

****MEDIA ADVISORY****



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Stop Wage Theft Campaign To Kick Off January 26th in Berkeley

City of Berkeley To Consider Pay Transparency Policy to fight underground economy

Berkeley: Smart Cities Prevail—a leading construction industry research and advocacy organization—will launch a new campaign to combat construction industry wage theft at a 4 p.m. Tuesday, January 26th at Berkeley City Hall. The event will include a variety of local leaders and construction professionals—including Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O’Malley and Berkeley City Council Member Laurie Capitelli—who is sponsoring a new measure to combat the problem in Berkeley.

According to recent research by the Little Hoover Commission and Economic Roundtable, wage theft and the underground economy currently costs California taxpayers \$8.5 billion per year in addition to the direct impacts on workers who are shortchanged in their paychecks. This is equivalent to 60% of California’s higher education budget. Claims are only filed in a fraction of cases, and even where judgments are issued against lawbreaking employers, claimants are paid less than 20% of the time.

In the Construction industry, wage theft currently costs workers \$1.2 billion, and taxpayers another \$774 million per year. One in six California Construction workers currently faces some form of wage theft.

Tuesday night, the City of Berkeley will consider a new pay transparency and accountability policy to ensure greater compliance with state labor laws on local construction projects. The proposal was recently outlined in a [Contra Costa Times Op-Ed](#) by Former Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner and Berkeley City Council member Laurie Capitelli.

“Workers are not the only victims of wage theft—taxpayers and law abiding businesses across our state are being shortchanged,” said Smart Cities Prevail Director and Wall and Ceiling Alliance Executive Director Frank Nunes. “We can do much more than just provide state agencies with more enforcement resources—working at the local level to disrupt the corrupt business models and institutional barriers that have enabled this problem to flourish. We must engage both taxpayers and local policymakers in the vital work of prevention, outreach, and mitigation.”

Who: Berkeley City Council Member Laurie Capitelli
Nancy O’Malley, District Attorney, County of Alameda
Frank Nunes, Executive Director, Wall and Ceiling Alliance and Director of Smart Cities Prevail
Derek Schoonmaker, Workers Rights Program Director, Centro Legal de la Raza

What: Kickoff of New Campaign to Combat Construction Industry Wage Theft

Where: Berkeley City Hall, 2134 Grove Street, Berkeley California

When: Tuesday, January 26th, 4:00 p.m.

Smart Cities Prevail is a leading construction industry research and advocacy organization. More information on us may be found at www.smartcitiesprevail.org, or on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). StopWageTheftCA.org is a project of Smart Cities Prevail.