

Denver City Council
1437 Bannock St. Room 451
Denver, CO 80202

To:

Denver Mayor Michael Hancock
Council Member Deborah Ortega
Council Member Kevin Flynn
Council Member Amanda P. Sandoval
Council Member Kendra Black
Council Member Amanda Sawyer
Council Member Paul Kashmann

Council President Jamie Torres
Council Member Robin Kniech
Council Member Stacie Gilmore
Council Member Chris Hinds
Council Member Candi CdeBaca
Council Member Christopher Herndon
Council Member Jolon Clark

As representatives of workers across many sectors, we want to express our support for the wage theft ordinance being considered by the Denver City Council. This ordinance would improve the lives of our workers while making an economy that works for all. Each year, millions of dollars in wages are stolen from workers in Colorado. Workers often struggle to recover their wages through the court system or the state's administrative process. A wage theft ordinance would create an additional, more accessible mechanism for workers to recover their stolen wages and have a significant impact on workers' ability to provide for their families.

As our economy continues to reel from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more vital that we take steps to ensure that vulnerable workers are paid the wages they are owed. While this pandemic has been difficult for everyone, Colorado workers have been among the hardest hit. Staggering levels of unemployment and relief efforts that have focused on businesses have had a devastating ripple effect through entire families and communities. If we want our communities to have any chance to recover, we must ensure that workers have effective recourse when their wages are stolen.

Because many unethical employers hire workers through labor brokers, subcontractors, staffing agencies, or other intermediaries that are insolvent or thinly capitalized, it is often hard for workers to recover unpaid wages even if they have obtained a court order finding that their wages were stolen.

This policy would also serve as a deterrent to wage theft for unscrupulous employers. The existing mechanisms for wage recovery allow these employers to exploit workers with little threat of repercussions. This puts good employers at a decided disadvantage in the economy. A wage theft ordinance would not only provide additional protections for workers and independent contractors, but it would also make our economy fairer for conscientious employers.

In Solidarity,

9to5 Colorado
American Friends Service Committee, Colorado

*Organizations of Individual Signers are listed for affiliation purposes only.

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Carpenter 555
Centro Humanitario Para Los Trabajadores
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado Jobs with Justice
Colorado May Day Club
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
CWA 7799
Denver Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO
Denver Classroom Teachers Association
Denver Democratic Socialists of America
Denver DSA and Colorado May Day Club
Fortaleza Familiar
IATSE
International Union of Painters & Allied Trades
IUPAT District Council 81
Just Wages Project
Mi Familia Vota
Reclaim the Eastside
SEIU Local 105
Together Colorado
Towards Justice
UFCW Local 7