



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT CHI BIZ STRONG INITIATIVE**

"For the last fourteen months, we have worked tirelessly to help our businesses survive a once-in-a-century pandemic. Now, as the pandemic wanes, we have an opportunity that we cannot waste to bring about transformative change that will kickstart our recovery and address long-standing issues that impede business growth. I am proud to co-sponsor this initiative and look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Lightfoot to support our critical small businesses."

- **Emma Mitts, 37th Ward Alderman and Chairman of the Committee on License and Consumer Protection**

"Chicago's workers have kept this City running throughout the pandemic, and as we plan for a pandemic-free future we must continue to put workers first. No one should have their wages stolen, especially during these difficult times, and I am thrilled to support Chicago's first Wage Theft Ordinance. This piece and the entire Chi Biz Strong Initiative will ensure that workers are not just included in the recovery but front and center as we build a new and better Chicago."

- **Susan Sadlowski Garza, 10th Ward Alderwoman and Chairwoman of the Committee on Workforce Development**

"The plan introduced today by Mayor Lightfoot will make immediate, pragmatic reforms to help restaurants reopen and recover from the pandemic. Targeted grants, streamlined permits, guardrails on delivery fees, and more will be hugely beneficial to neighborhood restaurants as they welcome diners and team members back. We thank Mayor Lightfoot and her team for recognizing the ongoing challenges facing Chicago's small businesses and taking bold actions to support our economy, our workforce, and our communities."

- **Sam Toia, President and CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association**



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The Chicago Urban League applauds Mayor Lightfoot and the city for their commitment to small businesses as they recover from this pandemic with the Chi Biz Strong initiative. All too often, small businesses, particularly businesses of color, are left out of economic development efforts and the recovery plan for COVID. It is especially important that they are supported given the devastating impact they have felt from by the pandemic. What we need more than good thoughts is a plan that ensures equitable recovery of small businesses all over the city.”

- **Karen Freeman-Wilson, President and CEO of the Chicago Urban League**

“As we near the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot simply return to business as usual in Chicago. The Mayor’s Chi Biz Strong Initiative is the bold plan we need right now to set our business community squarely on the path towards a fast and equitable recovery.”

- **Jaime di Paulo, President and CEO of Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**

“Chicago is an awesome city and its small business community is optimistic about a strong recovery this summer. Unnecessary red tape, however, will curtail the growth of small businesses and the success of local economies. We are excited about the Mayor’s push to eliminate the requirement that Chicago’s full City Council approve sign and other public way use permits. This will remove a bureaucratic hurdle that can cause businesses to wait months before getting their permits. We are also encouraged by the Mayor’s efforts to legalize sidewalk signs which will help small businesses bring back their customers and attract new patrons. We look forward to working with Mayor Lightfoot and City Council on these proactive measures because they will help Chicago small businesses recover from the pandemic.”

- **Elliot Richardson, President and Co-Founder of the Small Business Advocacy Council**

"Like so many small businesses, this last year has brought more challenges than I could have ever imagined or prepared for. While I'm grateful for all the support we have received, we need more if we are to fully recover from this unprecedented pandemic. This debt relief program will be a life-saver for my business, and I thank Mayor Lightfoot for continuing to fight for our vital small businesses."

- **Donnell Digby, Owner of the Woodlawn**



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“The pandemic has shed light on the importance of domestic work, including care work, to the functioning of our society. By requiring employers to provide care workers with a written contract and requiring employers to pay care workers \$15/hour, the City is sending a clear, strong message that care work is a valued profession and care workers must be treated with dignity and respect.”

- **Militza M. Pagán, Staff Attorney at the Shriver Center on Poverty Law, a member of the Illinois Domestic Workers Coalition**

"For domestic workers like me, requiring a written contract is very important, because many verbal contracts aren't respected by employers. A written contract will provide emotional and financial stability with things like notification or compensation if my employer no longer needs my services, so that I don't fall into crisis."

- **Magdalena Portillo, Arise Chicago member and house cleaner**

“As participants in the Protecting Workers Workgroup, we’re particularly encouraged to see the strengthening of protections for domestic workers, who are overwhelmingly people of color, women, and/or immigrants. Too often the nature of their work makes them vulnerable to violations of their rights; the provisions in this ordinance will help ensure they – and others - can do their essential work safely, and that there is accountability for the employers who violate workers’ rights.”

- **Cherita Ellens, President and CEO of Women Employed**

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