



# CAPS NEWSLETTER



## Newsom Wins... Proposition 6 Fails!

Every election season, the CAPS Board of Directors endorses politicians and ballot measures based solely on the answers to two questions: How will this person or proposal effect state scientists' pay, pensions/benefits, and how will they impact the vital work state scientists perform for California and its residents?

This year, the CAPS Board of Directors applied those questions to California's gubernatorial race before supporting Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom. They also considered November ballot measures and then opposed one, Proposition 6, which would have rolled back \$5.2 billion in annual fuel taxes that are dedicated to improving the state's infrastructure.

CAPS endorsed Governor-Elect Newsom for his demonstrable record of support for working people in both the public and the private sectors. His conservative opponent, John Cox, came from a business background and called for cutting government services to give tax breaks to the wealthy.

Cox also supported Proposition 6, which would have eliminated funds to improve state and local highways, bridges, roads and other infrastructure projects. Had it passed, Proposition 6 would not have directly impacted Unit 10 employees, but it would have shifted the costs of infrastructure projects to the General Fund -- which also pays state scientists' salaries and benefits.

The voters agreed with CAPS on both counts. Lt. Governor Newsom was selected on sixty percent of the ballots cast. He will take the oath of office on January 7. Meanwhile, fifty-five percent of voters rejected Proposition 6, guaranteeing that infrastructure improvements will continue to be funded by drivers instead of pulled from funds that could be used to compensate state scientists and fund the important programs they operate.

You can see the CAPS' November 6 General Election "scorecard" on the CAPS website, [www.capsscientists.org](http://www.capsscientists.org).

The next governor hasn't promised that he will work with CAPS to solve salary inequity. When Governor Newsom becomes state government's highest official, he will face many challenges: affordable housing, access to affordable health care, homelessness, the tense relationship with Washington, D.C., water infrastructure, and more.

But for CAPS, the priorities will remain the same: equitable salaries, pension protection, and good benefits for employees and retirees. Meanwhile, seventeen other bargaining units will undoubtedly share the same issues as they get first crack at negotiating a contract with the Newsom administration next year. CAPS, because its contract runs through mid-2020 with two guaranteed salary increases, can carefully watch those talks -- and determine strategy for the Bargaining Team's next turn at the table.

# Policing the New MOU

Ratification of the tentative agreement on October 11 means a new MOU is in effect retroactive to July 1, 2018, and expiring July 1, 2020.

During this contractual time frame, CAPS will work to ensure that the provisions of the agreement are fully enforced and that members receive every single benefit to which they are entitled. YOU can help by alerting your Local CAPS Rep, elected Board member or CAPS staff about alleged violations. **Be VIGILANT!**

Here is a summary of many of those contract provisions:

**Salaries: Every** State Scientist will receive a 5% General Salary Increase July 1, 2019, and another 5% GSI July 1, 2020.

**Educational Pay Differential:** A 3% pay differential for a Ph.D. (or greater) required by virtue of a member's state classification, or a 2% pay differential for a for a Master's Degree required by virtue of a member's state classification, is due with the November 2018 pay period. This differential will not be considered compensation for purposes of retirement contributions, and thus will not affect the retirement calculation. On the plus side, the differential won't have 8% deducted as the employee share of the retirement contribution.

**Diving Pay:** Approximately 28 CDFW divers will have their diving pay stipend increased from \$12 per hour to \$25 per hour **for the entire 8 hour day** when one or more dives occurs. For divers who perform dozens or hundreds of sanctioned dives per year, the amount of this increase could result in more than \$10,000 in annual income.

**Recruitment and Retention Differential-State Prisons:** State Scientists in eight state prisons including Avenal, Ironwood, Calipatria, Centinela, Chuckawalla Valley, Pelican Bay, California Correctional Center and High Desert Prison will receive a \$200 increase in this annual differential.

**Emergency Pay for Veterinarians and Staff Toxicologists:** Licensed Veterinarians and Staff Toxicologists at the Departments of Food and Agriculture, and Fish and Wildlife, are eligible to earn overtime during declared emergencies effective July 1, 2018. Such Scientists are normally exempt from overtime earnings and have in the past donated dozens and at times hundreds of hours doing emergency work without **any additional** compensation.

**Health, Dental, Vision:** All CAPS members will receive the continued benefit of the "80/80" employer contribution formula towards health benefits. This means 80% of the average premium of CalPERS' largest four health plans for state Scientists, and 80% towards the premium for dependents.

**Health Plan Vesting Eliminated:** This MOU provides for the full 80%/80% contribution for all new hires effective July 1, 2018. Those subject to the vesting schedule can expect an adjustment retroactive to July 1.

**Retiree Dental Benefit Vesting:** Unit 10 members must work 15 years to receive half of the state retiree **health benefit** and 25 years to receive the full **health benefit**, with a 5% increase for every year in between. Beginning in 2019, this vesting schedule also would apply to dental benefits during retirement for **new hires** only. It reflects ever-increasing costs and a workforce that is working longer.

**Business and Travel Reimbursements:** Reimbursement rates will be adjusted consistent with CalHR policy statewide and will automatically apply to all State Scientists. The lodging reimbursement rate for San Francisco increases to \$250.

**Uniform Replacement Allowance:** Scientists required to wear uniforms will see an increase in the reimbursable amount, from \$450 to \$670 annually for full-time employees, and from \$190 to \$335 annually for part-timers. This applies to Scientists at Fish and Wildlife, Forestry and Fire Protection, and Parks and Recreation.

**Safety Footwear:** Reimbursement for required safety footwear increases from \$200 to \$275 every two years.

**Retirement Increase Cost Sharing:** In 2019-20 and 2020-21, the agreement increases employee pension contributions by up to 1 percent of pay, depending on the CalPERS determination of normal costs. The employee contribution would return to current levels in 2021-22. This amount is not expected to increase more than 0.5% during the entire term of the MOU.

**Changes to Retiree Health Benefit Prefunding:** In 2019-20 and 2020-21, if the actuarially determined normal costs to prefund retiree health benefits increase or decrease by more than 0.5 percent, the employer and employee contributions to prefund these benefits would be adjusted so that each pays one-half of total normal costs. The employee contribution would return to previous levels in 2021-22.

**Duration:** The MOU is effective July 1, 2018, and terminates July 1, 2020. Negotiations with the next governor will commence as early as January 2020, 13 months from now.

If you have questions about any of these new provisions, about the MOU in general, or any concerns regarding the terms and conditions of scientists' employment, contact CAPS: [caps@capsscscientists.org](mailto:caps@capsscscientists.org)



# Congratulations Governor-Elect Gavin Newsom!

*by Patty Velez, President*

Former speaker of the US House of Representatives Tip O'Neill once famously said that "all politics is local." By that he meant that important decisions made by politicians better deliver for people in the district, at the local level. If you don't deliver you will soon find yourself looking for something else to do.

Politics is also relative. There has never been a perfect candidate for office, including for Governor of California. Candidates are viewed through the prism of personal preference, their position on social issues, their fiscal approach, political party affiliation and so much more.

I understand that every State Scientist has a political "prism" that guides how he or she votes. No doubt there were votes cast for many of the candidates on the ballot, Democrat, Republican, Green, Independent, and more.

But in this election, there were only two viable candidates for Governor, and I am grateful and relieved that Gavin Newsom, not John Cox, will be our next Governor.

In a relative sense, Newsom is much better for State Scientists when it comes to the issues most important to CAPS. For purposes of the environment, our salary, our retirement, our health benefits, and our workplace protections, Gavin Newsom was clearly the better choice. That's why CAPS endorsed Newsom, and urged you to vote for him. Newsom has a solid record of supporting workers in both the public and private sectors. Cox is an Orange County businessman whose priorities are with business interests. That's not to say Newsom will be a pushover for State Scientists or other state employee groups on pay and

benefits. But I expect more from him than Jerry Brown. With continued growth in the economy and positive tax receipts, there is room for addressing and correcting the longstanding salary inequities that affect us all. So in a relative sense, I believe we are MUCH better off with Gavin Newsom as governor.

We will all soon learn more about the near term objectives of our new Governor. He has begun selecting key players of his Administration. We have a particular interest in his choices for who heads his Department of Human Resources (CalHR), and the agencies and departments that employ State Scientists. We have offered our collective expertise and assistance to

Governor-Elect Newsom, especially on scientific and environmental issues, where we have expertise.

We will also have an opportunity to watch

how Governor-Elect Newsom and his representatives interact with the other state unions such as SEIU, which are first up at the bargaining table. Our pay and benefits are set for the next two years. While the increases don't go far enough in closing our equity gap, they are guaranteed.

So it's time to look forward and plan for the future. That means completing the reclassification project for all State Scientific classifications, fending off expected challenges to our defined benefit retirement plan on the 2020 ballot, and preparing for successful contract bargaining in the Spring of 2020.

As long as we remain committed to working together for common goals, and maintain our membership in CAPS, hopefully we will succeed!

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## CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SCIENTISTS

455 CAPITOL MALL, SUITE 500  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

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### What's Inside?

Newsom Wins...  
Proposition 6 Fails!

Policing the New  
MOU

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## Media Update

CAPS continues to promote the important work of State Scientists. Interest in work related to the CDFW animal forensics laboratory located in Sacramento -- currently slated for stories later this month or next by Spectrum News Los Angeles, The Sacramento Bee and The San Francisco Chronicle -- has also drawn interest from the Los Angeles Times.

Spectrum News Los Angeles is working on a story about CAPS Member Ashley Spicer, a Fish & Wildlife forensic scientist in the department's Sacramento crime lab. Spectrum News is a 24-hour state and local news channel that has been airing in major markets on the East Coast. The channel's Sacramento bureau reporter contacted CAPS seeking ideas and sources for a story about women in science. CAPS facilitated the connection between the reporter and the department, after soliciting the member's involvement. Video shooting at the CDFW lab has occurred. An "on-air" date has not yet been scheduled.

CAPS Member Mia Roberts is profiled as October's Featured Scientist by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. As an environmental scientist for CDFW's Office of Spill Prevention and Response in Fairfield, Mia is part of a team that responds to oil spills throughout the Bay Area. Thanks, Mia, for your service and for representing the important work that CAPS members perform daily!

ALL State Scientists are encouraged to forward story ideas: [caps@capsscientists.org](mailto:caps@capsscientists.org)

