



Federal Furloughs Highlight Value of CAPS' Bargaining, MOU

If you've been working for the state six years or more, you might have had "furlough flashbacks" during the federal government's 35-day partial shutdown in December and January.

Remember 2009? Remember when Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger balanced the State Budget on the backs of state employees with three-days-per-month furloughs? Remember how the policy forced some state employees to choose between rent and food? Remember how some state employees had to work on their furlough days without pay because their jobs were deemed too vital to leave undone, but not so vital to be fully funded? Remember the insecurity, the stress, and the anger?

A new version of furlough follies recently surfaced at the federal level when 800,000 federal workers were told to stay home while the politicians in Washington, D.C., fought over the budget for more than a month. Soon, familiar stories emerged: Government employees in food lines. Unpaid public servants forced into unbearable choices. Hardworking people, whose jobs should be the most secure, forced to confront insecurity.

It illustrated yet again how public employees -- local, state, or federal -- can wind up taking the hits for their employers' political fights. And when your employer is the government, where can you go for protection? Who will stick up for you?

The answer for everyone in Bargaining Unit 10 is CAPS. Since 2013, CAPS negotiators have insisted on contract language that guarantees the state cannot impose unpaid time off. Here's what the 2018 - 2020 MOU says:

"The State shall not implement a furlough program or a mandated Personal Leave Program during the duration of this Memorandum of Understanding."

Federal employees' collectively-bargained contracts don't include a furlough-protection provision. Congressional lawmakers have talked about crafting a legal guarantee to fund payroll in the event of future shutdowns, but no one will be surprised if the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) insists on furlough negotiated protections.

With the power of collective bargaining, that's what CAPS did years ago. And it's the kind of representation CAPS will continue with members' strong support.

CalPERS Picks President and Vice President

The CalPERS Board of Administration in January elected Henry Jones as president and Theresa Taylor as vice president. The offices each have one-year terms.

Jones was elected to the Board seat representing retirees in 2007 and is in his third term. This will be the first time he takes on the important role of president of the system. Before retiring from public service in 1998, Jones worked as the chief financial officer for the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Taylor was elected to the Board seat serving state employees in 2014 and was reelected last year. She has worked for the State of California for 20 years and currently serves as a compliance representative for the Franchise Tax Board. She previously served as vice president/secretary-treasurer of the Service Employees International Union Local SEIU 1000 and on the board of the California State Employees Association (CSEA).



Henry Jones

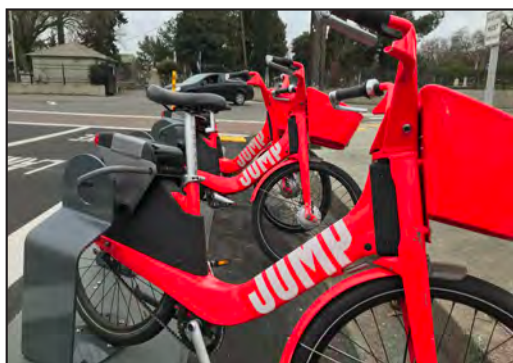


Theresa Taylor

CAPS supported Jones and Taylor in their campaigns for the Board and wishes both success in their new leadership roles.

State Reimburses Bike Share Business Travel

The California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) says that JUMP Bikes and electric scooters come under the same travel reimbursement policies as shared bicycle services. CalHR recently made the policy clear in [Section 2201 of the Human Resources Manual](#) (available online at <http://hrmanual.calhr.ca.gov>) after fielding questions from state employees in Sacramento, San Francisco, and other cities where shared, electric, two-wheeled vehicles have become common.



Reimbursement for transportation, according to CalHR rules, "will be based on the method of transportation that is in the best interest of the state, considering both direct expense and the employee's time."

If an employee chooses a mode of travel that is not the least costly, not a typical method of transportation, or is not "in the best interests of the state," the reimbursement is limited to "only the amount that would have been reimbursed had the employee traveled using the least costly method."

The state "strongly encourages" electric bike, electric scooter, and bicycle users wear a helmet.

CAPS Member Spotlight

Veterinarian and CAPS member Dr. Everardo Mendes enforces California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) regulations at "custom slaughterhouses" with a sensitivity to ethnic communities' needs as he teaches operators how to produce wholesome, safe meat products.

Custom slaughterhouses prepare meat and poultry for sale according to the special cultural and religious food requirements of their customers. Dr. Mendes inspects these small specialty businesses and guides them to follow state food regulations while still observing their traditions.

He teaches custom slaughterhouse operators about animal anatomy, disease identification and control, sanitation and preparation, all with sensitivity to the ethnic necessities of each business. To become licensed, operators must pass both written and hands-on tests.

An avid photographer and videographer, and fluent in several languages, Dr. Mendes applies those skills at work. He has created bilingual training materials with photos and videos. CDFA's annual Avian Health calendar has featured his pictures, and others are in New Castle disease handouts distributed in Southern California. To highlight the crucial role of food-safety veterinarians, Dr. Mendes made a YouTube video about custom slaughter.



Dr. Everardo Mendes (right) trains Ahmad Karaoui on postmortem inspection at the Nature Bounty plant.

"I love the work I do," he said during a recent telephone interview. "I like the personal contact aspect, supporting diverse communities, and helping people succeed while protecting Californians." You can view the video by clicking [here](#).



CAPS REPRESENTS YOU AT THE CAPITOL

by Patty Velez, President

CAPS took your issues to the Capitol earlier this month, as 16 members visited about 60 Assembly Members, Senators, and their staff during our annual Legislative Day.

This year, your CAPS representatives – I was proud to be one of them – on February 13 delivered three messages: Defend public pensions. Support a bill aimed at ending gender- and ethnically-based pay inequities. And we encouraged them to attend State Scientist Day.

Pensions remain a top concern for your CAPS representatives on Legislative Day. State court cases are challenging a long-held California legal precedent that public pension formulas cannot be downgraded once promised. Anti-pension interests next year will probably resurrect political efforts to curb or end defined-benefit pensions for active state and local government employees.

"... solidarity gave 16 of us the power to approach legislators, look them in the eye, and know they listened..."

Your representatives explained that CAPS members have already agreed to significant pension contribution increases to ensure the long-term viability of CalPERS. They urged legislators to reject pension cutbacks or cutoffs, and to consider the sacrifices members have already made.

CAPS' Legislative Day teams also supported Assembly Bill 271. The measure would require the state to evaluate all civil service classifications and prepare a report by 2020 (and every two years after) on gender and ethnic pay inequities in classifications where women and minorities are underrepresented.

Of course, we also took every opportunity to promote State Scientist Day, planned this year for May 8 on the Capitol's West Steps. For the last 31 years, CAPS has organized the event to highlight the vital work, knowledge, and skills of State Scientists, and to expose thousands of kids to fun, practical aspects of science.

Legislative Day reminded me once again that CAPS is in the people business. We form relationships, first with each other, to harness our collective strength. That solidarity gave 16 of us the power to approach legislators, look them in the eye, and know they listened because CAPS speaks for more than 3,000 State Scientists.



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CAPS Awards Four Grants to Members

One of the many benefits of CAPS membership is highlighted each quarter when the Benefits Committee awards four \$400 professional development grants to deserving State Scientists. Any CAPS member can apply for a grant through www.capsscientists.org. First Quarter, 2019, winners include:

David Lentz, Sr. Environmental Scientist (Specialist), Department of Fish & Wildlife, Sacramento, used the money to partially pay expenses to an Anchorage, Alaska, conference of the American Fisheries Society, where he made a presentation about the status of California Golden Trout during the drought.

Jennifer McDougale, Veterinarian (General), Animal Health & Food Safety Services, Tulare, is using her grant to help with travel and living expenses in Paris, where she will intern for five months with the World Animal Health Organization.

Alejandro Muniz, Environmental Scientist, Department of Food & Agriculture, Norco, is using his \$400 grant to pay part of the registration fee to attend a Southern California conference focused on fighting Citrus Greening disease and the parasitic wasp that spreads it.

Anura Ratnasri, Research Scientist II (Epi/Bio), Department of Health Care Services, Sacramento, used the grant to offset expenses incurred from research on the impact of socioeconomic factors on fetal birth weight.

