



# *Milwaukee County*

Supervisor Deanna Alexander, 18<sup>th</sup> District

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## **MINIMUM WAGE ORDINANCE IS INCONSISTENT AND UNFAIR**

Milwaukee County Supervisor Deanna Alexander issued the following statement of concerns about the “living wage” ordinance under consideration today by the County’s Finance, Personnel and Audit Committee:

“First, the main voices in promoting what they call the ‘living wage’ minimum say that anything less is unfair because a person can’t support a family of four on that wage alone. But if this is true – that it is an issue of fairness – then shouldn’t employees’ actual needs be considered?”

“Based on their logic, it wouldn’t be fair for a single employee to receive the same payment for the same work as an employee working to support a family of six. And why stop at \$12.45 per hour? Hartford, CT has a similar ordinance declaring \$22.00 per hour to be the minimum. So, in order to justify the proposal at hand, proponents must address ‘why not \$22.00, why not \$25.00, and why not more?’

“Second, why the inconsistencies? Is it really ‘fair’ to make exemptions for transit workers, airport parking workers, and assisted living workers? Proponents of the minimum wage ordinance also seem to believe that employees who work for nonprofits are somehow less needy than everyone else. If the goal is to provide a true ‘living wage,’ then the reason for the exemptions shouldn’t matter. Why are we going to place the bottom rung of the ladder higher so it is even more difficult for those at the bottom to climb up?”

“Third, to mandate that wages are increased, the money must come from somewhere. Proponents claim that taxpayers will not actually have to pay any of the costs. In addition to the burden that will be borne by the businesses that contract with the county, it will be paid by the state and federal governments who transfer funds to meet our needs. Do those funds not come from the taxpayers as well?”

“Fourth, the county board just passed a budget with no increase in tax levy. Should we be ready to modify it so soon, having been advised that we will have to take money from our contingency account to fund it?”

“There are many inconsistencies and unanswered questions surrounding this ordinance. Due to these issues, basic economic principles, and my pledge to represent the interests of the taxpayers in creating sensible laws rather than those that will lead to eliminating jobs and making it more difficult for unskilled workers to get ahead, I intend to vote against this ordinance.”

If approved by the committee, the full board will vote on the ordinance on Thursday, December 19.

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