

Risk Factors Comparison 2025-03-11 to 2024-03-05 Form: 10-K

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You should carefully consider the risks described below in addition to the other information set forth in this Annual Report on Form 10-K, including the sections titled “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations,” “Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosures About Market Risk” and our consolidated financial statements and related notes. If any of the risks and uncertainties described in the cautionary factors described below actually occur or continue to occur, our business, financial condition, results of operations, cash flow and the trading price of our common stock could be materially and adversely affected. The considerations and risks that follow are organized within relevant headings but may be relevant to other headings as well. Moreover, the risks below are not the only risks we face and additional risks not currently known to us or that we presently deem immaterial may emerge or become material at any time and may adversely impact our business, reputation, financial condition, results of operations, cash flow or the trading price of our common stock.

Risk Factors Summary Our business is subject to numerous risks and uncertainties, including those outside of our control, that could cause our actual results to be harmed. These risks include the following:

- Risks Related to Our Business and Industry** • our vulnerability to changes in economic conditions and other factors, many of which are largely outside of our control • our inability to open new restaurants in new and existing markets or to operate them as profitably as we have experienced in the past • our inability to effectively manage our growth • opening new restaurants may adversely impact sales at our and our franchisees’ existing restaurants • the number of visitors to areas where our restaurants are located may decline • **lower than expected** ~~our inability to generate~~ same- restaurant sales growth • **our unsuccessful** marketing programs **and-or** limited- time menu offerings ~~may fail to generate profits~~ • shortages or disruptions in the supply or delivery of frequently used food items or increases in the cost of our frequently used food items • **unsuccessful new restaurant openings** • our inability to compete successfully with other breakfast and lunch restaurants • our vulnerability to food safety and food- borne illness concerns • issues with our existing franchisees, including their financial performance, our lack of control over their operations and conflicting business interests • our reliance on a small number of suppliers for a substantial amount of our food and coffee • geographic concentration • damage to our reputation and negative publicity, even if unwarranted • our inability to effectively manage the accelerated impact of social media **and artificial intelligence**
- Risks Related to Information Technology and Intellectual Property** • our failure to adequately protect our network security • compliance with federal and state laws and regulations relating to privacy, data protection, advertising and consumer protection • potential state property law liability with our gift cards • our failure to enforce and maintain our trademarks and other intellectual property • adverse litigation outcomes with respect to our intellectual property rights
- Risks Related to Employees and the Workforce** • our inability to identify qualified individuals for our workforce • our failure to maintain our corporate culture • potential unionization activities • **risks associated with** our sustainability activities, including ESG matters
- Legal and Regulatory Risks** • compliance with federal and local environmental, labor, employment, food safety, franchise, zoning and other applicable laws and regulations • the distraction and expense of litigation • **increased labor and healthcare costs due to changes in laws and regulations** • risks associated with leasing properties subject to long- term and non- cancelable leases • compliance with the laws and regulations applicable to public companies • volatility in our results of operations caused by fluctuations in our tax obligations and effective tax rate and realization of our deferred tax assets • risks related to our sale of alcoholic beverages
- Risks Related to Accounting and Financial Reporting Matters** • impairment in the carrying value of our goodwill or indefinite- lived intangible assets • **risks associated with changes to accounting estimates** • our inability to effectively manage our internal control over financial reporting
- Risks Related to Our Indebtedness** • our level of indebtedness and our duty to comply with covenants under our Credit Agreement
- Risks Related to Our Company and Organizational Structure** • the interests of Advent may differ from those of our public stockholders • our reliance on our operating subsidiaries • ~~our lack of significant experience managing a public company~~ • risks associated with our status as an emerging growth company **and a** • **risks associated with the anti- takeover provisions of Delaware law, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation- incorporation and bylaws** • **risks associated with exclusive forum jurisdiction in the Court of Chancery in the State of Delaware**
- Risks Related to Ownership of Our Common Stock** • the market price of our common stock could be reduced by future offerings of debt or equity securities • risks associated with our status as a controlled company with highly concentrated ownership of common stock • **our expectation not to pay any dividends on our common stock in the foreseeable future** • possible significant fluctuations in our quarterly results of operations that could fall below the expectations of securities analysts and investors • **sales of substantial amounts of common stock in the public markets by Advent** • dilutive impact from grants under our equity incentive plans

General Risk Factors • the loss of our executive officers or other key employees • lack of access to additional capital to support business growth • changes in accounting principles or estimates • inadequate levels of insurance coverage against claims

We are vulnerable to changes in economic conditions and consumer preferences that could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Food service businesses depend on consumer discretionary spending and are often affected by changes in consumer tastes, national, regional and local economic conditions and demographic trends. ~~For example, due in large part to trends related to increased work- from- home accommodations by employers, we experienced and continue to experience changes in our breakfast and lunch business as it relates to customers who visit us before starting the workday, on their way to work or during corporate lunch breaks.~~ Factors such as traffic patterns, weather, fuel prices, local demographics and the type, number and locations of competing restaurants may adversely affect the performances of individual locations. In addition, economic downturns, geopolitical tensions, inflation or increased food or energy costs have harmed and

could continue to harm the restaurant industry in general and our restaurants in particular. Adverse changes in any of these factors could reduce consumer traffic or impose practical limits on pricing that could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. It is possible that consumers may no longer regard our menu offerings favorably, that we will no longer be able to develop new menu items that appeal to consumer preferences or that there will be a drop in consumer demands for restaurant dining during breakfast and lunch dayparts. Restaurant traffic and our resulting sales depend in part on our ability to anticipate, identify and respond to changing consumer preferences and economic conditions. The rising popularity of certain weight loss drugs, which suppress a person's appetite, may impact sales or traffic in our restaurants. In addition, the restaurant industry is subject to scrutiny due to the perception that restaurant company practices have contributed to poor nutrition, high caloric intake, obesity or other health concerns of their customers. If we are unable to adapt to changes in consumer preferences and trends, we may lose customers, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Additionally, government regulation may impact our business as a result of changes in attitudes regarding diet and health or new information regarding the adverse health effects of consuming certain menu offerings. These changes have resulted in, and may continue to result in, laws and regulations requiring us to disclose the nutritional content of our food offerings and laws and regulations affecting permissible ingredients and menu items. A number of counties, cities and states have enacted menu labeling laws requiring multi-unit restaurant operators to disclose to consumers certain nutritional information, or have enacted legislation restricting the use of certain types of ingredients in restaurants. An unfavorable report on, or reaction to, our menu ingredients, the size of our portions or the nutritional content of our menu items could adversely influence the demand for our menu offerings. Compliance with current and future laws and regulations regarding the ingredients and nutritional content of our menu items may be costly and time-consuming. If we fail to comply with existing or future laws and regulations, we may be subject to governmental or judicial fines or sanctions. The risks and costs associated with nutritional disclosures on our menus could also impact our operations, particularly given differences among applicable legal requirements and practices within the restaurant industry with respect to testing and disclosure, ordinary variations in food preparation among our own restaurants and the need to rely on the accuracy and completeness of nutritional information obtained from third-party suppliers. We may not be able to effectively respond to changes in consumer health perceptions, comply with further nutrient content disclosure requirements or adapt our menu offerings to trends in eating habits, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our financial condition and results of operations are subject to, and may be adversely affected by, a number of other factors, many of which are also largely outside of our control. Our operating results have been in the past and will continue to be subject to a number of other factors, many of which are largely outside our control. Any one or more of the factors listed below or described elsewhere in this Risk Factors section could have a material adverse impact on our business, financial condition and / or results of operations:

- increases in real estate costs in certain markets;
- inflationary pressures;
- disruptions to our supply chain;
- changes in governmental rules and approaches to taxation **and trade restrictions, including tariffs**;
- adverse outcomes of litigation;
- severe weather or other natural or man-made disasters affecting a large market or several closely located markets ~~that may temporarily but significantly impact our~~ **or our supply chain** restaurant operations in such markets;
- changes in climate, including changes to the frequency of severe weather events, that impact the cost and availability of goods and services, energy and other materials throughout our supply chain; and
- labor discord or disruption, geopolitical events, war, terrorism, political instability, acts of public violence, boycotts, hostilities and social unrest and health pandemics or other outbreaks of infectious disease that lead to avoidance of public places or restrictions on public gatherings such as in our restaurants.

An important aspect of our growth strategy involves opening new restaurants in existing and new markets. We may be unsuccessful in opening new restaurants or establishing new markets and our new restaurants may not perform as well as anticipated which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. A key part of our growth strategy includes opening new restaurants in existing and new markets and operating those restaurants on a profitable basis. We must identify target markets where we can enter or expand. We may not be able to open our planned new restaurants within budget or on a timely basis, and our new restaurants may not perform as well as anticipated. Our and our franchisees' ability to successfully open new restaurants is affected by a number of factors, many of which are beyond our control, including our and our franchisees' ability to:

- identify a sufficient number of available and suitable restaurant sites;
- compete for restaurant sites;
- reach acceptable agreements regarding the lease or purchase of restaurant sites;
- obtain or have available the financing required to develop and operate new restaurants, including construction and opening costs, which includes access to leases and equipment leases at favorable interest and capitalization rates;
- respond to unforeseen engineering or environmental problems with our selected restaurant sites;
- mitigate the impact of inclement weather, natural disasters and other calamities on the development of restaurant sites;
- hire, train and retain the skilled management and other employees necessary to meet staffing needs of new restaurants;
- obtain, in a timely manner and for an acceptable cost, required licenses, permits and regulatory approvals and respond effectively to any changes in local, state or federal law and regulations that adversely affect our and our franchisees' costs or ability to open new restaurants; and
- respond to construction and equipment cost increases for new restaurants.

If we are unable to open new restaurants, or if planned restaurant openings are significantly delayed, it could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our system-wide restaurants are geographically concentrated in the southeast portion of the United States and we may encounter new challenges as we enter new markets. The challenges of entering new markets include: difficulties in hiring experienced personnel; increased labor costs; unfamiliarity with local real estate markets and demographics; consumer unfamiliarity with our brand; and different competitive and economic conditions, consumer tastes and discretionary spending patterns that are more difficult to predict or satisfy than in our existing markets. Consumer recognition of our brand has been important in the success of company-owned and franchisee-owned restaurants in our existing markets, and we may find that our concept has limited appeal in new markets. Restaurants we open in new markets may take longer to reach expected sales and profit levels on a consistent basis and may have higher

construction, occupancy and operating costs than existing restaurants. Any failure on our part to recognize or respond to these challenges may adversely affect the success of any new restaurants and could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our failure to manage our growth effectively could harm our business and results of operations. Our growth plan includes opening new restaurants. Our existing restaurant management systems, financial and management controls and information systems may be inadequate to support our planned expansion. Managing our growth effectively will require us to continue to enhance these systems, procedures and controls and to recruit, hire, train and retain managers and team members. We may not respond quickly enough to the changing demands that our expansion will impose on our management, restaurant teams and existing infrastructure which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Opening new restaurants in existing markets may adversely impact sales at our and our franchisees' existing restaurants. The consumer target area of our and our franchisees' restaurants varies by location, depending on a number of factors, including population density, other local retail and business attractions, area demographics and geography. As a result, if we open new restaurants in or near markets in which we or our franchisees' already have restaurants, it could have a material adverse effect on the results of operations and same- restaurant sales growth for our restaurants in such markets due to the close proximity with our other restaurants and market saturation. Existing restaurants could also make it more difficult to build our and our franchisees' consumer base for a new restaurant in the same market. Sales cannibalization between our restaurants may become significant in the future as we continue to open new restaurants and could affect our sales growth, which could, in turn, have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. A decline in visitors to any of the retail centers, lifestyle centers, or entertainment centers where our restaurants are located could adversely affect our restaurant sales. Our restaurants are primarily located in high- activity trade areas that often contain retail centers, lifestyle centers, and entertainment centers. We depend on high visitor rates in these trade areas to attract customers to our restaurants. Factors that may result in declining visitor rates at these locations include economic or political conditions, anchor tenants closing in retail centers in which we operate, changes in consumer preferences or shopping patterns, changes in discretionary consumer spending, increasing petroleum prices, mobility restrictions and fear of contracting infectious diseases. A decline in traffic at these locations for a sustained period could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our same- restaurant sales growth may be lower than we expect in future periods. Same- restaurant sales growth will continue to be a critical factor affecting our ability to generate profits because the profit margin on same- restaurant sales growth is generally higher than the profit margin on new restaurant sales. Our ability to increase same- restaurant sales growth depends in part on our ability to successfully implement our initiatives to build sales. It is possible such initiatives will not be successful, that we will not achieve our target same- restaurant sales growth or that the change in same- restaurant sales growth could be negative, which may cause a decrease in sales growth and ability to achieve profitability. This could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our marketing programs and our limited time new offerings may not be successful and could fail to meet expectations, and our new menu items, advertising campaigns and restaurant designs and remodels may not generate increased sales or profits. We incur costs and expend other resources in our marketing efforts on new and seasonal menu items, advertising campaigns and restaurant designs and remodels to raise brand awareness and attract and retain customers. In addition, as the number of our restaurants increases, and as we expand into new markets, we expect to increase our investment in advertising and consider additional promotional activities. Accordingly, in the future, we will incur greater marketing expenditures, resulting in greater financial risk. Additionally, our limited time menu offerings, which are a key part of our promotional activities from time to time, may not perform as anticipated, which could have an adverse impact on our results of operations for the related period. If these initiatives are not successful, we could incur expenses without the benefit of higher revenues, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Changes in the cost of food could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our profitability depends in part on our ability to anticipate and react to changes in food and beverage costs, including, among other things, our costs for pork, coffee, eggs, avocados, potatoes, bread, cheese, ~~and fresh fruit and~~ produce items. We are susceptible to increases in the cost of food due to factors beyond our control, such as freight and delivery charges, general economic conditions, seasonal economic fluctuations, weather conditions, global demand, food safety concerns, infectious diseases, fluctuations in the U. S. dollar, tariffs and import taxes, product recalls and government regulations. In ~~2022-2024~~ **and continuing into 2023-2025**, for example, we **have experienced significant increases in the cost of eggs, primarily due to an outbreak of avian influenza, as well as coffee and avocados, primarily due to the impact of climate and weather conditions**. Dependence on frequent deliveries of fresh produce and other food products subjects our business to the risk that shortages or interruptions in supply could adversely affect the availability, quality or cost of ingredients or require us to incur additional costs to obtain adequate supplies. Further, increases in fuel prices could result in increased distribution costs. ~~In 2022, for example, we experienced significant increases in distribution costs as a result of material increases in fuel prices~~. Changes in the price or availability of certain food products could affect our profitability and reputation. While some commodities we purchase are subject to contract pricing, as our contracts expire, we may not be able to successfully re- negotiate terms that protect us from price inflation in the future. International commodities we purchase are also subject to supply shortages or interruptions. In the event of cost increases with respect to one or more of our raw ingredients, we may choose to temporarily suspend or permanently discontinue serving menu items rather than pay the increased cost for the ingredients. Any such changes to our available menu could adversely impact our restaurant traffic, business and same- restaurant sales growth. While future cost increases can be partially offset by increasing menu prices, such price increases may adversely affect our customers' visit frequencies and purchasing patterns. Competitive conditions may limit our menu pricing flexibility and if we or our franchisees implement menu price increases to protect our margins, restaurant traffic could be materially adversely affected, at both company- owned and franchise- owned restaurants. New restaurants may not be profitable or may close, and the performance of our restaurants that we have experienced in the past

may not be indicative of future results. Some of our restaurants open with an initial start-up period of higher or lower than normal sales volumes. Our restaurant level operating profit margins are generally lower through the first 12 months of operation. In new markets, the length of time before average sales for new restaurants stabilize is less predictable as a result of our limited knowledge of these markets and consumers' limited awareness of our brand. In addition, our average unit volume and same-restaurant sales growth may not increase at the rates our existing restaurants have achieved over the past several years. Our ability to operate new restaurants profitably and increase our average unit volume and same-restaurant sales growth will depend on many factors, some of which are beyond our control, including:

- consumer awareness and understanding of our brand;
- general economic conditions, which can affect restaurant traffic, local labor costs and prices we pay for the food products and other supplies we use;
- consumption patterns and food preferences that may differ from region to region;
- changes in consumer preferences and discretionary spending;
- difficulties obtaining or maintaining adequate relationships with distributors or suppliers in new markets;
- increases in prices for commodities;
- inefficiency in our labor costs as the staff gains experience;
- competition, either from our competitors in the restaurant industry or our own restaurants;
- temporary and permanent site characteristics of new restaurants;
- changes in government regulation; and
- other unanticipated increases in costs, any of which could give rise to delays or cost overruns.

Although we target specified operating and financial metrics, new restaurants may not meet these targets or may take longer than anticipated to do so. If our new restaurants do not perform as planned or close, or if we are unable to achieve our expected restaurant sales, it could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We face significant competition for customers, and our inability to compete effectively may affect our traffic, our sales and our operating profit margins, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. The restaurant industry is intensely competitive with many companies that compete directly and indirectly with us with respect to food quality, brand recognition, service, price and value, convenience, design and location. We compete in the restaurant industry with national, regional and locally-owned and / or operated limited-service restaurants and full-service restaurants. We compete with fast casual restaurants, quick service restaurants and casual dining restaurants. Some of our competitors have significantly greater financial, marketing, personnel and other resources than we do, and many of our competitors are well-established in markets in which we have existing restaurants or intend to locate new restaurants. In addition, many of our competitors have greater name recognition nationally or in some of the local markets in which we have or plan to have restaurants. We also compete with a number of non-traditional market participants, such as convenience stores, grocery stores, coffee shops, and meal kit delivery services, and "ghost" or dark kitchens, where meals are prepared at separate takeaway premises rather than a restaurant. Competition from food delivery services companies has also increased in recent years. Any inability to successfully compete with the restaurants in our existing or new markets will place downward pressure on our customer traffic and could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our continued success also depends in part on the continued popularity of our menu and the experience we offer customers at our restaurants. Consumer tastes, nutritional and dietary trends, traffic patterns and the type, number, and location of competing restaurants often affect the restaurant business, and our competitors may react more efficiently and effectively to changes in those conditions. In addition, some of our competitors in the past have implemented promotional programs that provide price discounts on certain menu offerings, and they may continue to do so in the future. If we are unable to continue to compete effectively, our traffic, restaurant sales and restaurant operating profit margins could decline, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Food safety and food-borne illness concerns may have an adverse effect on our business by decreasing sales and increasing costs. Food safety and quality concerns may adversely impact our business and profitability, our internal operational controls and standards may not always be met and our employees may not always act professionally, responsibly and in our and our customers' best interests. Any possible instances of food-borne illness could reduce our restaurant sales. Food safety is a top priority, and we dedicate substantial resources to help ensure that our customers enjoy safe, quality food products. However, food-borne illnesses and other food safety issues have occurred in the food industry in the past, and could occur in the future. Incidents or reports of food-borne or water-borne illness or other food safety issues, food contamination or tampering, employee hygiene and cleanliness failures or improper employee conduct, customers entering our restaurants while ill and contaminating food ingredients or surfaces at our restaurants could lead to product liability or other claims. Such incidents or reports could adversely affect our brand and reputation and could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Similar incidents or reports occurring at competitors in our industry unrelated to us could likewise create negative publicity, which could adversely impact consumer behavior towards us. Our food safety controls, procedures and training may not be fully effective in preventing all food safety and public health issues at our restaurants, including any occurrences of pathogens, bacteria, parasites or other toxins infecting our food supply. These potential public health issues, in addition to food tampering, could adversely affect food prices and availability of certain food products, generate negative publicity, and lead to closure of restaurants resulting in a decline in our sales or profitability. In addition, there is no guarantee that our restaurant locations will maintain the high levels of internal controls and training we require at our restaurants. Furthermore, our reliance on third-party food processors makes it difficult to monitor food safety compliance and may increase the risk that food-borne illness would affect multiple locations rather than single restaurants. Some food-borne illness incidents could be caused by third-party food suppliers and transporters outside of our control, and may affect multiple restaurant locations as a result. We cannot assure that all food items will be properly maintained during transport throughout the supply chain or that our employees will identify all products that may be spoiled and should not be used in our restaurants. The risk of food-borne illness may also increase whenever our menu items are served outside of our control, such as by third-party food delivery services companies, customer take out or at catered events. We do not have direct control over our third-party suppliers, transporters or delivery services, and may not have visibility into their practices. New illnesses resistant to our current precautions may develop in the future, or diseases with long incubation periods could arise, that could give rise to claims or allegations on a retroactive basis. One or more

instances of food- borne illness in one of our company- owned or franchised restaurants could adversely affect sales at all our restaurants if highly publicized, such as on national media outlets or through social media, especially due to the geographic concentration of many of our restaurants. This risk exists even if it were later determined that the illness was wrongly attributed to one of our restaurants. Potential food safety incidents, whether at our restaurants or involving our business partners, could lead to wide public exposure and negative publicity, which could materially harm our business. A number of other restaurant chains have experienced incidents related to food- borne illnesses that have had material adverse impacts on their operations, and we could experience a similar impact upon the occurrence of a similar incident at one of our restaurants. Additionally, even if food- borne illnesses were not identified at our restaurants, our restaurant sales could be adversely affected if instances of food- borne illnesses at other restaurant chains were highly publicized. Finally, although we have followed industry standard food safety protocols in the past and have endeavored to continually enhance our food safety procedures to ensure that our food is as safe as it can possibly be, we may still be at a higher risk for food- borne illness occurrences than some competitors due to our greater use of fresh, unprocessed produce and meats, our reliance on employees cooking with traditional methods rather than automation, and our avoidance of frozen ingredients. The financial performance of our franchisees can have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. As **15 % and 19 % and 23 %** of our system- wide restaurants were franchised as of December **29, 2024 and December 31, 2023 and December 25, 2022**, respectively, our results of operations are dependent in part upon the operational and financial success of our franchisees. While we are responsible for ensuring the success of our system- wide restaurants and for taking a long- term view with respect to system- wide improvements, our franchisees have individual business strategies and objectives, which may conflict with our interests. Our franchisees may not be able to secure adequate financing to open or continue operating their restaurants. If they incur too much debt or if economic or sales trends deteriorate such that they are unable to repay existing debt, our franchisees could experience financial distress or even bankruptcy. If a significant number of franchisees become financially distressed or close their restaurants, it could result in reduced franchise revenues, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We have limited control with respect to the operations of our franchisees, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Franchisees are independent business operators and are not our employees, and we do not exercise control over the day- to- day operations of the franchised restaurants. We provide training and support to franchisees, and set and monitor operational standards and guidelines, however, because we do not have day- to- day control over the franchisees, our franchisees may operate restaurants in a manner that is not consistent with our standards, guidelines and requirements, or hire and train qualified managers and other restaurant personnel. If franchisees do not operate to our expectations, our image and reputation, and the image and reputation of other franchisees, may suffer, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. If we are unable to maintain good relationships with our franchisees due to conflicts of interest or otherwise, revenues could decrease and we may be unable to expand our presence in certain markets. Our franchisees pay us fees pursuant to our franchise agreements. The viability of our franchise business depends on our ability to maintain good relationships with our franchisees. If we are unable to maintain good relationships with our franchisees, we may be unable to renew franchise agreements, which would result in a decrease in our franchise revenues and our presence in certain markets, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Franchisees, as independent business operators, may from time to time disagree with us on our strategies regarding the business or our interpretation of our respective rights and obligations under the franchise agreement and the terms and conditions of the franchisee / franchisor relationship. In addition, franchise agreements require us and our franchisees to comply with operational and performance conditions that are subject to interpretation and could result in disagreements. As a result, at any given time, we may be in disputes with one or more of our franchisees. Such disputes may result in legal action against us. To the extent we have such disputes, the attention, time and financial resources of our management and our franchisees will be diverted from our restaurants, which could, even if we prevail, have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We have a limited number of suppliers and distributors for several of our frequently used ingredients. If our suppliers or distributors are unable to fulfill their obligations under our arrangements with them, we could encounter supply shortages and incur higher costs. We contract with one distributor, which we refer to as our “ broad line ” distributor, to provide virtually all of our food distribution services in the United States. If our broad- line distributor does not adequately perform its obligations or is unable to scale with our business, or our distribution is disrupted for any reason, there could be an adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. **For example, in January 2024, unionized drivers at our broad- line distributor went on strike at a number of distribution centers, which adversely effected our operations and supply chain for several weeks resulting in the incurrence of higher costs and delays in food deliveries.** As of December **31-29, 2023-2024**, we purchased substantially all of our pork from two suppliers, substantially all of our eggs from one supplier and all of our coffee from one supplier. We purchase these ingredients pursuant to purchase orders at prevailing market or negotiated contract prices and are not limited by minimum purchase requirements. The cancellation of our supply arrangements with any one of these suppliers or the disruption, delay or inability of these suppliers to deliver these major products to our restaurants or distribution centers due to problems in production or distribution, inclement weather, unanticipated demand, **trade restrictions (such as increased tariffs or quotas, embargoes or customs restrictions)** or other conditions may materially and adversely affect our results of operations while we establish alternative supplier and distribution channels. Accordingly, although we believe that alternative supply and distribution sources are available, we may not be able to identify or negotiate with such sources on terms that are commercially reasonable to us. If our existing suppliers or distributors are unable to fulfill their obligations under their contracts or we are unable to identify alternative sources, we could encounter supply shortages and incur higher costs, each of which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. In addition, if our suppliers or distributors fail to comply with food safety or other laws and regulations, or face allegations of non- compliance, their operations may be disrupted.

We also could experience shortages of key ingredients if our suppliers need to close or restrict operations due to the impact of a pandemic or other infectious diseases. If our suppliers' employees are unable to work or our suppliers' operations are disrupted due to a pandemic or other infectious diseases, we and our franchisees could face shortages of food items or other supplies, and our and our franchisees' operations and sales could be materially adversely impacted by such supply interruptions. If that were to occur, we may not be able to find replacement suppliers on commercially reasonable terms or a timely basis, if at all. More generally, we are subject to additional risks related to the increases to energy or transportation costs. Energy prices are in turn subject to significant volatility caused by, among other things, market fluctuations, supply and demand, currency fluctuations, production and transportation disruptions, geopolitical developments, and other world events, as well as climate change related conditions discussed above. For instance, the Russia- Ukraine war and the Israel- Hamas war could adversely impact, among other things, our raw material, energy and transportation costs, as well as certain of our suppliers, global and local macroeconomic conditions, and cause further supply chain disruptions. Our system- wide restaurant base is geographically concentrated in the southeast portion of the United States, and we could be adversely affected by conditions specific to that region. Our restaurants in the southeast portion of the United States represented approximately ~~42-41~~ % of our system- wide restaurants as of December ~~31-29, 2023-2024~~. Our restaurants in Florida represented approximately 23 % of our system- wide restaurants as of December ~~31-29, 2023-2024~~. Adverse changes in demographic, unemployment, economic, regulatory or weather conditions in the southeast portion of the United States have had, and may continue to have, material adverse effects on our business, financial condition and results of operations. As a result of our concentration in this market, we have been, and in the future may be, disproportionately affected by conditions in this geographic area compared to other chain restaurants with a national footprint. Damage to our reputation and negative publicity could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our reputation and the quality of our brand are critical to our business and success in existing markets, and will be critical to our success as we enter into new markets. Any incident that erodes consumer loyalty to our brand could significantly reduce its value and damage our business. We may be adversely affected by negative publicity relating to food quality, the safety, sanitation and welfare of our restaurant facilities, customer complaints or litigation alleging illness or injury, health inspection scores, integrity of our or our suppliers' food processing and other policies, practices and procedures, employee relationships and welfare or other matters at one or more of our restaurants. Any publicity relating to health concerns, perceived or specific outbreaks of infectious diseases attributed to one or more of our restaurants, or non-compliance with government restrictions imposed by federal, state and local governments could result in a significant decrease in customer traffic in all of our restaurants and could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Furthermore, similar negative publicity or occurrences with respect to other restaurants or other restaurant chains could also decrease our customer traffic and have a similar material adverse effect on our business. In addition, incidents of restaurant commentary have increased dramatically with the proliferation of social media platforms. Negative publicity may adversely affect us, regardless of whether the allegations are valid or whether we are held responsible. In addition, the negative impact of adverse publicity may extend far beyond the restaurant involved, especially due to the high geographic concentration of many of our restaurants, and affect some or all our other restaurants, including our franchise- owned restaurants. The risk of negative publicity is particularly great with respect to our franchise- owned restaurants because we are limited in the manner in which we can regulate them, especially on a real- time basis and negative publicity from our franchised restaurants may also significantly impact company- owned restaurants. A similar risk exists with respect to food service businesses unrelated to us, if customers mistakenly associate such unrelated businesses with our operations. Employee claims against us based on, among other things, wage and hour violations, discrimination, harassment or wrongful termination may also create not only legal and financial liability but negative publicity that could adversely affect us and divert our financial and management resources that would otherwise be used to benefit the future performance of our operations. These types of employee claims could also be asserted against us, on a co- employer theory, by employees of our franchisees. A significant increase in the number of these claims or an increase in the number of successful claims could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our inability or failure to recognize, respond to and effectively manage the accelerated impact of social media or artificial intelligence could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our marketing efforts rely heavily on the use of social media. In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the use of social media platforms, including weblogs (blogs), mini- blogs, chat platforms, social media websites, and other forms of internet- based communications, which allow individuals access to a broad audience of consumers and other interested persons. Many of our competitors are expanding their use of social media, and new social media platforms are rapidly being developed, potentially making more traditional social media platforms obsolete. As a result, we need to continuously innovate and develop our marketing strategies in order to maintain broad appeal with customers and brand relevance, particularly given the rise in digital orders by customers at home due to the increased work- from- home customer base. We also continue to invest in other digital marketing initiatives that allow us to reach our customers across multiple digital channels and build their awareness of, engagement with, and loyalty to our brand. These initiatives may not be successful, resulting in expenses incurred without the benefit of higher sales or increased brand recognition. Additionally, negative commentary regarding our restaurants, our food or our service may be posted on our social media platforms and may be adverse to our reputation or business. This harm may be immediate, without affording us an opportunity for redress or correction. In addition, the rapid evolution and increased adoption of artificial intelligence technologies may affect our customers' expectations, requirements or tastes in ways we cannot adequately anticipate or adapt to, ~~and~~ adversely affect our business financial condition and results of operations, **and may require us to develop artificial intelligence- specific systems**. Information technology system failures or breaches of our network security could interrupt our operations and have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We and our franchisees rely heavily on our computer systems and network infrastructure across our operations, including point- of- sale processing at our restaurants, for management of our

supply chain, accounting, payment of obligations, collection of cash, credit and debit card transactions and other processes and procedures. Our ability to efficiently and effectively manage our business depends significantly on the reliability and capacity of these systems. Our and our franchisees' operations depend upon our and our franchisees' ability to protect our computer equipment and systems against damage from physical theft, fire, power loss, telecommunications failure or other catastrophic events, as well as from internal and external security breaches, viruses and other disruptive problems. Any actual or perceived breach in the security of our information technology systems or those of our franchisees and third- party service providers could lead to damage or failure of our computer systems or network infrastructure that causes an interruption in our operations could have a material adverse effect on our business and a significant theft, loss, disclosure, modification or misappropriation of, or access to, guests', employees', third parties' or other proprietary data or other breach of our information technology systems could subject us or our franchisees to litigation or to actions by regulatory authorities. Furthermore, at various times we have allowed certain of our team members in our corporate headquarters to work from home. Remote working, particularly for an extended period of time, could increase certain risks to our business, including an increased risk of cybersecurity events, vulnerability of our systems and improper dissemination of confidential or personal information, if our physical and cybersecurity measures or our corporate policies are not effective. The costs to us to protect against any of the foregoing cybersecurity vulnerabilities or to address a cyber- incident could be significant and have a material adverse impact on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Security incidents or breaches have from time to time occurred and may in the future occur involving our systems, the systems of the parties with whom we communicate or collaborate (including franchisees) or the systems of third- party providers. Certain of these technology systems contain personal, financial and other information of our customers, employees, franchisees and their employees, suppliers and other third parties, as well as financial, proprietary and other confidential information related to our business. The techniques and sophistication used to conduct cyber-attacks and breaches of information technology systems, as well as the sources and targets of these attacks, may take many forms (including phishing, social engineering, denial or degradation of service attacks, malware or ransomware), change frequently and are often not recognized until such attacks are launched or have been in place for a period of time. In addition, our employees, franchisees, contractors, or third parties with whom we do business or to whom we outsource business operations may attempt to circumvent our security measures in order to misappropriate regulated, protected, or personally identifiable information, and may purposefully or inadvertently cause a breach involving or compromising such information. Third parties may have the technology or know- how to breach the security of the information collected, stored, or transmitted by us or our franchisees, and our respective security measures, as well as those of our technology vendors, may not effectively prohibit others from obtaining improper access to this information. Advances in computer and software capabilities and encryption technology, new tools, and other developments may increase the risk of such a breach or compromise. The rapid evolution and increased adoption of artificial intelligence technologies may intensify our cybersecurity risks. Despite response procedures and measures in place in the event of an incident, a security breach could result in disruptions, shutdowns, or the theft or unauthorized disclosure of such information. The actual or alleged occurrence of any of these incidents could result in mitigation costs, reputational damage, adverse publicity, loss of consumer confidence, reduced sales and profits, complications in executing our growth initiatives and regulatory and legal risk, including criminal penalties or civil liabilities. As data security-related threats continue to evolve, we may be required to expend significant additional resources to continue to modify or enhance our protective measures or to investigate and remediate any information security vulnerabilities. We could be forced to expend significant financial and operational resources in responding to a security breach, including investigating and remediating any information security vulnerabilities, defending against and resolving legal and regulatory claims and complying with notification obligations, all of which could divert resources and the attention of our management and key personnel away from our business operations and adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations. In addition, our remediation efforts may not be successful and we could be unable to implement, maintain and upgrade adequate safeguards. We are continuing to expand, upgrade and develop our information technology capabilities. If we are unable to successfully upgrade or expand our technological capabilities, we may not be able to take advantage of market opportunities, manage our costs and transactional data effectively, satisfy customer requirements, execute our business plan or respond to competitive pressures. Failure to comply with federal and state laws and regulations relating to privacy, data protection, advertising and consumer protection, or the expansion of current or the enactment of new laws or regulations relating to privacy, data protection, advertising and consumer protection, could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our business requires the collection, transmission and retention of large volumes of customer and employee data, including credit and debit card numbers and other personally identifiable information, in various information technology systems that we and our franchisees maintain, and in those maintained by our third parties with whom we contract to provide services. The integrity and protection of that customer and employee data is critical to us. Further, our customers and employees have a high expectation that we and our service providers will adequately protect their personal information. Further, the standards for systems currently used for transmission and approval of electronic payment transactions, and the technology utilized in electronic payment themselves, all of which can put electronic payment data at risk, are determined and controlled by the payment card industry, not by us. For example, we are subject to industry requirements such as the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, or PCI- DSS, as well as certain other industry standards. Any failure to comply with these rules and / or requirements could significantly harm our brand, reputation, business and results of operations, and in the case of PCI- DSS, could result in monetary penalties and / or the exclusion from applicable card brands. We also rely on independent service providers for payment processing, including payments made using credit and debit cards. If these independent service providers become unwilling or unable to provide these services to us or if the cost of using these providers increases, our business could be harmed. We rely on a variety of marketing and advertising techniques, including email communications, affiliate partnerships, social media interactions, digital marketing, direct mailers, public relations initiatives and local community

sponsorships, promotions and partnerships, and we are subject to various laws and regulations that govern such marketing and advertising practices. A variety of federal and state laws and regulations govern the collection, use, retention, sharing and security of consumer data, particularly in the context of digital marketing, which we rely upon to attract new customers. We are, and may increasingly become, subject to other various laws, directives, industry standards and regulations, as well as contractual obligations, relating to data privacy and security in the jurisdictions in which we operate. The information, security and privacy requirements imposed by governmental regulation are increasingly demanding and are subject to potentially differing interpretations. Laws and expectations relating to privacy continue to evolve, and we continue to adapt to changing needs. For example, the definition of “personal information” or “personal data” under newer privacy laws is much broader than the definition of “personally identifiable information” that appears in older privacy laws, and many jurisdictions have or will soon enact new privacy laws. Specifically, certain states in which we operate or may operate in the future have enacted or may soon enact comprehensive privacy laws that may be more stringent or broader in scope, or offer greater individual rights, with respect to personal information than current federal, international or other state laws, and such laws may differ from each other, all of which may complicate compliance efforts. The California Consumer Privacy Act (“CCPA”), for example, requires, among other things, covered companies to provide new disclosures to California consumers and allows such consumers new abilities to opt- out of certain sales of personal data. The CCPA also provides for civil penalties for violations as well as a private right of action for data breaches that may increase data breach litigation. Further, the California Privacy Rights Act, which became fully effective in January 2023, significantly modifies the CCPA. **These modifications will require us to incur additional costs** **Colorado, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon, Texas, Utah** and expenses in our effort to comply. Virginia, Connecticut, Colorado and Utah have enacted similar data privacy legislation that took effect in 2023, and Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Montana, Maryland, Oregon, Minnesota, Rhode Island and Tennessee and Texas have enacted similar data privacy legislation that will take effect at various points in 2024 and beyond. Several other states and countries are considering expanding or passing privacy laws in the near term. **These laws and regulations have required and will require us to incur additional costs and expenses in our effort to comply.**

Our failure to adhere to or successfully implement appropriate processes to adhere to the requirements of evolving laws and regulations in this area could expose us and our franchisees to financial penalties and legal liability. Our and our franchisees’ systems may not be able to satisfy these changing requirements and customer and employee expectations, or may require significant additional investments or time in order to do so. Any failure, or perceived failure, by us to comply with our posted privacy policies or with any federal or state privacy or consumer protection- related laws, regulations, industry self- regulatory principles, industry standards or codes of conduct, regulatory guidance, orders to which we may be subject or other legal obligations relating to privacy or consumer protection could adversely affect our reputation, brand and business, and may result in claims, proceedings or actions against us by governmental entities, customers, suppliers or others or other liabilities or may require us to change our operations and / or cease using certain data sets. We may also be contractually required to indemnify and hold harmless third parties from the costs or consequences of non- compliance with any laws, regulations or other legal obligations relating to privacy or consumer protection or any inadvertent or unauthorized use or disclosure of data that we store or handle as part of operating our business. Federal and state governmental authorities continue to evaluate the privacy implications inherent in the use of third- party “cookies” and other methods of online tracking for behavioral advertising and other purposes. The U. S. government has enacted, has considered or is considering legislation or regulations that could significantly restrict the ability of companies and individuals to engage in these activities, such as by regulating the level of consumer notice and consent required before a company can employ cookies or other electronic tracking tools or the use of data gathered with such tools. Additionally, some providers of consumer devices and web browsers have implemented, or announced plans to implement, means to make it easier for Internet users to prevent the placement of cookies or to block other tracking technologies, which could, if widely adopted, result in the use of third- party cookies and other methods of online tracking becoming significantly less effective. Many applications and other devices allow consumers to avoid receiving advertisements by paying for subscriptions or other downloads. The regulation of the use of these cookies and other current online tracking and advertising practices or a loss in our ability to make effective use of services that employ such technologies could increase our costs of operations and limit our ability to acquire new customers on cost- effective terms and, consequently, have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We face potential liability with our gift cards under the property laws of some states. Our gift cards, which may be used to purchase food and beverages in our restaurants, may be considered stored value cards by certain states in accordance with their abandoned and unclaimed property laws. These laws could require a company to remit to the state cash in an amount equal to all or a designated portion of the unredeemed balance on the gift cards based on certain card attributes and the length of time that the cards are inactive. We received a letter, dated February 21, 2022, from the Delaware Secretary of State inviting us to participate in the Delaware Secretary of State’s Abandoned or Unclaimed Property Voluntary Disclosure Agreement Program to avoid being sent an audit notice by the Delaware Department of Finance. On August 31, 2022, the Company was accepted into Delaware’s Voluntary Disclosure Agreement Program, entitling it to certain benefits and protections offered to participants in the program. We intend to continue to work in good faith to complete a review of our books and records related to unclaimed or abandoned property during the periods required under the program. In the fourth quarter of 2023, the Company recorded a charge of \$ 0. 8 million for estimated probable losses that might arise from this matter. **Amounts incurred and In the second quarter of 2024, the Company paid \$ 0. 7 million to the State of Delaware** to resolve **past due escheat matters related to unclaimed gift card balances** property obligations in Delaware could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. We believe we are not currently required to remit any amounts relating to future unredeemed gift cards to states as our subsidiary that is the issuer of our gift cards was re- domiciled in Florida on December 9, 2022, a jurisdiction which exempts gift cards from the abandoned and unclaimed property laws. If this exemption was no longer available to us, our financial condition and results of

operations could be adversely affected. We recognize income from unredeemed cards when we determine that the likelihood of the cards being redeemed is remote and that recognition is appropriate based on governing state statutes. The analysis of the potential application of the abandoned and unclaimed property laws to our gift cards is complex, involving an analysis of constitutional, statutory provisions and factual issues. In the event that one or more states change their existing abandoned and unclaimed property laws or successfully challenge our position on the application of its abandoned and unclaimed property laws to our gift cards, or if the estimates that we use in projecting the likelihood of the cards being redeemed prove to be inaccurate, our liabilities with respect to unredeemed gift cards may be materially higher than the amounts shown in our consolidated financial statements. If we are required to materially increase the estimated liability recorded in our consolidated financial statements with respect to unredeemed gift cards, our financial condition and results of operations could be adversely affected. The failure to enforce and maintain our trademarks and protect our other intellectual property could have a material adverse effect on our business, including our ability to establish and maintain brand awareness. We have registered First Watch ® and certain other names, logos and slogans used by our restaurants as trademarks or service marks with the USPTO. The First Watch ® trademark is also registered in Canada. In addition, the First Watch logo, website domain name and Facebook and Instagram accounts are our intellectual property. The success of our business strategy depends on our continued ability to use our existing trademarks and service marks in order to increase brand awareness and develop our branded products. If our efforts to protect our intellectual property are not adequate, or if any third- party misappropriates or infringes on our intellectual property, whether in print, on the Internet or through other media, the value of our brands may be adversely affected, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, including the failure of our brands and branded products to achieve and maintain market acceptance. We or our suppliers maintain the seasonings and additives for our menu items, as well as certain standards, specifications and operating procedures, as trade secrets or confidential information. We may not be able to prevent the unauthorized disclosure or use of our trade secrets or confidential information, despite the existence of confidentiality agreements and other measures. If any of our trade secrets or information were to be disclosed to or independently developed by a competitor, it could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Litigation with respect to intellectual property assets, if decided against us, may result in competing uses or require adoption of new, non-infringing intellectual property, which may in turn adversely affect sales and revenues. Third parties may, from time to time, assert infringement or misappropriation claims against us, or assert claims that our rights in our trademarks, service marks, trade names and other intellectual property assets are invalid or unenforceable. Any such claims could have a material adverse effect on us or our franchisees if such claims were to be decided against us. If our rights in our intellectual property were invalidated or deemed unenforceable, we may not be able to prevent third parties from using such intellectual property or similar intellectual property to compete with us, which, in turn, could lead to a decline in our brand and the goodwill associated therewith and the results of operations. If our intellectual property became subject to third- party infringement, misappropriation or other claims, and such claims were decided against us, we may be forced to pay damages, be required to develop or adopt non- infringing intellectual property or be obligated to acquire a license to the intellectual property that is the subject of the asserted claim. There could be significant expenses associated with the defense of any infringement, misappropriation, or other third- party claims. We may also from time to time be required to institute litigation to enforce our trademarks, service marks and other intellectual property. Any such litigation could result in substantial costs and diversion of resources and could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations regardless of whether we are able to successfully enforce our rights. Our inability to identify qualified individuals for our workforce could slow our growth and adversely impact our ability to operate our restaurants. Our success depends in part upon our ability to attract, motivate and retain a sufficient number of qualified managers and employees to meet the needs of our existing restaurants and to staff new restaurants. A sufficient number of qualified individuals to fill these positions may be in short supply in some communities. Competition in these communities for qualified staff could require us to pay higher wages and provide greater benefits. We place a heavy emphasis on the qualification and training of our personnel and spend a significant amount of time and money on training our employees. Any inability to recruit and retain qualified individuals may result in higher turnover and increased labor costs, and could compromise the quality of our service, could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Any such inability could also delay the planned openings of new restaurants and could adversely impact our existing restaurants. The inability to retain or recruit qualified employees, increased costs of attracting qualified employees or delays in restaurant openings could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

In recent years Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the restaurant industry has experienced aggressive competition for talent, wage inflation and pressure to improve benefits and workplace conditions to remain competitive. In addition, our existing wages and benefits programs, combined with the highly competitive wage pressure resulting from the labor shortage, may be insufficient to attract and retain the best talent. Our failure to recruit and retain new restaurant employees in a timely manner or higher employee turnover levels all could affect our ability to open new restaurants and grow sales at existing restaurants, and we may experience higher than projected labor costs. Failure to maintain our corporate culture as we grow could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We believe that a critical component to our success has been our corporate culture. We have invested substantial time and resources in building our team. As we continue to grow, we may find it difficult to maintain the innovation, teamwork, passion and focus on execution that we believe are important aspects of our corporate culture. Any failure to preserve our culture could adversely impact our operations, including our ability to retain and recruit personnel and to effectively focus on and pursue our corporate objectives. If we cannot maintain our corporate culture as we grow, it could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Unionization activities may disrupt our operations and increase our costs. Although none of our employees are currently covered under collective bargaining agreements, our employees may elect to be represented by labor unions in the future. If a significant number of our employees were to become unionized and collective bargaining agreement terms were

significantly different from our current compensation arrangements, it could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. In addition, a labor dispute involving some or all our employees may harm our reputation, disrupt our operations and reduce our revenues, and resolution of disputes could increase our costs. Further, if we enter into a new market with unionized construction companies, or the construction companies in our current markets become unionized, construction and build-out costs for new restaurants in such markets could materially increase. Our sustainability activities, including environmental, social and governance matters, could result in reputational risks, increased costs and other risks. Certain customers, investors, lenders, regulators and other industry stakeholders have placed increasing importance on corporate ESG practices, which could cause us to incur additional costs and changes to our operations. If our ESG practices or disclosures do not meet stakeholders' evolving expectations and standards, our customer and employee retention, our access to certain types of capital, and our brand and reputation may be adversely impacted, which could affect our business operations and financial condition. We could also incur additional costs and require additional resources to monitor, report and comply with various ESG practices, laws and regulations, which could increase our operating costs and affect our results of operations and financial condition. In addition, from time to time, we may communicate certain initiatives regarding climate change, **animal welfare** and other ESG matters. We could fail or be perceived to fail to achieve such initiatives, which may adversely affect our reputation. The future adoption of new technology or processes to achieve such initiatives could also result in the impairment of existing assets. **At the same time, stockholders and regulators have increasingly expressed opposing views and expectations with respect to ESG initiatives, including the enactment of "Anti- ESG " legislation or policies**. Matters relating to employment and labor law could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations and restaurant companies have been the target of class action lawsuits and other proceedings alleging violations of workplace and employment laws. Proceedings of this nature are costly, divert management attention and, if successful could result in our payment of substantial damages or settlement costs. Various federal and state labor laws govern our relationships with our employees. Our operations are subject to the U. S. Occupational Safety and Health Act, which governs worker health and safety, the U. S. Fair Labor Standards Act, which governs such matters as minimum wages and overtime, and a variety of similar federal, state and local laws that govern these and other employment law matters. These laws include employee classifications as exempt or non- exempt, minimum wage requirements, employment eligibility verification requirements, workers' compensation rates, overtime, family leave, working conditions, safety standards, immigration status, unemployment tax rates, state and local payroll taxes, federal and state laws which prohibit discrimination, citizenship requirements and other wage and benefit requirements for employees classified as non- exempt. Significant additional government regulations and new laws, including mandated increases in minimum wages, changes in exempt and non- exempt status, or mandated benefits such as health insurance could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our business is subject to the risk of litigation by employees or others through private actions, class actions, administrative proceedings, regulatory actions or other litigation. Moreover, employment and labor claims asserted against franchisees may at times be made against us as a franchisor. The outcome of litigation, particularly class action and regulatory actions, is difficult to assess or quantify. In recent years, restaurant companies, including us, have been subject to lawsuits, including class action lawsuits, alleging violations of federal and state laws regarding workplace and employment conditions, discrimination and similar matters. Similar lawsuits have been instituted from time to time alleging violations of various federal and state wage and hour laws regarding, among other things, employee meal deductions, overtime eligibility of managers and failure to pay for all hours worked. Regardless of whether any claims against us are valid or whether we are liable, claims may be expensive to defend and may divert time and money away from our operations and result in increases in our insurance premiums. In addition, they may generate negative publicity, which could reduce customer traffic and sales. Although we maintain what we believe to be adequate levels of insurance, insurance may not be available at all or in sufficient amounts to cover any liabilities with respect to these or other matters. A judgment or other liability in excess of our insurance coverage for any claims or any adverse publicity resulting from claims could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Additionally, if we or our franchisees are unable to properly identify unauthorized workers, such workers will be subject to deportation and may subject us to fines or penalties. If any of our workers are found to be unauthorized, we could experience adverse publicity that may adversely impact our brand, disrupt our operations, make it more difficult to hire and keep qualified employees, cause temporary increases in our labor costs as we train new employees and result in adverse publicity. We could be party to litigation that could distract management, increase our expenses or subject us to material monetary damages or other remedies. Our customers occasionally file complaints or lawsuits against us alleging we caused an illness or injury they suffered at or after a visit to our restaurants, or that we have problems with food quality or operations. We may also be subject to a variety of other claims arising in the ordinary course of our business, including personal injury claims, contract claims and claims alleging violations of federal and state law regarding workplace and employment matters, equal opportunity, harassment, discrimination and similar matters, and we could become subject to class action or other lawsuits related to these or different matters in the future. In recent years, a number of restaurant companies have been subject to such claims, and some of these lawsuits have resulted in the payment of substantial damages by the defendants. Regardless of whether any claims against us are valid, or whether we are ultimately held liable, claims may be expensive to defend and may divert time and money away from our operations and hurt our performance. A judgment in excess of our insurance coverage for any claims could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. In addition, such allegations could result in adverse publicity and adversely impact our reputation, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. If we and our franchisees face labor shortages or increased labor costs or health care costs, it could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Labor is a primary component in the cost of operating our restaurants. If we or our franchisees face labor shortages or increased labor costs because of increased competition for employees, higher employee- turnover rates, unionization of restaurant workers, or increases in the federally-

mandated or state- mandated minimum wage, change in exempt and non- exempt status, unemployment tax rates, workers' compensation rates, overtime, family leave, safety standards, payroll taxes, citizenship requirements or other employee benefits costs (including costs associated with health insurance coverage or workers' compensation insurance), our operating expenses could increase and our growth could be adversely affected. We have a substantial number of hourly employees who are paid wage rates at or based on the applicable federal or state minimum wage and increases in the minimum wage will increase our labor costs and the labor costs of our franchisees. Additionally, we operate in states and localities where the minimum wage is significantly higher than the federal minimum wage and in such areas our staff members receive minimum compensation equal to the state' s or locality' s minimum wage. In other geographic areas, some of our staff members may be paid a tip credit wage that is supplemented by gratuities received from our customers. We rely on our employees to accurately disclose the full amount of their tip income, and we base our Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax reporting on the disclosures provided to us by such employees. Increases in the tip credit minimum wage in these states or localities, or under federal law, may have a material adverse effect on our labor costs, and our financial performance. Increases in federal or state minimum wage may also result in increases in the wage rates paid for non- minimum wage positions. We may be unable to increase our menu prices in order to pass future increased labor costs on to our customers, in which case our operating margins would be adversely affected. If menu prices are increased by us or our franchisees to cover increased labor costs, the higher prices could adversely affect demand for our menu items, resulting in lower sales and decreased franchise revenues. We are exposed to risks associated with leasing property subject to long- term and non- cancelable leases and may be unable to renew leases at the end of their terms. Many of our restaurant leases are non- cancelable and typically have initial terms of 10 years, providing for two to four renewal options of five years each as well as rent escalations. Generally, our leases are triple- net leases that require us to pay our share of the costs of real estate taxes, utilities, building operating expenses, insurance and other charges in addition to rent. We generally cannot cancel these leases, and additional sites that we lease are likely to be subject to similar long- term non- cancelable leases. Even if we close a restaurant, we are required to perform our obligations under the applicable lease, which could include, among other things, a payment of the base rent, property taxes, insurance and common area maintenance costs for the balance of the lease term, which would impact our profitability. In addition, as leases expire for restaurants that we will continue to operate, we may, at the end of the lease term and any renewal period for a restaurant, be unable to negotiate renewals, either on commercially acceptable terms or at all. As a result, we may close or relocate the restaurant, which could subject us to construction costs related to leasehold improvements and other costs and risks. Additionally, the revenues and profit, if any, generated at a relocated restaurant may not equal the revenues and profit generated at the existing restaurant. As a public company, we incur significant costs to comply with the laws and regulations affecting public companies, which could harm our business and results of operations. As a public company, we are subject to the reporting requirements of the Exchange Act, the Sarbanes- Oxley Act, and the listing requirements of Nasdaq, and other applicable securities rules and regulations. These rules and regulations have increased and will continue to increase our legal, accounting and financial compliance costs and have made and will continue to make some activities more time- consuming and costly, particularly after we cease to be an emerging growth company. For example, these rules and regulations could make it more difficult and more costly for us to obtain director and officer liability insurance, and we may be required to accept reduced policy limits and coverage or to incur substantial costs to maintain the same or similar coverage. These rules and regulations could also make it more difficult for us to attract and retain qualified persons to serve on our Board or our Board committees or as executive officers. Our management and other personnel will continue to devote a substantial amount of time to these compliance initiatives. As a result, management' s attention may be diverted from other business concerns, which could harm our business and results of operations. We will need to hire more employees in the future to comply with these requirements, which will increase our costs and expenses. To comply with the requirements of being a public company, including the Sarbanes- Oxley Act, we have **undertaken** and will need to continue to undertake various actions, such as implementing new internal controls and procedures and hiring accounting or internal audit staff or outsourcing certain functions to third parties, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Fluctuations in our tax obligations and effective tax rate and realization of our deferred tax assets may result in volatility of our results of operations. We are subject to income taxes in various U. S. jurisdictions. We record tax expense based on our estimates of future payments, which may in the future include reserves for uncertain tax positions in multiple tax jurisdictions, and valuation allowances related to certain net deferred tax assets. At any one time, many tax years may be subject to audit by various taxing jurisdictions. The results of these audits and negotiations with taxing authorities may affect the ultimate settlement of these issues. We expect that throughout the year there could be ongoing variability in our quarterly tax rates as events occur and exposures are evaluated. In addition, our effective tax rate in a given financial reporting period may be materially impacted by a variety of factors including, but not limited to, changes in the mix and level of earnings, varying tax rates in the different jurisdictions in which we operate, fluctuations in the valuation allowance or by changes to existing accounting rules or regulations. Further, tax legislation may be enacted in the future, which could negatively impact our current or future tax structure and effective tax rates. The U. S. government may enact significant changes to the taxation of business entities including, among others, an increase in the corporate income tax rate and the imposition of minimum taxes or surtaxes on certain types of income. No specific United States tax legislation has been proposed at this time and the likelihood of these changes being enacted or implemented is unclear. We are currently unable to predict whether such changes will occur. If such changes are enacted or implemented, we are currently unable to predict the ultimate impact on our business. Our business is subject to risks related to our sale of alcoholic beverages. We serve alcoholic beverages at our restaurants. Alcoholic beverage control regulations generally require our restaurants to apply to a state authority and, in certain locations, county or municipal authorities for a license that must be renewed annually and may be revoked or suspended for cause at any time. Alcoholic beverage control regulations relate to numerous aspects of daily operations of our restaurants, including minimum age of patrons and employees, hours of operation, advertising, trade practices, wholesale purchasing, other

relationships with alcoholic beverages manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors, inventory control and handling, storage and dispensing of alcoholic beverages. Any future failure to comply with these regulations and obtain or retain licenses could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We are also subject in certain states to “dram shop” statutes, which generally provide a person injured by an intoxicated person the right to recover damages from an establishment that wrongfully served alcoholic beverages to the intoxicated person. Recent litigation against restaurant chains has resulted in significant judgments and settlements under dram shop statutes. Because these cases often seek punitive damages, which may not be covered by insurance, such litigation could have a material effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Regardless of whether any claims against us are valid or whether we are liable, claims may be expensive to defend and may divert time and money away from operations and hurt our financial performance. A judgment significantly in excess of our insurance coverage or not covered by insurance could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We are subject to many federal, state and local laws with which compliance is both costly and complex. The restaurant industry is subject to extensive federal, state and local laws and regulations, including those relating to the environment, building and zoning requirements and those relating to the preparation and sale of food. Such laws and regulations are subject to change from time to time. The failure to comply with these laws and regulations could adversely affect our results of operations. Typically, licenses, permits and approvals under such laws and regulations must be renewed annually and may be revoked, suspended or denied renewal for cause at any time if governmental authorities determine that our conduct violates applicable regulations. Difficulties or failure to maintain or obtain the required licenses, permits and approvals could adversely affect our existing restaurants and delay or result in our decision to cancel the opening of new restaurants, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. The development and operation of our restaurants depend, to a significant extent, on the selection of suitable sites, which are subject to zoning, land use, environmental, traffic and other regulations and requirements. We are also subject to licensing and regulation by state and local authorities relating to health, sanitation, safety and fire standards. There is also a potential for increased regulation of certain food establishments in the United States, where compliance with a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (“HACCP”) approach would be required. HACCP refers to a management system in which food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of potential hazards from production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution and consumption of the finished product. Many states have required restaurants to develop and implement HACCP Systems, and the United States government continues to expand the sectors of the food industry that must adopt and implement HACCP programs. For example, the Food Safety Modernization Act (“FSMA”), signed into law in January 2011, granted the U. S. Food and Drug Administration new authority regarding the safety of the entire food system, including through increased inspections and mandatory food recalls. Although restaurants are specifically exempted from or not directly implicated by some of these requirements, we anticipate that the requirements may impact our industry. Additionally, due to such regulations, our suppliers may initiate or otherwise be subject to food recalls that may impact the availability of certain products, result in adverse publicity or require us to take actions that could be costly for us or otherwise impact our business. We may be required to incur additional time and resources to comply with new food safety requirements made under FSMA or other federal or state food safety regulations. Failure to comply with the laws and regulatory requirements of federal, state and local authorities could result in, among other things, revocation of required licenses, administrative enforcement actions, fines and civil and criminal liability. In addition, many applicable laws could require us to expend significant funds to make modifications to our restaurants or operations to comply with such laws. Compliance with these laws can be costly and may increase our exposure to litigation or governmental investigations or proceedings. Our business is also subject to extensive laws and regulations relating to public company compliance, disclosure and governance matters, including accounting and tax regulations, SEC and Nasdaq disclosure requirements, as further discussed below. The impact of current laws and regulations, the effect of future changes in laws or regulations that impose additional requirements and the consequences of litigation relating to current or future laws and regulations, or our inability to respond effectively to significant regulatory or public policy issues, could increase our compliance and other costs of doing business and could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Failure to comply with the laws and regulatory requirements of federal, state and local authorities could result in, among other things, revocation of required licenses, administrative enforcement actions, fines and civil and criminal liability. In addition, certain laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, which, among other things, requires our restaurants to meet federally mandated requirements for the disabled, could require us to expend significant funds to make modifications to our restaurants if we failed to comply with applicable standards. Compliance with all these laws and regulations can be costly and can increase our exposure to litigation or governmental investigations or proceedings. An impairment in the carrying value of our goodwill or indefinite-lived intangible assets could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. As of December 31, 2023, we had \$ 359.3 million of goodwill and \$ 139.4 million of indefinite-lived intangible assets. We test goodwill and indefinite-lived intangible assets for impairment annually on the first day of the fourth quarter of each fiscal year and whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that impairment may have occurred. We performed a qualitative annual impairment assessment of goodwill and indefinite-lived intangible assets on the first day of the fourth quarter of 2023. Based on the results of the qualitative assessment, we did not perform a quantitative assessment and no impairment was recognized in 2023. We cannot accurately predict the amount and timing of any impairment of assets and an impairment test in the future may indicate that an impairment has occurred. In the event that the book value of goodwill or other indefinite-lived intangible assets is impaired, any such impairment would be charged to earnings in the period of impairment and could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. Changes to estimates related to our long-lived assets and definite-lived intangible assets or operating results that are lower than our current estimates at certain restaurant locations may cause us to incur impairment losses on certain long-lived assets, which may adversely affect our results of operations. Changes to estimates

related to our property, fixtures and equipment and definite-lived intangible assets or operating results that are lower than our current estimates at certain restaurant locations may cause us to incur impairment losses or accelerate the amortization on certain long-lived assets, which may adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations. We have identified material weaknesses in our internal control over financial reporting, which could result in us failing to prevent or detect material misstatements of our consolidated financial statements due to error or fraud. If our remediation of the material weaknesses is not effective, or if we otherwise fail to maintain effective internal control over financial reporting in the future, we may not be able to accurately or timely report our financial condition or results of operations, which, in turn, could adversely impact the market value of our common stock. As a public company, we are required to comply with Section 404 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (“Section 404”) in accordance with the rules and regulations of the SEC, which requires management to certify financial and other information in our quarterly and annual reports and provide an annual management report on the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting. In addition, under Section 404 our independent registered public accounting firm will also need to attest to the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting in the future to the extent that we are no longer an emerging growth company, as defined in the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act (the “JOBS Act”). To comply with the rules and regulations of the SEC, we need to continue to dedicate internal resources, engage outside consultants and continue to execute on a detailed work plan to assess and document the adequacy of our internal control over financial reporting, continue taking steps to improve control processes, as appropriate, validate through testing that controls are functioning as documented and implement a continuous reporting and improvement process for internal control over financial reporting. Despite our efforts, there is a risk that we will not be able to conclude that our internal control over financial reporting is effective. As further described in Part II Item 9A of this Form 10-K, in connection with the preparation of our consolidated financial statements, we identified material weaknesses in our internal control over financial reporting, which could result in misstatement of the consolidated financial statements that would result in a material misstatement to the annual or interim consolidated financial statements that would not be prevented or detected. We have taken certain measures to remediate the material weaknesses. See Item 9A for additional information. Our level of indebtedness could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our principal amount amounts of our term loan loans outstanding was \$ 92.193.58 million, excluding unamortized debt discount and deferred issuance costs, and we had drawn \$ 30.0 million on our revolving credit facility as of December 31, 2023. Our indebtedness could have significant effects on our business, such as:

- limiting our ability to borrow additional amounts to fund capital expenditures, acquisitions, debt service requirements, execution of our growth strategy and other purposes;
- limiting our ability to make investments, including acquisitions, loans and advances, and to sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of assets;
- requiring us to dedicate a substantial portion of our cash flow from operations to pay principal and interest on our borrowings, which would reduce availability of our cash flow to fund working capital, capital expenditures, acquisitions, execution of our growth strategy and other general corporate purposes;
- making us more vulnerable to adverse changes in general economic, industry and competitive conditions, in government regulation and in our business by limiting our ability to plan for and react to changing conditions;
- placing us at a competitive disadvantage compared with our competitors that have less debt; and
- exposing us to risks inherent in interest rate fluctuations because our borrowings are at variable rates of interest, which could result in higher interest expense in the event of increases in interest rates.

In addition, we may not be able to generate sufficient cash flow from our operations to repay our indebtedness when it becomes due and to meet our other cash needs. If we are not able to pay our borrowings as they become due, we will be required to pursue one or more alternative strategies, such as selling assets, refinancing or restructuring our indebtedness or selling additional debt or equity securities. We may not be able to refinance our debt or sell additional debt or equity securities or our assets on favorable terms, if at all, and if we must sell our assets, it may adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations. See Note 10, Debt, and Note 21-22, Subsequent Events, in the accompanying notes to the consolidated financial statements included in Item 8 of Part II of this Form 10-K for additional information. The failure to comply with the covenants under our Credit Agreement or the volatile credit and capital markets could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition. Our ability to manage our debt is dependent on our level of positive cash flow from company-owned and franchise-owned restaurants. An economic downturn may adversely impact our cash flows. Credit and capital markets can be volatile, which could make it more difficult for us to refinance our existing debt or to obtain additional debt or equity financings in the future. Such constraints could increase our costs of borrowing and could restrict our access to other potential sources of future liquidity. Our failure to comply with the covenants under our Credit Agreement for our debt facilities or to have sufficient liquidity to make interest and other payments required by our debt could result in a default of such debt and acceleration of our borrowings, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. The interests of Advent may conflict with our interests or the interests of the holders of our common stock in the future. Advent engages in a range of investing activities, including investments in restaurants and other consumer-related companies in particular. In the ordinary course of its business activities, Advent may engage in activities where its interests conflict with our interests or those of our stockholders. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation contains provisions renouncing any interest or expectancy held by our directors affiliated with Advent in certain corporate opportunities. Accordingly, the interests of Advent may supersede ours, causing them or their affiliates to compete against us or to pursue opportunities instead of us, for which we have no recourse. Such actions on the part of Advent and inaction on our part could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. In addition, Advent may have an interest in pursuing acquisitions, divestitures and other transactions that, in its judgment, could enhance its investment in us, even though such transactions might involve risks to you, such as debt-financed acquisitions. First Watch Restaurant Group, Inc. is a holding company with no operations and relies on its operating subsidiaries to provide it with funds necessary to meet its financial obligations and to pay dividends. First Watch Restaurant Group, Inc. is a holding company with no material direct operations. First Watch Restaurant Group, Inc.’s principal assets are the equity interests it indirectly holds in its operating subsidiaries which own our operating

assets. As a result, First Watch Restaurant Group, Inc. is dependent on loans, dividends and other payments from its operating subsidiaries to generate the funds necessary to meet its financial obligations and to pay dividends on its common stock. Its subsidiaries are legally distinct from First Watch Restaurant Group, Inc. and may be prohibited or restricted from paying dividends, including pursuant to the restrictions contained in our Credit Agreement, or otherwise making funds available to us under certain conditions. Although First Watch Restaurant Group, Inc. does not expect to pay dividends on its common stock for the foreseeable future, if it is unable to obtain funds from its subsidiaries, it may be unable to, or its Board may exercise its discretion not to, pay dividends. ~~Our management does not have significant experience managing a public company and our current resources may not be sufficient to fulfill our public company obligations. We are subject to various regulatory requirements, including those of the SEC and Nasdaq. These requirements include record keeping, financial reporting and corporate governance rules and regulations. Our management team does not have significant experience in managing a public company and, historically, has not had the resources typically found in a public company. Our internal infrastructure may not be adequate to support our increased reporting obligations and we may be unable to hire, train or retain necessary staff and may be reliant on engaging outside consultants or professionals to overcome our lack of experience or employees. If our internal infrastructure is inadequate, we are unable to engage outside consultants at a reasonable rate or attract talented employees to perform these functions or are otherwise unable to fulfill our public company obligations, it could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.~~ For as long as we are an emerging growth company, we will not be required to comply with certain reporting requirements, including those relating to accounting standards and disclosure about our executive compensation, that apply to other public companies. As an emerging growth company, we are eligible to take advantage of certain exemptions from various reporting requirements that are applicable to other public companies that are not emerging growth companies, including, but not limited to, not being required to comply with the auditor attestation requirements of Section 404 (b) of the Sarbanes- Oxley Act, reduced disclosure obligations regarding executive compensation in our periodic reports and proxy statements, and exemptions from the requirements of holding a non- binding advisory vote on executive compensation and of stockholder approval of any golden parachute payments not previously approved. We **have taken and may continue to** take advantage of some of these exemptions. If we do, we do not know if some investors will find our common stock less attractive as a result. The result may be a less- active trading market for our common stock and our stock price may be more volatile. In addition, Section 107 of the JOBS Act provides that an emerging growth company can take advantage of the extended transition period provided in Section 7 (a) (2) (B) of the Securities Act for complying with new or revised accounting standards. In other words, an emerging growth company can delay the adoption of certain accounting standards until those standards would otherwise apply to private companies. We have irrevocably elected not to avail ourselves of this exemption and, therefore, we will be subject to the same new or revised accounting standards as other public companies that are not emerging growth companies. We could remain an emerging growth company for up to five years after our IPO, which took place in September 2021, or until the earliest of (a) the last day of the first fiscal year in which our annual gross revenues exceed \$ 1. 235 billion, (b) the date that we become a large accelerated filer as defined in Rule 12b- 2 under the Exchange Act, which would occur if the market value of our common stock that is held by non- affiliates exceeds \$ 700 million as of the last business day of our most recently completed second fiscal quarter, or (c) the date on which we have issued more than \$ 1. 0 billion in non- convertible debt securities in the preceding three- year period. Delaware law and our organizational documents, as well as our existing and future debt agreements, may impede or discourage a takeover, which could deprive our investors of the opportunity to receive a premium for their shares. We are a Delaware corporation, and the anti- takeover provisions of Delaware law impose various impediments to the ability of a third party to acquire control of us, even if a change of control would be beneficial to our existing stockholders. In addition, provisions of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and bylaws may make it more difficult to, or prevent a third party from, acquiring control of us without the approval of our Board. Among other things, these provisions: • provide for a classified Board with staggered three- year terms; • do not permit cumulative voting in the election of directors, which would otherwise allow less than a majority of stockholders to elect director candidates; • delegate the sole power of a majority of the Board to fix the number of directors; • provide the power of our Board to fill any vacancy on our Board, whether such vacancy occurs as a result of an increase in the number of directors or otherwise; • authorize the issuance of “ blank check ” preferred stock without any need for action by stockholders; • eliminate the ability of stockholders to call special meetings of stockholders; and • establish advance notice requirements for nominations for election to our Board or for proposing matters that can be acted on by stockholders at stockholder meetings. In addition, our **credit agreement for our debt facilities facilities impose imposes**, and we anticipate that documents governing our future indebtedness may impose, limitations on our ability to enter into change of control transactions. Thereunder, the occurrence of a change of control transaction could constitute an event of default permitting acceleration of the indebtedness, thereby impeding our ability to enter into certain transactions. The foregoing factors, as well as the significant common stock ownership by Advent could impede a merger, takeover, or other business combination, or discourage a potential investor from making a tender offer for our common stock, which, under certain circumstances, could reduce the market value of our common stock. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation designates the Court of Chancery of the State of Delaware as the sole and exclusive forum for certain types of actions and proceedings that may be initiated by our stockholders and designates the federal district courts of the United States of America as the sole and exclusive forum for claims arising under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, which, in each case, could limit our stockholders’ ability to obtain a favorable judicial forum for disputes with us or our directors, officers, employees, agents or other stockholders. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation includes a forum selection provision. To the fullest extent permitted by law, any person or entity purchasing or otherwise acquiring or holding any interest in any shares of our capital stock shall be deemed to have notice of and consented to the forum selection. This choice of forum provision may limit a stockholder’ s ability to bring a claim in a different judicial forum, including one that it may find favorable or convenient for a specified class of disputes with us or our directors, officers, other

stockholders, or employees, which may discourage such lawsuits, make them more difficult or expensive to pursue, and result in outcomes that are less favorable to such stockholders than outcomes that may have been attainable in other jurisdictions. By agreeing to this provision, however, stockholders will not be deemed to have waived our compliance with the federal securities laws and the rules and regulations thereunder. The enforceability of similar choice of forum provisions in other companies' certificates of incorporation has been challenged in legal proceedings, and it is possible that a court could find these types of provisions to be inapplicable or unenforceable. If a court were to find the choice of forum provisions in our amended and restated certificate of incorporation to be inapplicable or unenforceable in an action, we may incur additional costs associated with resolving such action in other jurisdictions, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Future offerings of debt or equity securities by us may have a material adverse effect on the market price of our common stock. In the future, we may attempt to obtain financing or to further increase our capital resources by issuing additional shares of our common stock or by offering debt or other equity securities, including senior or subordinated notes, debt securities convertible into equity or shares of preferred stock. Any future debt financing could involve restrictive covenants relating to our capital-raising activities and other financial and operational matters, which might make it more difficult for us to obtain additional capital and to pursue business opportunities, including potential acquisitions. Moreover, if we issue debt securities, the debt holders would have rights to make claims on our assets senior to the rights of our holders of our common stock. The issuance of additional shares of our common stock or other equity securities or securities convertible into equity may dilute the economic and voting rights of our existing stockholders or reduce the market price of our common stock or both. Debt securities convertible into equity could be subject to adjustments in the conversion ratio pursuant to which certain events may increase the number of equity securities issuable upon conversion. Preferred shares could have a preference with respect to liquidating distributions or a preference with respect to dividend payments that could limit our ability to pay dividends to the holders of our common stock. Our decision to issue securities in any future offering will depend on market conditions and other factors beyond our control, which may have a material adverse effect on the amount, timing, or nature of our future offerings. Thus, holders of our common stock bear the risk that our future offerings may reduce the market price of our common stock and dilute their stockholdings in us. If the ownership of our common stock continues to be highly concentrated, it may prevent you and other minority stockholders from influencing significant corporate decisions and may result in conflicts of interest. **Although we are no longer a "controlled company" within the meaning of the rules of the Nasdaq, Advent continues to exert substantial influence over us. As of December 29, 2024, Advent indirectly beneficially owns-owned approximately 32.56.9% of our outstanding common stock. As a result, Advent is a "controlled company" within the meaning of the Nasdaq listing rules.** Advent beneficially owns shares sufficient **to significantly influence for majority votes over** all matters requiring stockholder votes, including: the election of directors; mergers, consolidations and acquisitions; the sale of all or substantially all of our assets and other decisions affecting our capital structure; amendments to our certificate of incorporation or our bylaws; and our winding up and dissolution. This concentration of ownership may delay, deter or prevent acts that would be favored by our other stockholders. The interests of Advent may not always coincide with our interests or the interests of our other stockholders. This concentration of ownership may also have the effect of delaying, preventing or deterring a change in control of us. Also, Advent may seek to cause us to take courses of action that, in its judgment, could enhance its investment in us, but which might involve risks to our other stockholders or adversely affect us or our other stockholders. As a result, the market price of our common stock could decline or stockholders might not receive a premium over the then-current market price of our common stock upon a change in control. In addition, this concentration of share ownership may adversely affect the trading price of our common stock because investors may perceive disadvantages in owning shares in a company with significant stockholders. ~~As a controlled company, we are not subject to all of the corporate governance rules of Nasdaq. We are considered a "controlled company" under the rules of Nasdaq. Controlled companies are exempt from the corporate governance rules requiring that listed companies have (i) a majority of the Board consist of "independent" directors under the listing standards of Nasdaq, (ii) independent director oversight of director nominations and (iii) a compensation committee composed entirely of independent directors. Although we are eligible to use some or all of these exemptions, our Board is comprised of a majority of independent directors, and our nominating and corporate governance committee and compensation committee consists entirely of independent directors. However, if we are to use some or all of these exemptions in the future, you may not have the same protections afforded to stockholders of companies that are subject to all of the corporate governance requirements of Nasdaq.~~ We do not anticipate paying any dividends on our common stock in the foreseeable future. We do not expect to declare or pay any cash or other dividends in the foreseeable future on our common stock because we intend to use cash flow generated by operations to grow our business. Our **Credit credit Agreement agreement** for our debt facilities restricts our ability to pay cash dividends on our common stock. We may also enter into other credit agreements or other borrowing arrangements in the future that restrict or limit our ability to pay cash dividends on our common stock. As a result, you may not receive any return on an investment in our common stock unless you sell our common stock for a price greater than that which you paid for it. Our quarterly results of operations may fluctuate significantly and could fall below the expectations of securities analysts and investors due to seasonality and other factors, some of which are beyond our control, resulting in a decline in our stock price. Our quarterly results of operations may fluctuate due principally to seasonal factors and the timing of holidays. Accordingly, results for any one quarter are not necessarily indicative of results to be expected for any other quarter or for any year and same-restaurant sales growth for any particular future period may decrease. In addition, as we expand our number of restaurants in cold weather climates, the seasonality of our business may be amplified. In the future, results of operations may fall below the expectations of securities analysts and investors. In that event, the price of our common stock could be adversely impacted. The market price of our common stock could be adversely affected by sales of substantial amounts of our common stock in the public markets. Of our issued and outstanding shares, all the common stock sold in our initial public offering is freely transferable, except for any shares held by our "affiliates," as that term is defined in

Rule 144 under the Securities Act. **As of December 29, 2024, Approximately approximately 32.56-9%** of our outstanding common stock ~~is was~~ indirectly beneficially owned by Advent, and can be resold into the public markets in the future in accordance with the requirements of Rule 144. The market price of our common stock may decline significantly in connection with any sales by Advent of its common stock. A decline in the price of our common stock might impede our ability to raise capital through the issuance of additional common stock or other equity securities. The future issuance of additional common stock in connection with the First Watch Restaurant Group, Inc. 2021 Equity Incentive Plan (the “2021 Equity Plan”) and the First Watch Restaurant Group, Inc. 2017 Omnibus Equity Incentive Plan (the “2017 Equity Plan”) will dilute all other stockholdings. As of December ~~31-29, 2023-2024~~, we had an aggregate of ~~11-12, 356-554, 532-366~~ shares of common stock authorized for issuance under the 2021 Equity Plan and 2017 Equity Plan. Additionally, the 2021 Equity Plan contains an “evergreen provision,” pursuant to which the aggregate number of shares available for issuance will automatically increase on the first day of each fiscal year, beginning on December 26, 2022 and continuing for each fiscal year until, and including, the fiscal year ending on (and including) December 30, 2030. While we do not intend to grant any further awards under the 2017 Equity Plan, we may issue all the shares underlying the awards granted under the 2017 Equity Plan and all of the shares authorized for issuance under the 2021 Equity Plan without any action or approval by our stockholders, subject to certain exceptions. Any common stock issued in connection with the 2021 Equity Plan or the 2017 Equity Plan would dilute the ownership percentage held by existing stockholders. We depend on our executive officers and certain other key employees, the loss of whom could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We rely upon the accumulated knowledge, skills and experience of our executive officers and certain other key employees. The loss of the services of any of our executive officers could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations, as we may not be able to find suitable individuals to replace such personnel on a timely basis or without incurring increased costs, or at all. If our executive officers were to leave us or become incapacitated, it might adversely impact our planning and execution of business strategy and operations. We believe that our future success will depend on our continued ability to attract and retain highly skilled and qualified executive personnel. There is a high level of competition for experienced, successful executive personnel in our industry. Our inability to meet our executive staffing requirements in the future could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We might require additional capital to support business growth and this capital might not be available. We intend to continue to make investments to support our business growth and may require additional funds to respond to business challenges or opportunities, including the need to open additional restaurants, develop new menu items or enhance our existing menu items, and enhance our operating infrastructure. Accordingly, we may need to engage in equity or debt financings to secure additional funds. In addition, we may not be able to obtain additional financing on terms favorable to us, if at all. Volatility in the financial markets like we are currently experiencing could affect our ability to access capital markets at a time when we desire, or need, to do so, which could have an impact on our flexibility to pursue additional expansion opportunities and maintain our desired level of revenue growth in the future. If we are unable to obtain adequate financing or financing on terms satisfactory to us when we require it, our ability to continue to support our business growth and to respond to business challenges could be significantly limited, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Changes in accounting principles applicable to us could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. Generally accepted accounting principles in the U. S. are subject to interpretation by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (“FASB”), the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the SEC and various bodies formed to promulgate and interpret appropriate accounting principles. A change in these principles or interpretations could have a significant effect on our financial condition and results of operations, and could affect the reporting of transactions completed before the announcement of a change. Our insurance may not provide adequate levels of coverage against claims. We believe that we maintain insurance customary for businesses of our size and type. However, there are types of losses we may incur that cannot be insured against or that we believe are not economically reasonable to insure. Such losses could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. **34**