

# PROCLAMATION



City and County of Denver

## **Proclamation No. 17-0604 Affirming the Vital Importance of Journalism in Denver Civic Life**

**WHEREAS**, Irish statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke, upon the opening of the gallery in the House of Commons in 1787 to the British press, said there were Three Estates in Parliament – the clergy, the secular lords and the commoners, but in the reporters’ gallery there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than those; and

**WHEREAS**, freedom of the press in America has been cherished since at least 1733, when John Peter Zenger, a New York publisher, criticized the newly appointed colonial governor of New York, was sued by him for libel and was famously acquitted in a defense mounted by Alexander Hamilton; and

**WHEREAS**, the Framers of our Constitution, in order to ensure ratification by the 13 colonies, were compelled to add the first 10 amendments known as the Bill of Rights, a limitation on government power led by the First Amendment and its guarantees of freedom of religion, of speech, or redress and of the press; and

**WHEREAS**, strong local journalism is essential for democracy where it is closest to the people, as journalists listen to people’s concerns, critically cover events, search through records and sometimes put themselves in harm’s way to gather news in order, paraphrasing the columnist Finley Peter Dunne, “to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable;” and

**WHEREAS**, news organizations are facing significant pressures including large reductions in the ranks of reporters and photographers, increased political attacks, media manipulation and technological changes that unavoidably threaten the nation’s tradition of robust journalism; and

**WHEREAS**, the working journalists in the Denver Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America Local 37074 have reaffirmed their commitment to uphold the responsibility of informing the public, holding the powerful accountable and exposing corruption.

### **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:**

**Section 1.** That the members of the Council of the City and County of Denver, as the elected representatives of the people, reaffirm our responsibility to be transparent in our conduct of the business of the people, and to be forthright in our relationships with the Fourth Estate.

**Section 2.** That the Council of the City and County of Denver strongly urges media owners and publishers to provide their journalists with all of the resources necessary to carrying out their essential role in civic debate and discourse.

**Section 3.** That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall attest and affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to a representative of the Denver Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America Local 37074.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL May 22, 2017

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT