

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Ald. Joe Moore
773-848-5796

**CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS MEASURE TO
REWARD WHISTLEBLOWERS**

NEW TOOL DESIGNED TO UNCOVER POLITICAL CORRUPTION

The Chicago City Council today adopted an ordinance that empowers ordinary citizens to file taxpayer lawsuits against unscrupulous City contractors and others who defraud City government.

Under the ordinance, sponsored by Mayor Richard Daley and 49th Ward Ald. Joe Moore, whistleblowers could recoup up to triple the damages for the City, while pocketing up to 30 percent of that total (plus legal expenses) as a reward. The ordinance is based on similar federal and state whistleblower provisions.

Moore first introduced a whistleblower measure earlier this year after news reports documented widespread waste and corruption in the City's hired truck program. He then worked closely with Daley Administration officials to craft the ordinance which was adopted today.

Moore noted that the whistleblower measure passed on the same day the City Council adopted a budget that calls for City employee layoffs and tax and fee increases. "At a time when City resources are stretched to the limit, it is more important than ever that we use every tool at our disposal to uncover waste and fraud in city government," Moore said. "This whistleblower ordinance will add an important weapon in the anti-corruption arsenal by giving ordinary citizens the power to attack waste and fraud directly," he added.

With passage of this ordinance, Chicago becomes the nation's first large municipality to give ordinary citizens the right to bring such actions on its behalf. "Mayor Daley deserves huge credit for embracing this path-breaking measure," Moore said. "I'm very confident it will prove to be a very effective corruption fighting tool that will save our taxpayers millions of dollars over the next few years."

Moore also credited Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn with bringing the whistleblower concept to the forefront. "Pat Quinn has long been a champion for Illinois taxpayers. He helped to enact the Illinois Whistleblower Act in 1991, and his push to get all Illinois municipalities to adopt whistleblower provisions was the impetus for Chicago's ordinance," Moore commented.

City employees who blow the whistle on corruption would also be protected against retaliation under a companion ordinance also adopted by the City Council today. That

ordinance prohibits any City employee or official from taking retaliatory action against an employee for reporting fraud or other illegal activity. If any retaliatory action is taken against the employee, the employee is entitled to reinstatement with full fringe benefits, seniority rights, and two times the amount of back pay.

“We simply cannot depend solely of the media or the U.S. Attorney to root out corruption,” Moore said. “We also need the help of vigilant citizens and government employees who witness waste and fraud. These ordinances give them the ability to do so,” he added.

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that since 1986 when Congress strengthened the federal whistleblower act, over \$3 billion has been returned to the Treasury as a result of whistleblower claims.