A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT AMENDING THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION LAW TO CREATE A 
REBUTTABLE PRESUMPTION THAT FIRST RESPONDERS, HEALTH CARE 
WORKERS, AND ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS WHO ARE INFECTED WITH 
THE CORONAVIRUS CONTRACTED THE DISEASE IN THE COURSE OF 
EMPLOYMENT, REQUIRING THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL EMPLOYERS 
CREDIT FIRST RESPONDERS AND HEALTH CARE WORKERS FOR LEAVE TAKEN 
WHILE QUARANTINED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE OFFICE OF STATE 
HUMAN RESOURCES TO SETTLE STATE EMPLOYEE WORKERS' 
COMPENSATION CLAIMS RELATED TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 97-53 reads as rewritten:

§ 97-53. Occupational diseases enumerated; when due to exposure to chemicals and 
conditions enumerated.

The following diseases and conditions only shall be deemed to be occupational diseases 
within the meaning of this Article:

... (30) Pandemic infection contracted by a covered person. – A pandemic infection 
contracted by a covered person shall be presumed to be due to exposure in the 
course of the covered person's employment. The presumption may only be 
rebutted by clear and convincing evidence. The following definitions apply in 
determining eligibility for compensation under this subdivision:

a. Covered person. – Means (i) a law enforcement officer, jailer, prison 
guard, firefighter, or an emergency medical technician or paramedic 
employed by a State or local governmental employer, including a 
volunteer firefighter meeting the requirement of G.S. 58-84-5(3a), (ii) 
a health care worker, or (iii) an employee required to work during a 
pandemic for a business declared essential by executive order of the 
Governor or by order of a local governmental authority, including food 
service, retail, and other essential personnel.

b. Pandemic. – An outbreak of an emerging disease prevalent in the 
United States or the whole world.

...
SECTION 1.(b) This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to claims for workers’ compensation benefits filed on or after that date.

SECTION 2.(a) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR), Department of Administration, the sum of five million dollars ($5,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to settle claims filed by State employees who contract the coronavirus in the course of State employment as provided by G.S. 97-53(30), as enacted by this act. These funds shall remain available to pay these State employee claims until December 31, 2020. After that date, OSHR may use these funds to assist State agencies with the settlement of prior outstanding workers' compensation claims.

SECTION 2.(b) This section becomes effective July 1, 2020.

SECTION 3.(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the following local governmental employees shall be credited by their respective employers for any sick or vacation leave taken by the employee to comply with a quarantine related to exposure to the coronavirus:

(1) Health care workers.

(2) Law enforcement officers, jailers, prison guards, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and volunteer firefighters meeting the requirement of G.S. 58-84-5(3a).

SECTION 3.(b) This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to every local law enforcement agency, county, city, and political subdivision of the State.

SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law.