study in Massachusetts were The Park Lunch, the 99 Restaurant franchise in Amesbury, Massachusetts, Coachmen's Lodge, Goodstuff Smokehouse, and Chococoa Baking Company. In Rhode Island, the restaurants were Zorba's Pizza and Pub, Gentlemen Farmer, Jackie's Galaxie and Sushi Bar in North Providence, the Chilis in Lincoln, Rhode Island, and the Uno's Pizza location in Smithfield Rhode Island. These establishments were chosen as a way to gather information from a wide assortment of restaurants of different sizes, clientele, and types of food served (Appendix C).

The first stage of the interviews was recruitment. Initially, restaurant owners and managers were identified via LinkedIn or through their own websites. Then an email or phone call would be made as a way to schedule appointments. However, no restaurants contacted in this manner returned communication. A way around this predicament was to head to restaurants in person and ask the restaurant owner or manager for an interview. During the recruitment stage, it was discovered that asking for interviews in the mid-afternoon, between 2:00 P.M. and 3:30 P.M., yielded the most results. Most managers were able to have an interview at that particular point in time. If a manager was not present or if that time was not optimal for an interview, a request was made for a more convenient time.

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In order to yield the best results from managers during an interview, a series of questions were developed to aid in the process. Most of the questions were created to get an idea of the restaurant before and during the pandemic. Specifically, a general understanding of the performance of the restaurant before the pandemic and once it broke out was identified. Additionally, there was a focus on what measures were implemented by the restaurant as a means of surviving the pandemic. The overall effects of the pandemic were also discussed as a means of understanding the pandemic's impact on the restaurant industry on a micro level. Finally, a series of questions was asked to gain information regarding customer levels before, during, and after the pandemic in order to build a picture of the restaurant as a whole. While it was important to hit each one of the aforementioned points, it was also critical to let restaurants tell their stories. As such, if there were any details brought up during the interviews, such topics would be explored further and may have been utilized for future interviews.

Specifics regarding each restaurant's performance during the pandemic were not requested. While some managers were open to sharing general information regarding sales and customer spending, most of the managers were hesitant to share specific financial information. There were some who outright refused to delve into certain topics once they were brought up. Additionally, managers who worked at regional or national chains often did not know specifics regarding certain business decisions. Chief among these were the application and usage of PPP loans (Appendix C).

#### Performance of Restaurants Before and During the Pandemic

When asked this specific question, most respondents stated that their restaurants were performing significantly well or had high margins of growth. Even restaurants which had only recently opened, such the 99 Restaurant in Amesbury and Goodstuff Smokehouse, which had opened 3 months and 3 years old prior to the shutdown respectively, saw significant growth. Once the pandemic hit, the margin for growth stopped entirely. Due to restaurants' inability to serve customers indoors, a huge chunk of sales was suddenly not available. Additionally, restaurants that made a significant profit from alcohol discovered that this venture suffered

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significant losses. Only Zorba's Pizza and Pub, which already had infrastructure prepared for takeout, saw virtually no hit to sales (Appendix C).

Due to the significant drop in customers and revenue being brought in, many restaurants had to readjust their staffing. Some resorted to mass furloughs or layoffs, with Uno's Pizza furloughing 90% of their workforce. This turned out to be detrimental, as workers who were laid off benefited from unemployment. Former employees were often making more from unemployment than they were from their previous jobs. As such, many would refuse to return to work once the opportunities returned. Even restaurants who were able to absorb some of the shock from the initial shutdowns were forced to adapt to the change in the restaurant worker landscape (Appendix C).

#### Adaptations Used by The Restaurant Industry

With no plans in place to deal with something as devastating as a pandemic, most restaurants suffered economically. With the elimination of in-person service, restaurants changed their business models towards takeout. While some restaurants, such as Zorba's Pizza and Pub, were already in a position to solve this predicament due to their existing business models, most relied on in-person service as their main source of revenue. As such, their services needed to be revamped to tap into this market. Restaurants who had their own websites prior to the pandemic, such as the Park Lunch, decided to revamp their existing infrastructure. Other restaurants looked to food delivery companies as a means of expanding their services. Door Dash and Uber Eats were used by Jacky's and Chili's, with Chili's developing a partnership with Door Dash to establish a ghost kitchen. Additionally, as a means of ensuring the safety of customers and workers, many restaurants offered curbside delivery in place of traditional carryout options. This strategy was employed through Chococoa Baking Company, which offered their café products via this method as opposed to their in-person service (Appendix C).

During the pandemic, some restaurant owners had the ability to lean on non-restaurant business ventures to prop up their restaurants. For restaurants who were reliant on a single product or product line for the majority of their sales, they would transition such offerings to

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in-person and online retail offerings. This would open their services to a customer base which may not have necessarily known about or visited their restaurant. Chococoa Baking Company's signature product is its whoopie pie. It was ranked as the top whoopie pie by Yankee Magazine. The increased publicity allowed them to lean more on retail for their sales. The profits of many restaurants were based on alcohol sales. When restaurants were closed to in-person service, they subsequently could not take advantage of this market. However, Massachusetts and Rhode Island both authorized restaurants to serve alcohol with takeout offerings. The market for such products would not fully recover until reopening (Appendix C).

Despite many of the new opportunities which had become available as a result of the pandemic, one problem would continue to emerge for every restaurant. The closing of in-person service limited the amount of revenue generated by restaurants. As such, many found difficulties in paying expenses. One such expense was workers. Many restaurants determined that they were unable to retain their workers until either they were able to adapt to a new type of service or if conditions within their communities or states improved. These furloughs were devastating for the restaurant industry, with some, such as Uno's Pizza, having to furlough almost 90% of their workforce. Most of these workers would take advantage of unemployment as a means of supplanting their previous forms of income. This new source of income was often more than what they would be making at their previous jobs. As such, some refused to return to their previous work once conditions improved due to the subsequent loss of income. Additionally, the uncertain nature of the pandemic encouraged some workers with pre-existing health conditions or who were at or close to retirement age to leave the workforce entirely (Appendix C).

There was a significant disparity between restaurants who were able to keep their workforce employed and those who were not. Among the restaurants interviewed, Chili's, Chococoa Baking Company, Goodstuff Barbeque, and The Park Lunch suffered little to no worker retention issues due to the fact that they were able to continue paying wages. This was not the case for Uno's Pizza, 99 Restaurants, Coachmen's Lodge, and Zorba's Pizza and Pub, who

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consistently struggled with worker retention. While larger establishments, such as Chili's, were able to rely on corporate funds to retain their workforce, others did not have this option. There was, however, an offering from the government to help solve such issues. Specifically, Payment Protection Program funds were used by many small businesses, including restaurants, as a way to cover critical expenses during uncertain times. Additionally, restaurants that had an existing or established community within their own workforce would have an easier time retaining workers. Finally, with a significant difficulty in hiring new workers, the wages and benefits offered to restaurant workers significantly increased. As referenced by Kevin Miller of Goodstuff Barbeque, "Workers were paid low wages and forced to work high hours. Now they are able to work 40 hours but still live a manageable life" (Appendix C).

#### Effects of the Pandemic on the Restaurant Industry

During the pandemic, many things were implemented to maintain restaurants and to keep them operational. This includes increased sanitation, the installation of plexiglass, and outdoor dining. With regards to sanitation, there was a significant push to keep workers and customers as safe as possible. The main issue here was the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 throughout the pandemic. Recommendations from the CDC regarding safe distances between others, masking, and quarantine times changed quite frequently. It was difficult for restaurants to evolve quickly. Additionally, if one of the workers or customers contracted COVID-19 or came into close contact with someone who did, the worker would not be able to work again for an extended amount of time. As such, if too many workers contracted the virus or were in close contact with someone who contracted the virus, a kitchen could shut down. Depending on the available staff, workers who were out as a result of COVID-19 could restrict the number of individuals that they could serve. This was illustrated by Marco Enriquez of The 99 Restaurants in Amesbury. He claimed that they were able to run at full capacity of what was allowed if any number of the workers were restricted from working as a result of COVID-19. Due to this, sanitation of all equipment and customer spaces was enacted and enforced. Since reopening, most restaurants have maintained their previous levels of cleanliness (Appendix C).

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Once partial reopening took place for indoor dining, restaurants such as the Park Lunch constructed plexiglass dividers as a means to protect customers from potentially spreading COVID-19 to other parties while eating. The effectiveness of such changes on keeping restaurant customers safe was not analyzed. That being said their effectiveness at sending a message of cleanliness encouraged some customers to return or stay when cases began to rise. Since reopening has occurred, some restaurants have since taken them down. Others have left them up due to the effort required to remove them (Appendix C).

One of the major changes to the dining landscape involved outdoor dining. This practice was initially instituted as a way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by providing an outdoor space. As a result, the limits regarding the number of people capable of being served were often larger than those for indoor dining. This provided a lifeline for restaurants who were struggling with takeout. Many restaurants hastily made investments into this market. When full reopening took place in late spring 2021, the popularity of outdoor dining during the pandemic encouraged restaurants to keep the practice once the weather became warm enough (Appendix C).

While inflation and supply chain issues were not fully analyzed in this study, both came up frequently during interviews. Specifically, the issue of inflation was referenced on both the worker side and supply side of the business. Wages and benefits have risen in order to recruit a workforce which was not interested in working under previous conditions. Inversely, the costs of food products, which fluctuated at seemingly random intervals, caused the price of certain goods to follow suit. In order to maintain profitability, these costs were passed onto the customers who often had to pay more for goods and services than they had previously. A critical component of inflation has been the rise of supply chain issues. These issues have resulted in certain products not being as accessible as they once were, as well as a subsequent rise in prices. This also resulted in steep costs to the customer (Appendix C).

#### Customer Levels

During the pandemic, there was a significant decrease in customer levels at restaurants. While many restaurants would continue to prosper because of regulars, most would not be able to sustain such income levels through takeout services alone. Additionally, the uncertainty



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regarding the pandemic caused some customers to avoid restaurants entirely. As the pandemic continued, conditions became safer. Customer levels would rise and fall with the types of services restaurants were able to provide, along with sentiments from their customer base regarding COVID-19 at the time. Once vaccines became readily available and full reopening took place, most restaurants with the exception of Coachmen's Lodge have returned to pre-pandemic customer levels. Despite a resurgence in the number of customers, the levels of growth which many restaurants prospered from before the pandemic have not necessarily returned. This can be partially attributed to inflation which has plagued the industry since the beginning of the pandemic. Finally, there has been a significant shift with regards to revenue. Specifically, takeout services have expanded rapidly since the outbreak of the pandemic. This service has largely remained consistent, as there appears to be a significant trend towards such services (Appendix C).

Differences Between State

During the interview process, numerous differences emerged between restaurants in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Out of the restaurants interviewed in Rhode Island, none benefited from PPP loans or knew if they had benefited with only Zorba's Pizza and Pub sharing that they applied for PPP loans. Additionally, the restaurants in Rhode Island typically suffered from more worker retention issues than those in Massachusetts. Finally, the impact on the communities where the restaurants were located was not as frequently discussed as those in Massachusetts. While these differences were apparent, it would seem as though sales of restaurants between the two states were not dissimilar to one another (Appendix C).

The interview process in Rhode Island was slightly different from that in Massachusetts. For starters, three national or regional chains were interviewed in Rhode Island, compared to only one in Massachusetts. Additionally, managers and owners in Rhode Island tended to be less willing to share pertinent information than those in Massachusetts. There is also a political difference between Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The policies enacted in each state were similar but had enough variation that the impact was evident on a macroeconomic level and may have also been evident on a more microeconomic level. Finally, there were only a small number of interviews conducted in each state. As a result, certain parts of both states did not

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have a sample. With a larger sample size, these differences might not have been as apparent (Appendix C).

Differences Between Size

During interviews, restaurants which had a large revenue basis were typically cut out from PPP funds. Due to their existing size, the theory would be that the company would be able to pay for expenses themselves using existing capital. Restaurants which were small businesses also tended to explain their impact on the community. Specifically, Chococoa Baking Company donated 10% of their revenue to the Hospital Healthcare Heroes fund. Goodstuff Smokehouse gave away 25,000 free lunches to school children who needed food. This impact would build loyalty towards the restaurant and encourage future sales. Additionally, smaller restaurants typically had the ability to cultivate a community within their own restaurant and build loyalty within the company. This was evident through the small business's ability to retain workers. Despite the size disparity, there was nothing to suggest that trends surrounding the amount of revenue changed as a result of the size of the restaurant. The lack of financial data from these establishments hinders accuracy (Appendix C).

**CONCLUSIONS**

Restrictions and policies designed to slow the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic had a direct impact on restaurants. Specifically, the number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue generated by the restaurant industry, and the levels of consumer spending in the restaurant industry. From an analysis of five restrictions enacted within Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the effects of the pandemic were highlighted on a macroeconomic level. All three were significantly correlated with one another, regardless of which state each factor each was conducted in. Looking through the initial closing of restaurants to in-person service, the change in existing policy caused a sharp decline in all three indicators in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Subsequently, restaurants would reopen for outdoor service and all indicators would trend upwards. However, as the pandemic continued, the variability of restaurant revenue and customer spending levels would increase. While some of the variability can be explained through the implementation of subsequent regulations and

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policies within each state analyzed, there do not appear to be too many indicators which would suggest such results outside of statistical anomalies. With regard to the number of restaurants open, the lack of significant movement following the passing of regulations seems to suggest that restaurants within the industry have implemented several adaptations in order to survive a hostile environment.

Interviews were conducted to answer how restaurants survived. Specifically, what measures were undertaken by the restaurant industry as a means of survival. While each restaurant would conduct their business in a different way from one another, several similarities began to emerge regardless of the state where business was conducted, the size of the restaurant, and the type of food offered. The three major measures undertaken by the restaurant industry include a significant shift towards making service more convenient, support from other business ventures or the introduction of new ventures, and a change in measures designed to keep existing employees or hire new staff. With regards to making restaurants more convenient for customers, takeout was essential, particularly when dining service was prohibited. Restaurants either improved their existing infrastructure or developed partnerships with takeout giants in order to tap into a new market. Support from other business ventures within a company's portfolio removed the pressure from a restaurant. This allowed the restaurant to survive until they were capable of operating at previous levels. Finally, the limitation placed upon the industry through the unwillingness of workers to return to previous standards forced the industry to increase wages and benefits as an incentive to bring workers back.

While national data was examined, it was difficult to examine why national policy affected the number of restaurants open, the amount of revenue generated, and the levels of consumer spending at restaurants. The federal government did not enact policies which had a direct impact on the restaurant industry outside of PPP provisions and vaccine availability. Due to this fact, states with differing populations and cultural viewpoints could act in accordance with one another. Additionally, there were several instances where data was either not available or could not be extracted in a succinct manner to correctly determine the results of

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such policies. When policies were enacted within close proximity to one another, it was also difficult to differentiate the data from each in order to examine the effects of each policy. Further research into how different states and different policies impacted the restaurant industry could be explored.

The information gathered for the interviews was located mostly within isolated pockets within driving distance. Due to the fact that restaurant owners and managers were not always in the best position to have interviews when requested, a smaller sample size was taken. Additionally, the failure to connect with restaurant owners and managers via electronic methods significantly limited the ability to take interviews remotely. Under different circumstances, such difficulties would not have had such an impact on the ultimate results, and a larger sample size may have been obtained.




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**APPENDICES.**

Appendix A – Timeline of Events in MA, RI, & US

Key:

 : Massachusetts  
 : Rhode Island  
 : Federal Government

**January 7, 2020:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established the Coronavirus Incident Management System (Coronavirus).

**January 17, 2020:** The CDC implements public health screenings at airports in San Francisco, New York City and Los Angeles (Coronavirus).

**January 29, 2020:** President Trump established an interagency task force aimed at dealing with COVID-19 (Statement from the Press Secretary).

**January 31, 2020:** The Department of Health and Human Services declares a public health emergency for the United States as a means of aiding the nation's healthcare community in response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

**March 6, 2020:** President Trump signed COVID-19 bill, passing \$8.3B for crisis response for non-Department of Defense relief (Remarks by President Trump at).

**March 9, 2020:** The Governor of Rhode Island, Gina Raimondo, declared a state of emergency for Rhode Island in response to the Covid pandemic (Miller, G. Wayne, Raimondo Declares).

**March 10, 2020:** The Governor of Massachusetts, Charlie Baker, declared a state of emergency for Massachusetts in response to the Covid pandemic (COVID-19 State).

**March 11, 2020:** President Trump announces travel restrictions from Europe will begin March 13, 2020, for 30 days in an effort to control the rapid spread of coronavirus (Remarks by President Trump in).

**March 13, 2020:** President Trump declares a National Emergency in response to Covid. Travel restrictions from Europe are enacted (Proclamation).

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**March 15, 2020:** Governor Baker banned gatherings of more than 25 people and banned restaurants from serving on premise food starting on March 17. Additionally, he expanded the criteria for unemployment (Becker).

**March 16, 2020:** The White House announced, “15 Days to End the Spread”, a nationwide effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 (15).

**March 17, 2020:** Restaurants were banned from serving on premise food. These were restricted to takeout or delivery services and were forced to follow social distancing guidelines outlined by the Department of Public Health. These requirements would have been in effect until April 6 (Becker).

**March 17, 2020:** Bars and Dine-in Restaurants are closed for in-person service and were restricted to take out or delivery. Crowds of 25 or more are banned through March 30, 2020 (Miller, G. Wayne Raimondo Shutting).

**March 18, 2020:** President Trump signed the Family First Act, providing \$3.5B emergency supplemental appropriations related to COVID-19. He also issued the Executive Order on Prioritizing and Allocating Health and Medical Resources to Respond to the Spread of COVID-19 (Statement by).

**March 19, 2020:** President Trump invokes the Defense Production Act (Coronavirus).

**March 20, 2020:** Governor Raimondo signs an executive order allowing restaurants to sell beer and wine with takeout orders to supplement their income, staying in place until March 30, 2020 (Kalunian).

**March 23, 2020:** Governor Baker orders the closure of the physical workplaces and facilities of all nonessential businesses to all workers and customers. He also implemented a stay-at-home order. These would have gone into effect from March 24 until April 7 (Hannah).

**March 23, 2020:** Governor Raimondo orders the closure of all entertainment and recreation businesses (Winsor).

**March 24, 2020:** Governor Baker’s new restrictions are implemented (Hannah).

**March 26, 2020:** Governor Raimondo announces that any individuals entering the state from New York would be required to self-quarantine for 14 days. State police officers begin targeting individuals who own cars with New York license plates to quarantine (Sherman, Eli, Et al.).

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**March 27, 2020:** President Trump signs the CARES act, which provides 2 trillion dollars in relief for small businesses and families (National).

**March 27, 2020:** Governor Raimondo extends gathering bans, including those relating to restaurants, to April 13, 2020 (DaSilva, Melanie, Et al. RI has 38).

**March 28, 2020:** Governor Raimondo enacts a stay-at-home order for all Rhode Islanders who do not meet a specific criterion of exceptions. All travelers entering Rhode Island for non-work-related purposes and all Rhode Islanders returning home must quarantine. All “nonessential” businesses are ordered to be closed. Ban on gatherings larger than 5 (DaSilva, Melanie, Et al. RI has 33).

**March 29, 2020:** President Trump extends social distancing guidelines through April 30, 2020 (Coronavirus).

**March 29, 2020:** Following the threat of lawsuits by Former Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York, Governor Raimondo requires all out-of-state travelers to visit a designated information center prior to quarantining (Machado, Steph. RI).

**April 3, 2020:** The CDC advises the public to wear face coverings while in public areas (Coronavirus).

**April 7, 2020:** Governor Raimondo extends the restrictions for bars and restaurants until May 7, 2020 (Documenting).

**April 8, 2020:** Governor Raimondo signs an executive order authorizing the Rhode Island Department of Health to fine individuals who deliberately or repeatedly violate quarantine orders after testing positive for COVID-19, coming into close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, or traveling to Rhode Island for a non-work purpose with intent to stay (Machado, Steph, et al.).

**April 9, 2020:** The Federal Reserve announces it will provide up to 2.3 trillion dollars in loans to support the economy (Federal Reserve).

**April 16, 2020:** President Trump announced guidelines on the three phases of his plan Opening Up America Again (President Donald J. Trump Announces).

**April 18, 2020:** Governor Raimondo signed an executive order stating that employees must need to wear face masks while at work (Nesi).

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**April 20, 2020:** Governor Raimondo announces 6 key indicators that will be required for Rhode Island to reopen its economy. Those being whether the spread has continued to decrease in the state, whether the state has supports in place for vulnerable populations and those in quarantine, whether the state healthcare system has the capacity and the personal protective equipment to handle another surge, whether large gathering spaces have plans for long-term social distancing, and whether the state is prepare to reimpose measure or close the economy again it is necessary (Fitzpatrick, Edward Governor).

**April 24, 2020:** President Trump signs into law the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, which provides additional funding to support Americans impacted by the coronavirus (President Donald J. Trump Remains).

**April 25, 2020:** Governor Baker hints that reopening will not occur until a significant drop in cases occurs (Hilliard).

**April 25, 2020:** Several protestors participate in a “Reopen Rhode Island” protest at the Rhode Island State House. This is countered by one in support of Governor Raimondo and her restrictions (Vencill).

**April 26, 2020:** Governor Raimondo reaffirms that the stay at home order would not be extended when it expires on May 8th, 2020 (RI.gov. Governor Raimondo).

**April 27, 2020:** President Trump announces a blueprint for testing to allow America to reopen safely (President Donald J. Trump is).

**April 27, 2020:** Governor Raimondo announces a plan to reopen Rhode Island’s economy once the stay at home order is lifted. In the first phase, gathering sizes would be increased from 5-10. Additionally, pilots of outdoor dining would begin to take place. Under the second phase, restaurants would be able to reopen (Raimondo).

**April 28, 2020:** Governor Baker announced that the stay at home advisory would be extended until May 18th (CBS Boston. Coronavirus).

**April 29, 2020:** Governor Raimondo announces that gatherings of over 100 people may be allowed by August (Fitzpatrick, Edward. Raimondo).

**May 1, 2020:** Governor Baker issued a mask mandate that required people to wear masks when not able to remain 6 feet apart from people (Stout, Matt, et al.).



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**May 4, 2020:** A group of several hundred protestors organized outside of the Massachusetts State House to protest the stay-at-home advisory and reopen businesses (Burnell).

**May 6, 2020:** President Trump announces the COVID-19 Task Force will remain in place indefinitely (Coronavirus).

**May 8, 2020:** Governor Raimondo lifts the stay-at-home order (Borkowski).

**May 9, 2020:** The first phase of the state's reopening plan takes place.

**May 11, 2020:** Governor Baker announced a four-phased plan to reopen the state. These phases include:

Start: Limited industries resume operations with severe restrictions

Cautious: Additional industries resume operations with restrictions and capacity limits

Vigilant: Additional industries resume operations with guidance

New Normal: Development of vaccine and/or therapy enables resumption of 'new normal'

**May 11, 2020** (Continued): Massachusetts published the Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards as part of phase one that required businesses to abide by requirements involving social distancing, hygiene, staffing policies, and cleaning and disinfecting (Staff Boston25News.com).

**May 13, 2020:** Rhode Island released a new set of guidelines for reopening businesses (Reopening RI).

**May 15, 2020:** President Trump announces Operation Warp Speed, the administration's program to accelerate the development, manufacturing, and distribution of COVID-19 medical countermeasures (Remarks by President Trump on).

**May 15, 2020:** Governor Raimondo announces the second phase of reopening will not take place until June (Fitzpatrick, Edward. Rhode).

**May 18, 2020:** Essential businesses, manufacturing, and construction sites were allowed to reopen with stricter regulations. Governor Baker announced May 25, 2020 as the date in which "additional businesses" would be allowed to reopen (CBS Boston. Here's).

**May 18, 2020:** Restaurants are allowed to reopen for outdoor dining (RI.gov. Raimondo).

**May 25, 2020:** The "additional businesses" reopened under new restrictions (CBS Boston. Here's).

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**May 26, 2020:** Governor Baker announced a six-million-dollar grant to help small businesses to purchase protective equipment and implement safety protocols consistent with existing regulations (Stout, Matt. Boston).

**June 1, 2020:** Rhode Island enters phase 2 of its reopening plan. The gathering size is increased to 15 and restaurants are allowed to reopen for indoor dining at 50% capacity (Rhode Island to).

**June 2, 2020:** Most travel restrictions for travelers entering Rhode Island are lifted and out-of-state travelers are no longer required to quarantine for 14 days unless they come from a state with an active stay-at-home order (Anderson, Patrick. Raimondo Hopes).

**June 3, 2020:** Massachusetts recognizes that a person is considered recovered after 21 days have passed since being sick or testing positive (More).

**June 5, 2020:** President Trump signs the Paycheck Protection Flexibility Act of 2020 which modifies certain provisions under the paycheck protection program (Bill).

**June 6, 2020:** Governor Baker announced the introduction of Phase 2 in Covid recovery. As a part of phase 2, restaurants were now able to serve customers if they were seated outdoors, pending strict restrictions (Jarmanning).

**June 8, 2020:** Phase 2 of reopening commenced (Michelle.Williams@Masslive.com).

**June 29, 2020:** New quarantine orders are issued by Governor Raimondo. Anyone arriving from a state with a Covid surge or positivity rate of above 5% will be required to show a negative test or quarantine for 14 days (Staff, Journal)

**June 30, 2020:** Rhode Island enters phase 3 of reopening. Social gathering limits are increased to 25 people and public events at 125 people (Sherman, Eli. Phase).

**July 1, 2020:** Governor Baker announced that the state would move into Phase 3 of reopening. These included museums, gyms, and casinos. Additionally, the capacity for indoor gatherings would be increased to 25 people and outdoor gatherings would be increased to 100 people. Visitors from select states were allowed to visit Massachusetts (Kim).

**July 4, 2020:** President Trump signs a bill reauthorizes lending and separates such program from other Small Business Administration loan programs (Coronavirus).

**July 6, 2020:** The first portion of Phase 3 of reopening commenced (Phase).

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**July 21, 2020:** Governor Baker signed a law allowing restaurants to serve cocktails to go in sealed containers until February (ssolis@masslive.com, Steph Solis |. Massachusetts).

**July 29, 2020:** Governor Raimondo announces that Rhode Island will not move to the fourth phase of reopening. Gatherings would be limited to 15 (RI to).

**August 1, 2020:** Visitors traveling and residents returning from out of state were required to quarantine for 2 weeks or present a negative Covid test taken w/in 72 hours, unless said state that was traveled from was exempt or if an individual was exempted from the requirements (CBS Boston. “New).

**August 7, 2020:** Governor Baker suspends the second portion of reopening, intensifies the enforcement of COVID restrictions, and limits outdoor gatherings to 50 people (ssolis@masslive.com, Steph Solis |. Citing).

**September 25, 2020:** Governor Raimondo signs an executive order extending phase 3 of Rhode Island’s reopening until October 28, 2020 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**September 29, 2020:** Governor Baker announced that communities classified as “lower risk” would be allowed to move to the second part of phase 3 of reopening on October 5. This included the indoor and outdoor performance venues to open to 50% capacity or a maximum of 250 people (Creamer).

**October 5, 2020:** Communities in the “lower risk” category were allowed to proceed to the second part of phase 3 (Documenting Massachusetts)

**October 22, 2020:** The Baker administration announced a \$774 million plan to bolster economic recovery for businesses in the state (With).

**October 30, 2020:** Governor Raimondo announces that gatherings limits return to 10 (Anderson, Patrick. “Raimondo Announces).

**November 2, 2020:** Governor Baker announced a statewide curfew for businesses, including the prohibition of table services for restaurants. He also limited the limit for indoor gatherings to 10 people and outdoor gatherings to 25. A state home advisory between the hours of 10 P.M. and 5 A.M. would be implemented on November 6 (CBS Boston. Baker).

**November 5, 2020:** Governor Raimondo issues a voluntary stay at home advisory during night hours, the closing of facilities at 10 on weekdays and 10:30 on weekends, and a 50% capacity for indoor gatherings and 66% capacity for outdoor gatherings (Documenting).

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**November 6, 2020:** Stay at home advisory is reimplemented (Documenting Massachusetts).

**November 20, 2020:** Governor Raimondo issues new Covid restrictions effective November 30, 2020 - December 13, 2020. The restrictions include the reduction of capacity of restaurants at 33% and the prohibition of social gatherings with multiple households (Documenting Rhode Island).

**November 30, 2020:** Governor Raimondo's new restrictions become effective (Documenting).

**December 1, 2020:** Governor Raimondo announced that Rhode Island was still in the process of allocating \$50 million in federal funding to replace revenue lost during the state's pause with a limit of \$50,000 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**December 9, 2020:** Governor Baker announced that the state would return to phase 3, step 1. Restaurant guests would be required to wear a mask when not eating or drinking and there was a limit on the number of people per table at 6 (Jones).

**December 11, 2020:** The FDA issues an Emergency Use Authorization to Pfizer for its COVID-19 vaccine, the first Covid vaccine available in the US (Coronavirus).

**December 18, 2020:** The FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization to Moderna for its COVID-19 vaccine (HHS).

**December 20, 2020:** Governor Raimondo allowed certain restrictions relating to the economic pause to expire. She expands the capacity of restaurants to 50% (Documenting).

**December 22, 2020:** Governor Raimondo extends the COVID-19 state of emergency until January 20, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**December 23, 2020:** Governor Baker announced a series of new restrictions, including the reimposition of limits on indoor gatherings at 10, outdoor gatherings at 25, and most businesses to 25% capacity, including restaurants. These restrictions were to last until January 8, 2021 (Documenting Massachusetts).

**December 26, 2020:** The new restrictions were enacted (Documenting Massachusetts).

**December 30, 2020:** Governor Raimondo extended the COVID-19 state of emergency until January 28, 2021. (Documenting Rhode Island)

**January 4, 2021:** Governor Baker announced that the COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program had granted \$67.4 million to small businesses to help offset the economic burden (Baker-Polito Administration Awards)

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**January 8, 2021:** Governor Baker extended the restrictions until January 24, 2021 (reports, Staff and wire. Gov.).

**January 11, 2021:** Governor Baker announced that first responders would be eligible to get the COVID vaccine (First).

**January 13, 2021:** Governor Baker announced that employees and residents of congregate care facilities and homeless shelters, along with the staff and inmates of correctional facilities, would be able to get the COVID vaccine (Baker-Polito Administration Announces Plan).

**January 18, 2021:** Employees and residents of congregate care facilities and homeless shelters, along with the staff and inmates of correctional facilities became eligible for a COVID vaccine (Documenting Massachusetts).

**January 19, 2021:** Governor Raimondo extends the COVID-19 state of emergency until February 17, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**January 20, 2021:** President Biden signs an executive order creating the position of Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response and Counselor to the President as a means of combating future biological and pandemic threats (Executive Order on Organizing).

**January 21, 2021:** President Biden signed an executive order that was designed to protect worker health and safety (Executive Order on Protecting).

**January 21, 2021:** Governor Baker announced the end of the statewide curfew on businesses and a nighttime stay-at-home advisory that would take effect on January 25, 2021 (Documenting Massachusetts).

**January 22, 2021:** President Biden passes an executive order designed to encourage government departments and agencies to consider the economic impact of such actions (Executive Order on Economic).

**January 25, 2021:** The end of the statewide curfew on businesses and a nighttime stay-at-home advisor (Documenting Massachusetts)

**January 26, 2021:** Governor Baker announced that residents aged 75 and above would be eligible for the Vaccine on February 1, 2021 (reports, Staff and wire. Baker Releases).

**January 27, 2021:** Governor Raimondo extended the state's mask mandate until February 25, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

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**January 28, 2021:** Residents aged 75 and above were eligible for the vaccine (Documenting Rhode Island).

**February 1, 2021:** Residents aged 75 and above are eligible for the vaccine (Documenting Massachusetts).

**February 2, 2021:** Governor Raimondo ended the order requiring businesses to close by 10 p.m. on weekdays and 10:30 p.m. on weekends (Documenting Rhode Island).

**February 4, 2021:** Governor Baker announced the easing of the capacity restrictions on businesses to 40% on February 8, 2021 (reports, Staff and wire. Baker to).

**February 8, 2021:** Massachusetts eased some restrictions, particularly the capacity limit on businesses from 25% to 40% (Documenting Massachusetts).

**February 8, 2021:** Governor Raimondo signed an executive order loosening Coronavirus restriction. Restaurants are now capable of seating 8 people from 2 households at a table (Documenting Rhode Island).

**February 10, 2021:** Governor Baker announced that on and following February 11, 2021, caregivers who accompany an individual aged 75 and above would also have the ability to become vaccinated (Baker-Polito Administration Announces Two).

**February 11, 2021:** Caregivers accompanying individuals aged 75 or older became eligible for the vaccine (Documenting Massachusetts)

**February 11, 2021:** Bar areas in restaurants are allowed to reopen (Documenting Rhode Island).

**February 17, 2021:** Governor Raimondo extends the state's coronavirus emergency order until March 17, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**February 22, 2021:** Individuals 65 and older are eligible to get the vaccine (Documenting Rhode Island).

**February 24, 2021:** President Biden extends the national emergency indefinitely (Notice).

**February 24, 2021:** Governor Raimondo extends the mask order through March 24, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**March 1, 2021:** Massachusetts entered step 2 of phase 3. This allowed restaurants to operate at 100% capacity, though other restrictions were still in place. Governor Baker announced that step 1 of phase 4 will commence on March 22, 2021 (jcote@masslive.com).

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**March 3, 2021:** Governor Baker announced that K-12 teachers and staff would be eligible for the vaccine (Staff, CBSBoston.com. Massachusetts).

**March 9, 2021:** Governor Dan McKee of Rhode Island announces school staff and childcare workers will become eligible for the vaccine starting March 12, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**March 11, 2021:** K-12 teachers and staff become eligible for the vaccine (Documenting Massachusetts).

**March 12, 2021:** School staff and childcare workers become eligible for the vaccine. Governor McKee announces that restaurants can move tables indoors to six feet instead of eight feet. Bar areas are allowed to sit patrons until midnight (Documenting Rhode Island).

**March 17, 2021:** Governor Baker announced a new vaccine timeline. On March 22, 2021, individuals 60 and over, along with certain workers such as grocery store and restaurant workers would be allowed to get a vaccine. April 5, 2021: Those who are 55 and older or have a medical condition would be allowed to get the vaccine. April 19, 2021: Anyone 16 and over would become eligible (Fortier).

**March 17, 2021:** Governor McKee extends the state of emergency until April 14, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island)

**March 19, 2021:** President Biden signs HR 1319 aka “American Rescue Plan Act of 2021” which provides additional economic support (Baker-Polito Administration Announces Transition).

**March 19, 2021:** When announced: Indoor dining capacity increased to 75%. Social gathering set at 15 people indoors or 50 outdoors. All residents 60 & up with underlying medical condition become eligible for the vaccine (Documenting Rhode Island).

**March 22, 2021:** Massachusetts moved to the first step of phase 4. The gathering limit for indoor gatherings increased to 100 and 150 for outdoor gatherings. The quarantine or test requirement transitioned to an advisory. Individuals 60 and above and certain workers became eligible for the vaccine (Documenting Massachusetts)

**March 24, 2021:** Governor McKee extended the state’s mask mandate until April 21 (Documenting Rhode Island).

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**April 5, 2021:** Those who are 55 and older or have a medical condition would be allowed to get the vaccine (Documenting Massachusetts)

**April 5, 2021:** Rhode Island expands vaccine criteria to all individuals 50 and older (Documenting).

**April 19, 2021:** Anyone 16 and over would become eligible for the vaccine in Massachusetts and Rhode Island (Documenting Massachusetts, Documenting Rhode Island).

**April 22, 2021:** Governor McKee extends the mask order until May 20, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**April 26, 2021:** Governor Baker announced he would end the statewide outdoor mask mandate on May 10, 2021. The limits on gatherings would increase to 200 indoors and 250 outdoors. Restaurants would be allowed to increase the table size to 10 and serve alcohol without food. All business restrictions would come to an end on August 1, 2021 (Reports, Staff. "Baker).

**April 27, 2021:** CDC updates outdoor face mask guidance for fully vaccinated people (Coronavirus).

**April 30, 2021:** Governor McKee lifts mask requirement for fully vaccinated people when outdoors (Documenting Rhode Island).

**May 10, 2021:** Massachusetts entered the second step of phase 4. Singing was allowed in restaurants again and the statewide outdoor mask mandate ended (Reports, Staff. Baker Tweaks).

**May 10, 2021:** Governor McKee eased restrictions for businesses. Businesses were allowed to accept 80% capacity in indoor settings. Outdoor dining expands to 100% capacity. Social gatherings expand to 25 people indoors and 75 people outdoors. (Documenting Rhode Island).

**May 12, 2021:** Governor McKee extends the state of emergency until June 10, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**May 13, 2021:** CDC updates COVID-19 guidance for fully vaccinated people (Coronavirus).

**May 17, 2021:** Governor Baker announced the end of the mask mandate and all other covid-restrictions on May 29, 2021. He also stated he would end the state of emergency on June 15, 2021 (Staff, CBSBoston.com. Baker).



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**May 18, 2021**: Governor McKee ends the mask mandate for vaccinated individuals (Documenting Rhode Island).

**May 21, 2021**: Governor McKee ends most Covid-era restrictions (Documenting Rhode Island).

**May 25, 2021**: Governor Baker said he planned to file legislation that would extent certain Covid regulations beyond the end of the state of emergency, including the ability for restaurants to file expedited permits for outside dining (Governor).

**May 29, 2021**: All statewide covid-restrictions ended (Staff, CBSBoston.com. Baker).

**June 1, 2021**: Governor McKee ended the outdoor mask mandate for all individuals (Documenting Rhode Island).

**June 11, 2021**: Governor McKee extends the Coronavirus emergency order until July 9, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**June 15, 2021**: The state of emergency in Massachusetts came to an end (Documenting Massachusetts)

**June 18, 2021**: Governor McKee removes capacity restrictions on certain state-defined higher-risk activities and settings (Documenting Rhode Island).

**July 9, 2021**: Governor McKee terminates the remnants of the mask mandate but extends the state of emergency until August 6, 2021 (Documenting Rhode Island).

**July 27, 2021**: CDC updates its guidance on COVID and recommends mask wearing for people in substantial or high COVID-transmission areas (Coronavirus).

**August 6, 2021**: The state of emergency in Rhode Island ends (Documenting Rhode Island).

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Appendix B – Table of Factors

Dates by Week	Percent Change US Res. Open	Percent Change MA Res. Open	Percent Change RI Res. Open	Percent Change US Res. Revenue	Percent Change MA Res. Revenue	Percent Change RI Res. Revenue	Percent Change US Con. Spend.	Percent Change MA Con. Spend.	Percent Change RI Con. Spend.
Prior/ Starting Point	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1/29/2020	-0.4%	-0.9%	-0.6%	0.2%	0.8%	3.6%	1.1%	-2.7%	3.4%
2/5/2020	-0.4%	0.1%	0.7%	-0.1%	-4.4%	0.4%	2.3%	2.5%	-5.4%
2/12/2020	-0.4%	0.1%	-0.9%	-0.6%	-3.1%	-1.4%	-2.0%	-2.5%	-3.7%
2/19/2020	-0.4%	0.4%	-0.3%	-2.4%	-4.6%	-4.2%	-1.7%	-1.7%	-2.2%
2/26/2020	-0.5%	0.4%	-0.4%	-1.3%	-1.9%	-4.0%	-1.8%	-1.1%	-6.8%
3/4/2020	-1.0%	-1.0%	0.1%	-4.2%	-3.7%	1.2%	-1.8%	4.4%	-22.1%
3/11/2020	-2.4%	-2.9%	-0.5%	-5.3%	-5.5%	-4.3%	-4.6%	-4.2%	-6.0%
3/18/2020	-2.9%	-3.5%	-2.6%	-25.6%	-29.1%	-30.0%	-20.5%	-33.0%	-30.2%
3/25/2020	-10.0%	-13.5%	-12.8%	-61.7%	-66.4%	-73.1%	-59.1%	-67.6%	-74.8%
4/1/2020	-30.9%	-31.8%	-37.7%	-70.0%	-72.9%	-78.5%	-66.2%	-66.8%	-74.5%
4/8/2020	-34.0%	-35.4%	-43.2%	-68.7%	-71.7%	-77.9%	-65.2%	-66.7%	-72.5%
4/15/2020	-35.5%	-38.0%	-45.7%	-68.8%	-71.9%	-78.6%	-64.3%	-65.9%	-75.0%
4/22/2020	-34.6%	-39.0%	-43.8%	-63.2%	-69.3%	-74.9%	-59.2%	-59.9%	-71.1%
4/29/2020	-32.9%	-37.1%	-42.4%	-61.8%	-65.3%	-76.2%	-58.0%	-56.1%	-68.7%
5/6/2020	-29.5%	-35.8%	-38.3%	-58.6%	-65.1%	-66.7%	-54.1%	-56.9%	-66.2%
5/13/2020	-26.6%	-32.3%	-33.0%	-54.5%	-63.4%	-63.6%	-50.7%	-53.3%	-68.0%
5/20/2020	-23.9%	-30.6%	-27.6%	-52.7%	-62.8%	-64.7%	-48.2%	-51.0%	-62.6%
5/27/2020	-20.5%	-27.3%	-26.8%	-47.1%	-60.0%	-55.4%	-45.1%	-48.9%	-62.0%
6/3/2020	-17.3%	-25.0%	-22.4%	-41.7%	-60.3%	-46.6%	-39.9%	-45.1%	-58.3%
6/10/2020	-13.7%	-21.8%	-18.2%	-38.9%	-57.4%	-42.1%	-38.1%	-42.3%	-54.4%
6/17/2020	-11.7%	-18.3%	-15.6%	-38.6%	-51.0%	-41.5%	-34.8%	-35.0%	-50.2%
6/24/2020	-10.3%	-16.7%	-15.5%	-32.2%	-44.6%	-33.1%	-31.1%	-28.3%	-46.6%
7/1/2020	-9.4%	-15.4%	-15.0%	-33.4%	-42.8%	-20.3%	-33.0%	-30.0%	-46.7%
7/8/2020	-8.6%	-10.5%	-12.4%	-33.9%	-42.0%	-19.3%	-34.8%	-25.7%	-44.3%
7/15/2020	-9.1%	-12.3%	-14.0%	-35.8%	-45.2%	-21.5%	-31.6%	-24.3%	-43.5%
7/22/2020	-9.2%	-11.2%	-12.7%	-37.0%	-45.7%	-22.2%	-31.7%	-18.3%	-40.2%
7/29/2020	-9.1%	-11.5%	-14.2%	-36.1%	-44.3%	-22.1%	-30.1%	-19.1%	-38.4%
8/5/2020	-8.7%	-10.0%	-13.2%	-35.8%	-42.4%	-20.8%	-27.7%	-22.3%	-34.5%
8/12/2020	-8.1%	-7.7%	-11.7%	-33.4%	-42.9%	-12.0%	-26.3%	-21.4%	-38.4%
8/19/2020	-7.7%	-8.1%	-10.9%	-31.9%	-38.9%	-11.5%	-24.4%	-19.4%	-35.8%
8/26/2020	-7.4%	-8.1%	-10.7%	-30.9%	-38.1%	-11.5%	-24.0%	-17.7%	-37.1%
9/2/2020	-6.9%	-7.2%	-9.6%	-30.8%	-35.1%	-11.8%	-23.5%	-25.6%	-30.7%

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9/9/2020	-6.4%	-6.0%	-10.6%	-24.0%	-32.7%	-7.0%	-22.0%	-17.2%	-29.3%
9/16/2020	-6.3%	-4.9%	-10.6%	-28.3%	-33.9%	-7.4%	-19.4%	-19.3%	-30.5%
9/23/2020	-5.0%	-4.1%	-8.9%	-28.4%	-34.5%	-13.2%	-22.5%	-20.7%	-39.8%
9/30/2020	-4.6%	-4.6%	-9.5%	-28.2%	-34.2%	-17.1%	-22.0%	-18.0%	-38.2%
10/7/2020	-3.8%	-3.4%	-7.3%	-25.7%	-33.9%	-12.3%	-20.3%	-21.5%	-38.5%
10/14/2020	-3.4%	-2.3%	-6.8%	-27.2%	-30.8%	-17.0%	-22.1%	-25.6%	-40.5%
10/21/2020	-2.9%	-1.9%	-6.2%	-24.0%	-30.6%	-17.2%	-21.9%	-17.7%	-35.9%
10/28/2020	-2.6%	-0.9%	-8.1%	-27.0%	-32.6%	-20.7%	-20.9%	-18.8%	-35.5%
11/4/2020	-2.6%	-1.1%	-7.1%	-29.5%	-37.2%	-22.8%	-20.4%	-23.7%	-40.4%
11/11/2020	-4.7%	-3.5%	-11.2%	-33.5%	-36.9%	-21.2%	-21.8%	-22.2%	-36.5%
11/18/2020	-5.8%	-5.4%	-11.8%	-31.7%	-34.7%	-19.2%	-22.0%	-22.1%	-34.4%
11/25/2020	-5.9%	-4.1%	-6.8%	-34.2%	-36.7%	-19.5%	-24.7%	-24.5%	-42.9%
12/2/2020	-6.5%	-5.1%	-8.8%	-36.3%	-41.5%	-22.3%	-26.4%	-29.8%	-45.4%
12/9/2020	-6.3%	-4.7%	-9.5%	-37.5%	-38.3%	-20.5%	-27.6%	-33.4%	-52.3%
12/16/2020	-5.9%	-3.5%	-12.2%	-39.5%	-42.0%	-25.2%	-27.8%	-23.6%	-44.9%
12/23/2020	-6.0%	-3.7%	-10.3%	-40.2%	-45.8%	-31.8%	-22.9%	-22.2%	-40.0%
12/30/2020	-4.6%	-1.1%	-10.5%	-35.2%	-35.8%	-23.6%	-34.0%	-31.8%	-50.3%
1/6/2021	-6.1%	-4.4%	-14.4%	-32.1%	-32.1%	-18.7%	-23.5%	-27.1%	-41.3%
1/13/2021	-5.8%	-5.2%	-14.2%	-31.1%	-27.6%	-18.3%	-21.6%	-21.4%	-41.0%
1/20/2021	-6.2%	-4.8%	-14.0%	-31.2%	-30.8%	-15.8%	-16.3%	-12.8%	-34.4%
1/27/2021	-6.4%	-4.4%	-16.1%	-33.3%	-32.6%	-18.4%	-17.2%	-17.8%	-38.5%
2/3/2021	-6.2%	-3.3%	-13.2%	-32.6%	-36.9%	-22.2%	-12.3%	-11.0%	-41.7%
2/10/2021	-5.6%	-3.3%	-13.3%	-31.2%	-36.8%	-18.4%	-16.7%	-19.7%	-40.7%
2/17/2021	-5.7%	-2.6%	-12.7%	-34.0%	-32.1%	-22.4%	-16.4%	-11.4%	-29.0%
2/24/2021	-6.7%	-2.8%	-10.9%	-31.8%	-35.5%	-23.5%	-11.9%	-13.7%	-38.1%
3/3/2021	-5.2%	-2.9%	-10.0%	-27.8%	-32.8%	-9.3%	-6.8%	-3.7%	-26.0%
3/10/2021	-4.8%	-3.1%	-9.6%	-24.2%	-28.0%	-7.1%	-12.4%	-14.8%	-27.7%
3/17/2021	-4.7%	-2.7%	-9.6%	-25.2%	-30.6%	-9.3%	-8.7%	-8.9%	-23.7%
3/24/2021	-4.5%	-2.5%	-11.7%	-15.1%	-23.2%	-4.9%	-5.5%	-3.0%	-29.4%
3/31/2021	-4.6%	-2.7%	-7.7%	-16.5%	-29.5%	-5.0%	-3.6%	-4.2%	-25.4%
4/7/2021	-4.6%	-3.4%	-9.6%	-16.8%	-24.5%	-0.1%	-3.8%	-8.4%	-23.5%
4/14/2021	-4.4%	-4.8%	-7.9%	-13.6%	-30.4%	-1.9%	-0.4%	-3.8%	-25.9%
4/21/2021	-3.9%	-3.5%	-9.6%	-13.8%	-32.4%	1.4%	-0.7%	4.0%	-24.0%
4/28/2021	-4.2%	-3.5%	-7.0%	-14.7%	-25.8%	6.4%	-3.5%	2.2%	-14.3%
5/5/2021	-4.1%	-3.5%	-5.4%	-14.4%	-32.4%	0.8%	-1.0%	0.6%	-19.8%
5/12/2021	-3.8%	-3.2%	-5.9%	-12.4%	-27.9%	3.5%	-2.1%	2.4%	-25.5%
5/19/2021	-3.8%	-4.1%	-6.1%	-13.5%	-28.0%	-7.2%	-1.0%	-1.6%	-21.8%
5/26/2021	-3.9%	-4.0%	-5.5%	-15.2%	-28.8%	-1.5%	0.1%	2.1%	-20.1%
6/2/2021	-3.6%	-4.6%	-8.8%	-5.4%	-26.0%	11.4%	4.1%	10.3%	-12.2%
6/9/2021	-3.2%	-3.5%	-5.1%	-7.1%	-20.1%	5.9%	1.1%	5.9%	-14.0%
6/16/2021	-4.2%	-4.5%	-8.4%	-10.3%	-21.8%	-2.4%	0.3%	6.6%	-15.9%

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6/23/2021	-4.0%	-4.1%	-8.9%	-7.1%	-17.9%	-4.1%	2.7%	6.8%	-18.1%
6/30/2021	-4.0%	-4.7%	-11.8%	-7.2%	-17.1%	0.7%	4.6%	9.2%	-9.8%
7/7/2021	-2.1%	1.1%	-7.7%	-1.7%	-8.6%	4.8%	3.1%	11.0%	-5.8%
7/14/2021	-2.9%	-2.3%	-9.8%	-4.6%	-16.9%	-4.9%	5.3%	10.4%	-14.8%
7/21/2021	-2.1%	-0.8%	-5.4%	-5.5%	-16.8%	-10.3%	6.6%	15.5%	-19.5%
7/28/2021	-1.7%	-0.5%	-4.5%	-5.6%	-15.0%	-1.8%	4.6%	9.8%	-15.7%
8/4/2021	-1.5%	-0.2%	-2.5%	-6.6%	-14.0%	-2.0%	6.8%	5.4%	-12.0%
8/11/2021	-1.2%	0.8%	-4.4%	-5.5%	-18.8%	2.9%	2.4%	7.8%	-11.6%
8/18/2021	-1.2%	0.7%	-0.9%	-5.7%	-15.3%	6.6%	3.7%	9.7%	-8.5%
8/25/2021	-1.0%	0.4%	0.3%	-5.9%	-18.1%	-5.0%	0.8%	6.7%	-15.1%
9/1/2021	-1.0%	2.1%	-2.7%	-5.4%	-12.7%	8.4%	1.0%	7.3%	-6.7%
9/8/2021	-1.0%	1.7%	-2.6%	1.2%	-12.1%	14.5%	4.0%	8.7%	-10.6%
9/15/2021	-0.9%	1.0%	-5.0%	-3.8%	-13.9%	-1.8%	4.4%	4.1%	-14.1%
9/22/2021	0.3%	1.8%	-3.9%	-2.9%	-14.8%	-1.6%	3.1%	7.3%	-5.2%
9/29/2021	0.6%	-0.2%	-0.9%	-3.7%	-17.2%	-2.2%	1.8%	6.5%	-15.2%
10/6/2021	1.2%	0.8%	-0.9%	0.0%	-15.6%	8.6%	5.8%	4.0%	-11.6%
10/13/2021	1.6%	3.5%	2.1%	-4.8%	-22.3%	3.2%	3.8%	4.8%	-15.3%
10/20/2021	1.8%	3.5%	-1.0%	4.5%	-11.6%	10.9%	4.8%	7.0%	-11.6%
10/27/2021	2.3%	4.6%	0.3%	0.5%	-14.5%	2.0%	7.7%	8.5%	-5.6%
11/3/2021	2.4%	4.1%	-0.4%	-2.0%	-14.7%	-0.8%	7.6%	9.5%	-9.7%
11/10/2021	3.1%	4.8%	3.4%	-0.2%	-15.1%	15.2%	2.5%	4.4%	-7.0%
11/17/2021	3.6%	6.4%	-1.0%	6.1%	-9.3%	14.5%	8.4%	9.8%	-9.9%
11/24/2021	4.2%	6.1%	4.1%	5.8%	-10.3%	11.4%	7.3%	14.1%	0.7%
12/1/2021	4.6%	4.8%	-0.4%	5.0%	-17.1%	-3.4%	2.6%	-0.3%	-9.8%
12/8/2021	4.9%	4.9%	1.5%	2.1%	-11.1%	5.7%	5.6%	5.7%	-11.8%
12/15/2021	5.1%	6.6%	0.2%	-0.8%	-19.2%	-0.4%	8.0%	16.2%	-10.6%
12/22/2021	5.4%	5.4%	2.1%	-8.5%	-24.6%	-17.0%	10.9%	16.1%	-8.3%
12/29/2021	7.9%	8.1%	-1.8%	4.6%	-12.5%	-14.9%	-3.5%	4.9%	-30.1%
1/5/2022	5.7%	5.7%	-0.5%	3.8%	-13.7%	-10.2%	7.0%	17.3%	-8.4%
1/12/2022	7.9%	9.0%	0.2%	4.5%	-22.4%	-16.5%	-0.1%	0.0%	-19.1%
1/19/2022	7.2%	8.0%	3.2%	1.5%	-14.5%	-14.7%	4.1%	6.5%	-15.6%
1/26/2022	6.5%	5.9%	-1.9%	1.4%	-14.7%	-9.2%	5.2%	15.7%	-8.3%
2/2/2022	6.7%	6.9%	0.4%	2.4%	-27.9%	-33.3%	10.6%	-0.7%	-21.8%
2/9/2022	7.2%	7.8%	3.3%	6.0%	-0.9%	16.4%	6.1%	5.9%	-15.4%

(The Economic Tracker)

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Appendix C – Interview Notes

Jackie's Galaxy and Sushi Bar

- 6 locations
- Description: Regional Chain in Rhode Island that focuses on high-end traditional and contemporary Asian cuisines from different regions of Asia.
- Location Interviewed: Jacky's Galaxie Restaurant & Banquet, 1488 Mineral Spring Ave, North Providence, RI 02904
- Notes: First Pandemic, sales dropped 30%, most extra cost for staff, isolation. Social distancing, reduction of competitors. Required to check temperatures. Not associated with racial backlash. Uber eats/DoorDash expanded their services with them. Dining, when mostly closed down, boosted take out business. Health check was required for workers. 2-3 times per day, sanitizing. Still seeing fewer resources. Vax requirements. Most of the staff view it like the flu and are willing to get a vaccine. If tested positive, quarantine everyone 24 hrs for the test until negative. 1 incident, though not at the location. Face masks needed. High cost. Not sure if upper management applied for ppe loans. (Ken).

Chili's

- 1610 Locations
- Description: Chain of restaurants that offer casual dining influenced by Texan and Mexican cuisine.
- Location Interviewed: 622 George Washington Hwy, Lincoln, RI 02865
- Notes: Before the pandemic, sales were at 60k-70k per day. Covid meant to go only. Slow service. Brand held service. No firing or closing. Focused on going back to normal. Same in providence. Implemented ghost kitchen - online door dash partnership. Lucky to make it out. Lots of local restaurants didn't make it. Currently no remaining covid issues outside of occasional Covid infections. Staffing remains a major issue. No one wanted to work due to unemployment. If covid erupted, they could lose the entire kitchen, restaurants would come to a halt. To go, big/only

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revenue stream. As such, there are steps, racks, and a bagger to implement a more streamlined iteration. No PPE loans (Haes).

Gentleman Farmer

- Description: Classic Diner
- Location Interviewed: 617 Putnam Pike, Chepachet, RI 02814
- Notes: During the pandemic, things were ok. There was a shock that they had to adjust to. Serving at every other table. Didn't really have to close. Business was a little slower; people were afraid to go out. Needed to be clean. Take out service expanded. 6ft. Apart. Mask wearing all the time/ 24/7. No one got sick. Still does disinfectant. Cleaning rituals. Everything was neat and in order. Clean everything. No residual effects outside of inflation. Customer levels have basically returned to normal (Arsoniadis).

Unos

- 100 locations
- Description: Pizza restaurant chain with a Chicago flair
- Location Interviewed: 371 Putnam Pike, Suite 200, Smithfield, RI 02917
- Notes: Steady service. Revenue up 2% over previous year until pandemic hit. Immense impact. Had to furlough 90%. Take out only. Only real managers. Difficulty getting people back to reopen. Struggling to have compensation equal or greater than unemployment bonuses. Massive impact. Required an increase in wages/benefits. Built an outdoor patio. Still in service. Things have just about returned to normal. Working conditions are not yet back to levels pre-pandemic (Casey).

99 Restaurant

- 100 Locations
- Description: Family style chain restaurant with locations throughout the Northeast.
- Location Interviewed: 100 Macy St, Amesbury, MA 01913
- Notes: Opened 3 months before shutdown. Got a boost. Very busy one of top. Everything shut down. Slowly built sales back up. Able to reopen, limited & full. Business started to climb. No indoor dining. Huge chunk of sales loss. Exclusions 99

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followed. CDC recommends. 14 days + x amount. Sometimes couldn't function at full capacity as a result. Limited even. Sanitation. Above & beyond. Had to go even further. Clean disinfectant & sanitizer. Take out saw a huge boost. Still see a difference company-wide. Trends: reduced workforce. The pay range went up. Line cooks, bonus incentives. Prep. can't say either way (Enriquez).

**Chococoa Baking Company**

- Description: Cafe offering espresso-based drinks, pastries & a wide variety of house-baked whoopie pies.
- Location Interviewed: The Tannery - Mill #1, 50 Water St, Newburyport, MA 01950
- Notes: Prior to pandemic, business was good, growing sales, customers/customer acquisition was good. The first few months of Covid were bad. Had to reset. Start Over. They needed to innovate. Product offering. Staffing. Took a little while to figure things out. Once staffing was figured, the brand. Stayed open. Put masks on whoopie pies to encourage the practice. Poke fun at it. Had to give back. 10% donation of whoopie pies to hospital healthcare heroes' fund. All the regular staff kept on. Online curbside delivery options. Positive feedback. People's normal life. Landlord helped with rent, based it off of 2019, cut down on expenses, and got PPE loans. Lot of people were stuck, some left family situation. Wanted unemployment, never closed a day. Improved air filtration. Separate outdoor dining. Bought heaters. All in place. More of a shift of everything. Got named top whoopie pie in Yankee Magazine. Kept through online, never outpaced. Lots of businesses distributors 1 order in 2020. None until 2022. Leary's. Twice a week, smaller places did better. (Gagnon)

**Coachmen's Lodge**

- Description: Fine dining restaurant that also serves as a function hall.
- Location Interviewed: 273 Wrentham Rd, Bellingham, MA 02019
- Notes: Prior to pandemic, it will be a lot busier. After not as many on Wednesday and Thursday. Don't have a crowd. People spend less. Lots of impact. Decided whether to remain open. Function side was strong, but the restaurant died off. 3 staff from 6-7. Sales took a hit. Question of how many can be kept on. Find situation staff rotating.

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Lost 20-30 staff. High turnover. Haven't had to do too much to survive. Still in the middle. Encouraged staff to get inoculated., wear masks. No ppe. No menus during pandemic. Roll silverware. The menu is slimmed down. Lost kitchen staff. Simplicity. Take out strong. Handling staff is easier. Areas of operation shrunk. Not as many late-night individuals (Olley).

#### Zorba's Pizza and Pub

- Description: Pizza Restaurant/Take Out & Pub
- Location Interviewed: 1370 Mineral Spring Ave, North Providence, RI 02904
- Notes: Followed rules. Used plastic dividers. Offered a special, 2 1 topping pizzas. Boosted take out. People were afraid, through uncertainty. Gained some revenue through takeout. Worry about bad service. Consistent sales. Dip in dine in, back to take out. Ran to go drink special. Still able to. Kept the pizza special. Dine in has returned, lots of regulars. Hard to find help. Family's workdays were 4 days turned into 7. Did a lot of havoc. Mostly recovered since then. More takeout variety items since then. Grab & go. Test waters. Applied for PPE. (Katsaras)

#### Goodstuff Smokehouse

- Description: BBQ restaurant
- Location Interviewed: 97 Main St, Blackstone, MA 01504
- Notes: At the time, we were very young. 6 yrs old this February. Extremely concerned, due to loans. Consistent growth since it opened. Covid caused growth to come to a halt. Model translated to takeout. 50/50 in house vs. takeout. Repercussions: Supply chain is a mess. Cost is felt throughout. Growth has not yet returned. 1% YTD. Little shaky as things came back. The bar was closed for 6-8 months. Profit from alcohol got hit. 100%-90% for the first few weeks. As comfort grew. 90%-55-60% w/ 8 weeks. Small size- had benefits. More controllable tables outside. Lost 2-4 tables. Outdoor, more manageable for staff. Takeout for alcohol. Still have transitioned. Back to normal- self service station for BBQ sauce. Workers. Job taken away. Able to keep the entire staff. At home for months changed career paths workdays. Outlook of industry. Wages increased. Lots of places starving for labor. Low paid-high hours.



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Now 40 hrs, but still able to live. Wages approx. 17 for dish staff, 20 for cooks. Quality has gone up. Less quantity outside ppl. Big chains → help with 401k, finance. Work better. Giant benefit. Prep: Wouldn't have done anything different as most things were out of their control. Sanitation priority. When outbreak. Gave free lunch for students. Day 1 25k to meals community rallied. First 2% in pandemic. Pre=22% Now ~5% Change in wage. PPE went to wages. Cooks if sniffles down for a week. Make sure Covid doesn't occur. Change in behavior. Big shock. At first, fears of bringing everything. Hurdle after hurdle. Get through town rallied. (Miller, Kevin)

Park Lunch

- Description: Family-Style Restaurant & Sports Bar
- Location Interviewed: 181 Merrimac St, Newburyport, MA 01950
- Notes: Business was very well prior to the pandemic. Once it hit. Sales were awful. No customers. No alcohol. Plexiglass. 6 ft. Masks. Some remnants of plexiglass b/c too lazy to take it down. Outdoor dining. Kept b/c it works Nighttime. Barstool fund. Followed Barstool Sports. Reached out to Dave Portnoy. Took a video. Sent it to him. Got called by him. Helped for 6 months. Mostly takeout. More of a push. Better than what it was. Online is convenient. Help due to linked w/ card. Trend-outside dining. Got used to enjoying it. Would have put money back. Lot of regulars came via takeout. People were sick, didn't want to get sick. Were worried, couple made unemployment. Got all back but 2. Got help with PPE Loans. Inflation impacted some items not available. Distributors' difficulties. (Wilmont).

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