

CAPSule

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David Miller Wins!

Runoff Ballots Mailed November 10 in Bilbrey Race; Voting Deadline is December 11

CAPS member David Miller has been declared the unofficial winner in one of the two Member-at-Large seats up for election to the CalPERS Board of Administration. Results are considered "unofficial" until formal certification by the California Secretary of State. The unofficial election results indicate Miller received 77,316 votes for Position A, which represents 63.71 percent of the votes cast during the voting period of September 1 through October 2, 2017. Michael Flaherman received 44,041 votes, or 36.29 percent.

In the vote for the *other* Member-at-Large seat, incumbent Michael Bilbrey and challenger Margaret Brown will face each other in a runoff election next month. The runoff between Bilbrey and Brown was triggered when none of the four candidates received a majority of votes cast. The two candidates with the highest number of votes vie in a runoff for the Position B seat. Bilbrey received 49,801 votes, or 40.82 percent, while Brown received 43,132 votes, or 35.35 percent. Ballots for the runoff for Position B will be mailed on November 10, with voting concluding on December 11. **CAPS has endorsed Michael Bilbrey and urges a vote for him!**

Miller and the winner of the runoff will each serve four-year terms beginning January 16, 2018. Miller has served as a



state regulator, labor leader, and mediator. He is a Senior Environmental Scientist at the Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Bilbrey joined the CalPERS Board in 2011 and is completing his second term. He is employed by Citrus Community College. Brown works for the Garden Grove Unified School District.

The 13-member CalPERS Board of Administration sets policy and oversees the administration of retirement and health benefits on behalf of California public employers, and their active and retired employees. The Board also oversees administration of the pension fund's investments. Under the California Constitution, the CalPERS Board has exclusive authority to administer the CalPERS Pension Fund, valued currently at approximately \$337 billion.

For more than eight decades, CalPERS has built retirement and health security for state, school, and public agency members who invest their lifework in public service. CalPERS' pension fund serves more than 1.8 million members in the CalPERS retirement system. CalPERS also administers health benefits for more than 1.4 million members and their families, making it the largest defined-benefit public pension in the U.S.

Science Matters. California State Scientists

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Can Early Career Experience Boost YOUR Pay?

Many state scientists have had years of scientific experience before joining the state workforce. Occasionally, they don't get proper credit for their experience. So whether that experience was in a professional, research, or internship setting, it may count when it comes to range placement at the time of hire. Unfortunately, some state personnel staff don't give enough experiential credits at the time of hire. The result is that the new hire may be placed in a lower salary level than he or she is entitled. Even if there is a question about it, many scientists just let it go, not wanting to "rock the boat."



How Do the Departments Determine Range? Placement in a salary range is typically determined by an Alternate Range Criteria. These differ based on classification. One of the most common for State Scientists is Environmental Scientist with Ranges A, B and C. The Alternate Range Criteria for Environmental Scientist is 430, which is listed on the CalHR Pay Scales chart as "AR Crit." This can be found on the CalHR web page: www.calhr.ca.gov.

You Can Have Your Range Placement Reviewed. Simply contact your local CAPS office and ask for a labor representative. Be prepared with your application from your time of hire and an updated resume, among other items. If a case can be made, CAPS will submit a Merit Issue Complaint on your behalf. This starts at the department level. If the department denies the claim, it can be appealed to the State Personnel Board. Getting a final decision can take upwards of six months, but the wait can be worth it!

What Happens if the Claim is Successful? If your claim is granted you may be looking at back pay from your date of hire! Depending on which range you started in and when you were hired, you can be looking at a good lump sum in back pay. ***The largest award of back pay achieved by CAPS was over \$20,000!*** Not every case is a winner, of course. But it may be worth a second look to ensure that you were properly credited with previous experience and correctly placed in your salary range at your time of hire. For more, contact CAPS: caps@capsscientists.org.

Its Bullying Awareness Month

Check out these infographics online and empower yourself!: <http://capsscientists.org/benefits/workplace-bullying/>

Miller Win Elevates Scientists

By Patty Velez, President

Just how big was David Miller's election win to the CalPERS Board of Administration?

Let's just say that when Miller declared his candidacy for the fourth consecutive time, very few gave him much of a chance to win. Except CAPS. Miller got the CAPS endorsement, some modest funding, and the active help of experienced campaign staff.

He was also fortunate in that no other labor candidate ran for the seat this time. Very often the field is dominated by a candidate backed by a large labor union. But in this case, Miller's past experience in running for the seat, and his determination to never give up, prompted a wide array of labor groups to back his candidacy. It also didn't hurt that his opponent was a Wall Street executive and hedge fund manager.

Miller's victory is important for several reasons. First, it rewards a high integrity candidate who is fully committed to making CalPERS operate exclusively for the benefit of the members. Second, it provides valuable visibility to a State Scientist just elected to a critical public policy position.

Finally, CAPS gets visibility for spearheading his election campaign. We don't just talk about the importance of protecting our retirement system and health benefit programs, we act on it. Miller's election is tangible evidence of that.

CAPS has always maintained positive relationships with members of the CalPERS Board of Administration.

We monitor every meeting, and have worked to influence law and policy as it relates to retirement and health benefits. It's quite different now that we have one of our own on the inside. It will help immeasurably in the efforts by CAPS and other labor groups to protect and preserve the system that's constantly under attack, and is so valuable to all of us.

With a portfolio estimated at \$337 billion, serving 1.8 million members, there's almost no better place to have a knowledgeable, committed advocate for quality, sustainable retirement and health benefits.

Congratulations, David!

“ We don't just talk about the importance of protecting our retirement system and health benefit programs, we act on it. ”





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More CAPS Grants...

The CAPS Benefits Committee proudly awards FOUR \$400 professional development grants to CAPS members each quarter because many state departments don't adequately fund State Scientists' professional development. Grants awarded for the **FOURTH** quarter of 2017 are listed below. **ANY** CAPS member can apply for a CAPS grant via the CAPS webpage: www.capsscientists.org.



Environmental Scientist Specialist Stacy Anderson of the CDFW in Rancho Cordova will use her grant to offset the cost of attending the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Mule Deer Working Group Workshop in Salem, Oregon during October 2017.



Research Scientist III Catherine Gilmore Zarate of the Department of Public Health in Sacramento will use her grant to offset costs of attending a conference on Quality in Home Visiting Programs in Washington, D.C. during late January 2018. This is the 7th National Home Visiting Summit on Quality in Home Visiting programs where researchers, advocates, policymakers and practitioners jointly pursue best practices in the home visiting field.



Environmental Scientist Merissa Hanisko of the CDFW in Yreka will use her grant to offset the costs of attending the annual meeting of the California Native Plant Society during late January 2018 in Los Angeles. This conference provides an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from a variety of geographical areas.



Environmental Scientist Aaron N.K. Haiman of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy in West Sacramento will use his grant to cover the costs of advanced training classes that will better prepare him for career advancement.