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## **Colorado organizations and organized labor celebrate Denver City Council passage of wage theft ordinance which is a more accessible mechanism for workers to recover their stolen wages**

Denver, CO – Tonight, Denver City Council voted 12 – 0 to enact 22-1614, legislation that will ensure Denver workers are paid what they are legally owed. The policy creates an administrative pathway for workers to recover stolen wages by filing a complaint with Denver’s auditor. Wage theft occurs whenever a worker is paid less than what they are owed. It includes minimum wage violations, misclassification, meal break violations, forcing someone to work “off the clock,” or paying less than the agreed-upon wage.

Mark Thompson, President of Southwest Carpenters 555 shared, “This ordinance means that all Denver workers became the most protected in the nation. Workers' courage and willingness to turn wage theft into wage justice as well as their persistence and values crafted a bill that will for the first time in our city’s history comprehensively protect workers from wage theft.”

The legislation was sponsored by Council members Torres, Sawyer, Gilmore, and CdeBaca and is the result of years of engagement with a labor coalition comprised of IUPAT DC 81, Carpenters Local 555, Towards Justice, Colorado Jobs with Justice, LiUNA local 720, SEIU 105, and the Colorado Building & Construction Trades Council.

Pamela Resendiz, Executive Director of Colorado Jobs with Justice stated, “This ordinance will ensure that Denver Labor has the authority to assist workers in recovering all wages legally owed; it would also ensure that Denver Labor can offer meaningful remedies to workers and empower Denver Labor to levy substantial penalties on violators, thereby deterring future violations and protecting high-road employers from unfair competition. In this way, our city can help ensure that all workers, particularly low-wage workers without access to legal counsel, can achieve wage justice.”

The law will go into effect as soon as Mayor Hancock signs it. Then, the auditor’s office will engage the public in a rulemaking process to determine how the policy will work on the ground.

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