

CAPSule

E-Mail CAPS at: caps@capsscientists.org

Website: www.capsscientists.org

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CAPS Wins Travel Arbitration

When is it appropriate to reimburse state scientists for lodging and meals at rates less than those offered to other state employees? NEVER! When that happens, CAPS will challenge this inherently unfair practice. Fortunately, contract language negotiated by CAPS is worded expressly to prevent this miscarriage of justice, even if it means collecting the amounts owed in arrears.

On May 5, arbitrator Catherine Harris issued a final decision resulting from a grievance filed by CAPS several months ago, soon after state management refused to honor increases in lodging and meal reimbursement rates that were extended to other state employee groups while traveling on state business.

Arbitrator Harris granted the grievance in full and found that *"the state violated Article 20.4 [of the CAPS MOU] by refusing to provide to Unit 10 members the increases in meal and lodging reimbursement rates... the state is ordered to provide the increased meal and lodging reimbursements retroactive to the effective date of the increases in the [other] bargaining units."*

For the many state scientists required to travel on state business, this decision comes as really good news, because many have been paying out-of-pocket for months for hotel rooms and meals, while their state employee colleagues were getting fully reimbursed at the higher rates. The CAPS Bargaining Team expected to win this case.

The state's bargaining team representing Governor Jerry Brown has refused to extend the higher rates to state scientists unless the CAPS Bargaining Team agreed to a final settlement at the bargaining table. The CalHR Team has refused to settle at any more than 4.5% over three years.

Instead, the CAPS Team insists on salary equity as part of any final agreement. The team made it clear to CalHR at the bargaining table that it would not be held hostage by meager increases in lodging and meal reimbursements. That is not sufficient leverage to convince CAPS Team members or the vast majority of state scientists to reach agreement on a contract that includes a 4.5% wage increase over three years. In fact, sound management should dictate that **ALL** state employees should get the same travel reimbursements while on state business. This is especially true when virtually every hotel in California is aware that the state now pays \$6 more per night for lodging. By now they have all increased their state employee lodging rate by \$6 per night. Where state scientists have been on business trips with other state workers, CAPS members have been reimbursed at a lower rate, and that's simply unfair and bad business.

This means that if **YOU** have been reimbursed for lodging and meals at **less** than the current state rates, you can expect to have that reimbursement amount adjusted (increased) retroactively. Future reimbursements should reflect the new, higher rates.

You can expect to soon receive confirmation of all this from state management. Thus far, CalHR has not forwarded this information to state departments nor has it directed them to comply with it. Consequently, CAPS advises its members to submit reimbursements for future travel at the higher rates, and attach the last page from the arbitration victory to the reimbursement claim form. CAPS is here to assist you, so any problems or undue delays in reimbursement should be directed to your nearest CAPS office, or email us at caps@capsscientists.org.

Read the decision on the CAPS webpage: www.capsscientists.org.



Science Matters. And so do state scientists. That was the message on State Scientist Day May 14 at the State Capitol, where CAPS members introduced thousands of school kids to the wonders of science. See much more inside this issue.

California State Scientists ... Knowledge, Innovation, Protection

455 Capitol Mall, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814 • (916) 441-2629
215 N. Marengo Avenue, Suite 185, Pasadena, CA 91101 • (818) 246-0629
1 Sutter Street, Suite 800, San Francisco, CA 94104 • (415) 861-6343
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CAPS Works *for* YOU!



This year CAPS celebrates its 30th anniversary. To mark the occasion, we're getting "back to basics." That's so long-time members and newcomers alike can have a better sense of where CAPS came from and what it does for members.

Why is CAPS important to you? The answer is simple: CAPS gives a strong, unified voice to *all* state scientists in Unit 10 when it comes to protecting our pay, benefits and retirement. This was evident with the recent travel reimbursement arbitration victory. That decision extends to ALL state scientists the same lodging and meal reimbursement rates received by other state employees (see page 1). No single state scientist could have achieved that victory. It required the collective voice of our bargaining unit—represented by CAPS—to stand up to the state and say "we deserve better!"



Why collective bargaining? It would be extremely difficult for individual employees to fight for fair pay, benefits and adequate working conditions. Collective bargaining allows CAPS to negotiate on behalf of all 2,500 state scientists. The best offer from state management rarely—if ever—satisfies the needs of all state scientists, but CAPS make certain that the final offer from state management is its best offer. But if there is a tentative agreement, CAPS members have the final say on whether it is accepted—or not. It's with that one voice that CAPS continues the call for salary equity for ALL state scientists!

Protecting jobs. CAPS also works tirelessly to protect scientific work done by state scientists. That means pushing for adequate funding for state scientific programs, improving the hiring and promotion process to encourage top scientific candidates, and making sure scientific work isn't outsourced to private entities.



Working conditions. Ever needed help with a difficult supervisor? Received a counseling memorandum you considered unfair? Concerned about not passing probation in a new position? Been questioned by a supervisor or law enforcement officer about something you did on the job that could result in disciplinary action? Thought you might be working in a higher paid classification but not getting paid for it? All of these situations and many more could affect you during the course of your career with the state. CAPS is here to help. Get informal advice or direct representation when you need it most. That is **WHY** you pay dues. It is your insurance policy that helps protect one of your most valuable assets: your job. After you pass probation, the law says you have a property interest in your state job. You own it, so it can't be taken from you without due process. CAPS understands this and provides you with professional advice and assistance when you need it most. If you ever wonder how valuable that assistance can be, ask a coworker or a family member how they have handled or would handle a difficult situation at work. You will likely be told that when they needed it, it was very expensive and not readily available.



Retirement and health benefits. CAPS spends considerable time and resources ensuring every state scientist collects the retirement benefit he or she was promised when hired. That means a dependable and predictable retirement annuity based on a defined benefit. CAPS understands the importance of a secure retirement for every career scientist, and we spare no expense in doing everything to ensure it is there when YOU call it quits. Same with health benefits. We negotiate the best contribution rate possible from the state employer, and then we work with CalPERS to help ensure that quality health care offerings are made available to you and your family.

Bottom line: CAPS fights for state scientists with one voice!

EnCAPSulations...

Retirement Security Involves EVERYONE. Californians for Retirement Security (CRS), of which CAPS is a member, continues to refine its messaging on pension reform in the wake of San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed's failed ballot initiative. Pension issues relate more to the crisis faced by most Americans who can't afford to retire, rather than the sustainability of retirements in the public sector. CAPS and the CRS coalition will work to keep the focus where it belongs. That's a living retirement program for all Californians. This project includes public education on how a lack of adequate pensions could result in increased reliance on social services as workers get older, thus costing the state more money.

CalPERS Is Sustainable. Critics of public retirement systems in California use the recent examples of bankruptcies in Stockton and San Bernardino to advocate an end to taxpayer guaranteed retirement plans. Instead, they advocate shifting the burden of funding retirement for public employees primarily to the employees themselves. This is now the predominant model in the private sector. They also use the rare example of retirement fraud and abuse to bolster the claim that taxpayer-funded retirement plans should be phased out. They describe the retirement plans administered by CalPERS, for example, as "unsustainable." As recent double-digit investment returns demonstrate, the sustainability of retirement plans administered by CalPERS has never looked better.



Miller for CalPERS. The election for state employee representative to the CalPERS Board of Administration is held every four years. That election will be held during August, just three months from now. CAPS President David Miller is once again a candidate for that seat, and CAPS has endorsed him. David Miller understands the need for aggressive and vocal advocacy on that board for sustainable public employee pensions in California. As a career state scientist and long-time advocate for sustainable pensions, he will not hesitate to speak out forcefully on behalf of state employees and all CalPERS members. He will also work to ensure that investment and related decisions affecting pensions made by CalPERS are sound ones. Ballots will be mailed to all CalPERS state employee members on August 29, so please **VOTE FOR DAVID MILLER!**

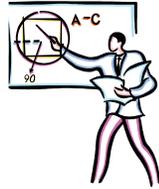
Supporting Science Takes More Than Lip Service

By David Miller, President

CAPS supports scientists by advocating equitable salaries and fair benefits. We also promote science education—we have a long enviable track record. We sponsor an annual State Scientist Day, which celebrates the importance of science and the role of state scientists in promoting quality of life in California. We cosponsor one of the largest of California's 14 regional science fairs.



It is a remarkably successful exercise in introducing young people to the scientific method and ultimately careers in science. We enlist our volunteer members to select an Outstanding Young Scientist every year.



All of this takes considerable time and effort by hundreds of state scientists. We want a strong legacy to hand off to the next generation of state scientists. It's an organizational tradition I inherited from my CAPS predecessors, and something I hope to pass on to future leaders.



I just wish more state **policymakers** would take this to heart, and act on it. Our work is rewarding, but doing the work alone doesn't pay the bills. For some reason, a succession of governors, including Governor Brown, have been quick to extol the importance of science-based decisions—the virtue of hard-working scientists—but they won't offer a fair wage. Our salaries continue to lag far behind our public sector counterparts and state engineers.



Governor Brown's wage proposals thus far are no different than his Hollywood predecessor. In fact, we just had to force Governor Brown to cough up the measly increases in lodging and meal reimbursements that were extended to other state employees. It took a lengthy and expensive legal process and a state arbitrator to force state management to fully reimburse state scientists for travel on state business.

Recent calculations by esteemed scientists have predicted that the polar ice caps are melting faster than previously predicted. Water issues and drought in California underscore the importance of the role of science in conserving our limited water supplies. There is a renewed emphasis on science education, and a need for more qualified scientists to help solve the urgent problems faced by society. Yet an important question before young people in making career decisions is whether a career in science will be sufficiently rewarding relative to other professions. I know that for many of you career state scientists—my colleagues and fellow CAPS members —

it hasn't worked out well financially relative to other career choices you could have made.

We have seen too many other professional state employee groups receive regular and substantial wage increases while we have not: in law enforcement, medicine and engineering, for example. That is not for lack of effort on my part or your other CAPS leaders over the years. This is really tough, demanding work. It requires effective advocacy, not job actions. CAPS' efforts on your behalf are predicated on the concept that responsible advocacy results in cost-of-living increases without the need to go on strike or take other job actions which threaten our employment.

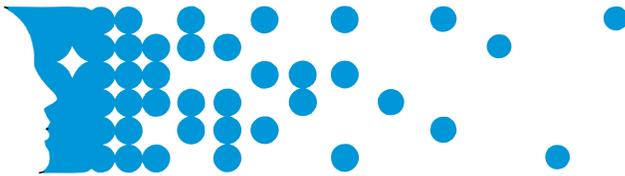
I remain committed to making positive change without risking the jobs of our members. But it is long past time that we get support from our boss, Governor Jerry Brown, to achieve salary equity. We tightened our fiscal belts when budget deficits were in the \$20 billion range. We weren't given much choice. But a salary increase of a measly 2% isn't adequate when there is a budget SURPLUS in the billions. It's time for catch up; it's time for salary equity. Not more lip service.

“Our work is rewarding but doing the work alone doesn't pay the bills.”



June 1 Deadline for Dependent Scholarship Applications.

College costs continue to rise, and CAPS is doing its small part to help. Any CAPS member with a dependent in college, or bound for college NEXT fall, may apply to CAPS for one of several \$500 cash scholarships. The number awarded this year will depend on the number of applicants and availability of funds. To obtain the dependent scholarship application, go to the CAPS web page: <http://capsscientists.org/benefits/scholarships/>. This is for CAPS MEMBERS ONLY! If you aren't yet a CAPS member, or you know someone who should be, apply online for CAPS membership: <http://capsscientists.org/contact/application/>.



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● 455 Capitol Mall, Suite 500
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CalPERS Generates \$30 Billion in Economic Activity

According to a recent CalPERS study, more than \$30 billion in economic activity was generated by retirement benefits paid by the pension fund for the year ending July 1, 2012. View the online copy of the [CalPERS Economic Impacts in California](#) via the Newsroom at www.calpers.ca.gov.

Key findings of the report:

- Retirees returned to the California economy nearly 11 times the value for each taxpayer dollar (public funds) contributed to the system. That's \$10.85 spent for each taxpayer dollar contributed to CalPERS in support of the retiree during his or her working life.
- The total economic revenue generated by CalPERS benefits was more than \$30.4 billion.
- CalPERS benefits created 113,664 jobs throughout California.
- The CalPERS investment portfolio, which includes public and private equities, real estate, fixed income, and infrastructure, supported 1.5 million jobs.
- Investments in California accounted for \$20.7 billion, or approximately 8.9 percent of the entire CalPERS portfolio.

CalPERS is the largest public pension fund in the U.S., with \$287.7 billion in assets. CalPERS administers health and retirement benefits on behalf of 3,089 public school, local agency and state employers. There are nearly 1.7 million members in the CalPERS retirement system and more than 1.3 million in its health plans. For more information about CalPERS, visit www.calpers.ca.gov.