

# CITY NEWS

FROM COUNCILWOMAN JEANNE FAATZ



## **New law to verify employment is the right way to fix a wrong**

Making laws is a lot harder than you think. They have to apply equally and fix something that's broken. The E-Verify ordinance that Councilman Chris Nevitt and I sponsored is a great example.

It wasn't fair that Denver had to lay off qualified city employees who were documented workers while awarding city contracts to companies that sometimes employed people who weren't. That needed to be set right, so we took steps to do so, decisively.

Under the new law, contractors and their subs now must use the federal E-Verify screening program to show that every new employee they hire is a documented worker. The ordinance lets the city Auditor check up on companies that try to skirt the law, and it provides penalties for wrongdoing.

The law is fair, even-handed and lets contractors who play fast and loose with the rules know that the city is watching and will act. It gives employees appeal rights if the screening system makes a mistake about their status, and it levels the playing field for companies bidding for city contracts.

The new law isn't perfect. Because of federal restrictions it only applies to new workers, for example. But it's a good start at cracking down on employers that abuse the privilege of doing work for the city. And it demonstrates that Denver cares deeply that employees have the legal right to work before they get paid with taxpayer's money.

I'm proud to have sponsored this ordinance and grateful that my colleagues on council agreed it was important to pass. The idea began when a constituent spoke up. I listened and now there's a new way to right a wrong. That's teamwork, and proof that together we can make our community work even better.

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