



DENVER AUDITOR TIMOTHY M. O'BRIEN, CPA

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Contact: Tayler Overschmidt

Director of Communications

taylor.overschmidt@denvergov.org

720-913-5033

City Council passes subpoena power for Denver Labor investigations

DENVER – The Denver City Council has unanimously passed the Denver Labor subpoena power bill, co-sponsored by Council Members Sarah Parady, Amanda Sawyer, and Kevin Flynn.

This bill gives the Auditor's Office the tools it needs to get information from private employers who do not voluntarily cooperate during wage theft investigations. By having a collaborative tool like this, the Auditor's Office can seek faster resolution and payment on behalf of workers, while limiting the burden for businesses.

A second bill supporting this common-sense tool for the Audit Services Division is forthcoming and will ensure community partners and city contractors are held equally accountable for how they use taxpayer dollars.

Denver Auditor Timothy M. O'Brien issued this statement in support of uniform subpoena power for the full Denver Auditor's Office:

"The Denver City Council has taken a strong first step for accountability in Denver. I am grateful to all our council co-sponsors who supported this common-sense effort, as well as all 13 members who voted in favor. We couldn't have gotten here without the tireless advocacy from community members, local leaders, and groups like Coloradans for the Common Good, Centro de los Trabajadores, the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition, SEIU Local 105, Towards Justice, and so many more. Thank you to the many individuals from the labor, faith, nonprofit, and advocacy communities who helped us get this far."

We heard from members of the community in meetings and in public comment that subpoena power is an appropriate and necessary tool for both our wage and audit work. We hear them and are committed to continuing our efforts to guarantee uniform subpoena power for the whole Denver Auditor's Office.

Our government audit function allows us to examine how the city spends money on various initiatives, including services like shelters and encampment response efforts,

that affect the most vulnerable people in our communities. Our audit work can also hold agencies and city partners accountable for ensuring affordable housing and accessible sidewalks. And our work supports equitable contracting and fair competition citywide. We provide the oversight the voters asked for when they approved the audit function in the Denver Charter.

In order to achieve this, we need access to records from city partners who signed contracts saying they would provide that information. Subpoena power is a reasonable and moderate tool to ensure accountability, support due protections for sensitive information, and ease the process without expensive and public fights.

We encourage all City Council members to support accountability for the use of public dollars, just as they have unanimously supported accountability in private industry citywide. We look forward to the next steps in collaboration with our City Council co-sponsors Councilwoman Sarah Parady and Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer — on behalf of the entire public we serve.”

You can find more information about the Auditor and Denver Labor [on our website](#).

About the Auditor's Office

Denver's Auditor is publicly elected and answers to the voters. The role of the Auditor is to help minimize risks, improve internal controls, maximize efficiencies, and strengthen accountability. Denver Labor works to deter wage theft, reduce the harms of poverty, and expand economic justice and fair competition through comprehensive wage and hour enforcement and education.

About Auditor O'Brien

Denver Auditor Timothy M. O'Brien, CPA, has more than 40 years of auditing and accounting [experience](#). Auditor O'Brien strives to bring greater clarity, transparency, and accountability to Denver's city government for its residents. Elected in 2015 — and reelected in 2019 and 2023 — Timothy O'Brien is distinguished from his predecessors as a professional auditor.

Auditor O'Brien also received the [David M. Walker Excellence in Government Accountability Award](#) in 2022 from the National Intergovernmental Audit Forum and the [ADA Access Award](#) from the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition in 2018 for his work on behalf of people with disabilities. Auditor O'Brien received the [2017 Outstanding CPA in Government Impact Award](#) from the [American Institute of CPAs](#). He was honored with the [2016 Jonathan Holtzinger Award of Excellence](#) by the Colorado Chartered Financial Analyst Society for demonstrating the highest standards as a financial and investment professional.

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