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- National League of Cities Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee
- Milwaukee Continuum of Care
- City-County Carjacking and Reckless Driving Task Force



**CHANTIA LEWIS**  
ALDERWOMAN, 9TH DISTRICT

# **Amendment to help furloughed workers falls just short**

## **Statement of Alderwoman Chantia Lewis May 8, 2020**

This morning an amendment I sponsored that would have immediately recalled or assisted through an accommodation any furloughed city employee who could prove that he or she had not received unemployment insurance benefits within two weeks of beginning her/his furlough was narrowly defeated by the full Common Council on a 7-8 vote.

Those voting “yes” on the amendment were: Myself, Alderman Ashanti Hamilton, Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman Khalif J. Rainey, Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic and Alderwoman Nikiya Dodd,

My concern this morning as we took up drastic proposed furloughs and reductions in work hours for city employees is that our state Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is simply overwhelmed and swamped as it attempts to process hundreds of thousands of unemployment benefit claims from residents who are out of work because of the stay home emergency brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I strongly believe that no furloughed workers at any company or organization should have to suffer because of the current shortcomings of the federal or state governments, and that they should be made whole without a loss of pay during this crisis.

I applaud the work that DWD is doing to try and help the thousands of workers during this time of calamity in our state.

It is incumbent upon us as employers to ensure we protect our workers as well as our bottom line. I would encourage all other employers to help in any way possible to do whatever is in their purview to help buffer this blow to their employees as best they can. We are all in this together, and that means we have to look out for everyone.

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I am hopeful that despite the defeat of my amendment, the city will continue to work closely with DWD and state leadership to ensure furloughed workers are taken care of quickly as they apply for unemployment benefits.

Our city workers are simply the best and I will continue to fight for them at every turn!

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