



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 6, 2021

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UFCW LOCAL 7 DEMANDS EQUAL PAY FOR ALL AS DENVER HOSTS PUBLIC HEARING ON “CERTIFIED YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM” WHICH WILL PAY MINORS LESS

UFCW Local 7 President Kim Cordova Calls On City of Denver To Protect Minors and Ensure They Are Paid the Same Minimum Wage as Adults

DENVER – Today, UFCW Local 7 spoke out on behalf of hardworking minors ahead of a public hearing by the City and County of Denver’s Denver Economic Development and Opportunity (DEDO). The city’s proposed [Certified Youth Employment Program](#) would allow employers to pay “unemancipated” minors a reduced minimum wage, which stands at \$14.77 as of January 1, 2021, in exchange for on-the-job learning programs.

Kim Cordova, President of UFCW Local 7, which represents more than 25,000 workers in Colorado and Wyoming, issued the following statement:

“Thanks to UFCW Local 7’s hard work in passing a \$15.00 minimum wage in Denver, as of January 1, worker’s wages increased to \$14.77 per hour and will be \$15.87 next year. Every worker in Denver, no matter their age, deserves fair pay for their work. Unfortunately, with the city’s help, employers are already looking to create loopholes to keep wages stagnant following the increased minimum wage by paying “unemancipated” minors a reduced minimum wage in exchange for on-the-job learning programs.

“This policy outlined in the proposed [Certified Youth Employment Program](#) is not only discriminatory but an unjust approach to the intent of the law, which was to support *all* working Coloradans. The council’s proposed program is especially cruel right now, as many minors must work to help to maintain their households due to unprecedented economic stress caused by the pandemic. The proposal is also counterproductive since putting more money in the pockets of working minors translates to more dollars being spent in our local economy.

“Our elected leaders should be fighting for workers no matter their age, race, gender, or beliefs, not adding to the financial uncertainty these workers already face. UFCW Local 7 believes that employers and policymakers should invest in the workforce’s future with training programs, but not by forcing working taxpayers under 18 to pay for them. The city of Denver should not approve this discriminatory program because it denies minors the fair wages they need and deserve, and undermines the intent of the minimum wage hike law.”

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[Local 7](#), the largest Union in Colorado, is affiliated with United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which represents over 1.3 million workers in the United States and Canada, and is one of the largest private-sector Unions in North America. UFCW members work in a wide range of industries, including retail food, food processing, agriculture, retail sales, and health care.

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