

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors: Won't penalize employees furloughed due to coronavirus

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MILWAUKEE – The Board of Supervisors adopted (13-4-1) a [rule change](#) today that prevents Milwaukee County employees from losing service credit towards their pension if they are furloughed for more than a month due to COVID-19.

“We shouldn’t further penalize dedicated public servants who have been forced to do more with less because of the pandemic,” said Supervisor Jason Haas, who serves on the Pension Study Commission.

Furloughed employees clock-in for fewer hours each week than they normally would and are paid less. For example, some furloughed employees work a four-day, 32-hour work week rather than a traditional five day, 40-hour week, typically while performing the same duties.

“I’m not in favor of rubbing salt in the wounds of County employees – who have already suffered a loss of pay through no fault of their own – and cutting their pension credits, when the savings would amount to very little compared to the size and scale of our pension fund,” said Supervisor Moore Omokunde.

There are no new costs to taxpayers because the pension contributions were already budgeted. There would be a minute loss of savings, [estimated](#) at roughly \$3,700 to \$11,100 annually over 20 years. Milwaukee County’s pension contribution

for 2020 was \$64 million.

The change would affect [at least 160](#) out of more than 1500 employees who had their hours and pay reduced due to the Coronavirus pandemic and puts these workers in the same category as employees on military leave and those who are out due to work-related injuries.

“Not only is this the fair and reasonable thing to do, but it aligns with our racial equity mission,” said Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr. “Many of the affected workers are frontline employees who are providing essential services in the field, can’t telework from home like other employees, and in many cases are people of color who have already faced significant barriers to economic security”.

Active Milwaukee County employees contribute about \$12 million of their own salary towards the County pension fund every year.