**Letter below, but first, some tips:**

* The areas for you to customize with your own info are in [BRAKETS AND CAPS] in the first paragraph and at the end, in the signature. Feel free to customize/add where you see fit.
* Reporters are constantly up against deadlines. The easier/faster you can make it for them, the more likely you’ll get your story in print. So:
  + Respond quickly when they contact you – drop everything!
  + Have other resources ready – especially other affected small biz owners who they can talk to.
* It’s best to have a sort of pitch lined up for when you speak with them. Like this:
  + I am eager to help contribute to the economic recovery, and have been holding out great hope for this program.
  + I want to get my business going as soon as possible, but the math just doesn’t work under the current rules.
  + Because I am closed (fully or partially) I have two choices under the current rules of the PPP: bring everyone back on payroll and pay them to sit at home, or wait until June 30th and bring everyone back then.
  + Option 1 doesn’t work because the new unemployment supplement would mean I’d have to pay them (X AMOUNT) per hour to have them making more than those sitting home – (X PERCENTAGE) more than they are making now. My small business cannot afford to pay that kind of differential, and it’s not reasonable for me to ask my employees to work for less money than they would make staying home.
  + Option 2 doesn’t work because there is so much uncertainty around what the operating environment will look like by June 30th; but by all accounts we will not be back to “normal” by then.
  + Because of all the uncertainty, both options could leave me saddled with unforgivable debt
  + While there is no way to tell exactly when we will return to some semblance of normal, you only have to look at Italy or China to see how long these lockdowns have to go for – and when the lockdowns are lifted things will come back slowly, not all at once.
  + Even when we are technically permitted to reopen, many customers may not have the money, or be too scared to go about their normal business at first. And my employees could be home schooling children, or have no daycare
  + This is especially hard on service and hospitality businesses because we employ service and hospitality workers, who can’t work from home and can’t easily be transitioned to a different type of work.

**Now, the email you can send to get a call back from a member of the press:**

Dear [PRESS CONTACT],

I'm a small business owner in [YOUR CITY] writing because I'm one of many businesses that has held out great hope for the Payroll Protection Program’s (PPP) loan forgiveness provision. However, with a more thorough understanding of the rules as currently written, its apparent that there are major oversights in the plan that will force my business and other service and hospitality businesses around the state to take on potentially unforgivable debt while risking losing our employees for good.

Closing my business broke my heart, but I know, based on guidance from state and federal public health authorities, that it was the right thing to do to protect the health of my staff and my customers. Given our focus on health and safety, it’s frustrating to learn that the loan forgiveness provision carries with it the requirement that we return to full staffing levels by 8 weeks from loan disbursement or by June 30th, both of which are overly ambitious given the current reality on the ground.

There are so many variables that will affect my staffing levels far beyond when we are technically able to reopen. Demand is unlikely to return to pre-crisis levels anytime soon, as incomes dwindle from job loss and other economic fallout, and customers are not fully confident they can go about their regular business safely. On top of that, there is no way to know what the guidance from state and federal authorities will be 8 weeks from now, when we are supposed to be back to 100% pre-crises employment levels.

This recent piece in Forbes sums it up nicely:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewrigie/2020/04/03/no-seat-at-the-table-for-restaurants-cares-act-leaves-hospitality-industry-hanging/?fbclid=IwAR22O_mvYo_MLl8dj6UmL4vPW8QBqETOvAelxIKjwmGaiHyz_apqheavHY4#685faf324558>

Some have suggested I just pay my staff to sit at home - but with the new federal unemployment supplement of $600/week on top of what my staff is already getting from the state, I'd be asking them to take a pay cut to go pack on payroll, hence the risk of my losing them for good once this crisis is over.

We need more time to staff up – 8 weeks from loan origination is insufficient. We need at least 6 months from the time the government orders are lifted to start our 8 week grant period. And we also need better guidance on the Unemployment provisions so we can develop a return-to-work strategy that is fair for our staff.

In short, we need to ensure rule changes that create a rational economic environment for small businesses so we can do our part in reviving the economy.

I'd love to talk to you about how the PPP will play out for my business, and I could help connect you to other businesses stuck in the gap if this is a story you'd be interested in pursuing.

My contact details are below. If this not something you're able to cover, I'd appreciate any assistance you can offer in reaching out to other reporters who might want to cover this story.

Regards,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR BUSINESS NAME]

[YOUR BUSINESS ADDRESS/CONTACT INFO]