

Senator:

My name is Frank Pagurko, and I write to you on behalf of the Rio Grande Foundation, an economic policy think tank based in Albuquerque. We work to promote the interests of the people of New Mexico through free market policy.

In the interests of small businesses and working New Mexicans across the state, I strongly urge you to **vote NO** on SB 198, the “Paid Sick Leave” bill. As you are aware, the past year has been extremely difficult for New Mexico’s small businesses, particularly local and family-owned restaurants. While the 55th Legislature has introduced several bills that would help small businesses survive the economic shutdown, SB 198 is not one of them. In fact, it would negate any support provided in those other bills. Small businesses have little cash on hand in the best of times, and those same businesses have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 shutdown, with 37% of businesses with 20-49 employees reporting “significant or severe” economic hardship to BusinessWire. As of December 2020, New Mexico had an unemployment rate of 8.2%-one of the worst in the nation. In an environment where many small businesses are struggling even to keep their doors open, SB 198 would devastate them.

Mandatory paid sick leave has already been rejected three times in Albuquerque-once by voters themselves. I ask you to stand in support of local businesses and New Mexico voters and reject this counter-productive bill. Thank you.



Frank Pagurko III