

WE USE CAPS

CAPS REACHES AGREEMENT TO END PERSONAL LEAVE PROGRAM 2020



Your CAPS Bargaining Team (CAPS Team) and Governor Gavin Newsom (represented by CalHR) [reached an agreement](#) this month to end the 2020 Personal Leave Program (PLP 2020) and to restore the deferred 5% General Salary Increase (GSI) originally scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2020. Here are the terms:

COMPENSATION

Effective July 1, 2021, the **9.23% reductions to State Scientists' gross salaries will end**, returning wages to the full amount listed in the State's [pay scales](#) as of June 2020. In addition to returning to full pay, on July 1, 2021, all rank-and-file Unit 10 scientists will receive the deferred **5.0% GSI** along with a newly negotiated **2.5% GSI** and an additional increase of **0.13%** due to compounding two separate GSIs, for a total **increase in pay of 7.63%**. As a result, State Scientists' **gross pay** will increase by **16.86%** between June 2021 and July 2021, but take-home pay will differ based on each individual's deductions. Please note that these increases are related to the COVID-19 PLP Side Letter: CAPS is still bargaining for a successor Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

OPEB/CERBT CONTRIBUTION RETURNS AT LOWER RATE

The agreement restarts the employee OPEB contribution, which pre-funds post-retirement healthcare. In July 2020, the employee share was temporarily suspended as part of the PLP 2020 Side Letter Agreement. At that time, State Scientists were contributing 2.8% of pay. Starting July 1, 2021, State Scientists will contribute **only 2.1%**. The deduction is listed as "CERBT" on pay warrants.

RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS CONTINUE AT LOWER RATES

When the CAPS Team negotiated the initial COVID-19 PLP Side Letter Agreement, they ensured State Scientists' pension contributions decreased by 0.5% a year earlier than previously planned. That reduction continues under this new agreement (e.g., 8% of pay for Miscellaneous CalPERS members, instead of 8.5%).

LEAVE CAP INCREASE REMAINS UNTIL 2025

The CAPS Team ensured the Vacation/Annual Leave Cap increases will remain as agreed previously. The Vacation/Annual Leave Cap will remain at 832 hours until 2025, due to the 192 PLP hours received during the past year.

PLP 2020 HOURS DO NOT EXPIRE

While the COVID-19 PLP Side Letter Agreement was silent on whether PLP 2020 hours could expire, the new agreement ensures PLP 2020 hours remain on the books until used.

CHANGES TO VPLP PARTICIPATION

The 2018-2020 MOU, still in effect due to the "Evergreen Clause" in the Dill's Act, allows members to make quarterly modifications to their participation in the Voluntary Personal Leave Program (VPLP). The CAPS Team negotiated provisions that will enable opting

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CAPS BARGAINING TEAM AND STATE RESUME PAY EQUITY DISCUSSIONS



The CAPS Bargaining Team (CAPS Team) has been meeting with Gov. Gavin Newsom's Administration (represented by CalHR) to continue [Interest-Based Bargaining](#) (IBB) with a focus on CAPS' top priority: equitable salaries for State Scientists.

Discussions included [Government Code 19826](#), which requires "that like salaries shall be paid for comparable duties and responsibilities" in state civil service. The CAPS Team also reviewed the long history of inequitable wages paid to Unit 10 rank-and-file employees compared to salaries for Unit 10 supervisors and managers and Unit 9 state-engineer peers.

For in-depth bargaining news, members can read CAPS' regularly updated reports at capsscientists.org/caps-bargaining-updates/bargaining-updates. CAPS also emails bargaining news to members on Tuesdays following bargaining weeks.

Part of the CAPS Team's bargaining strategy presents powerful testimonial letters to CalHR describing how salary inequities impact State Scientists and scientific programs. Read them – and others written over several years – at capsscientists.org/support-bargaining.

Please consider sharing your experience. Write a letter to the CalHR Team, either on your own or with colleagues, detailing the salary-related issues you confront daily. Letters can reveal how inequitable wages affect your personal life, your program's work, your agency's ability to meet its mission, harm to recruiting and retaining scientists, or whatever else you observe or experience. Email your letter to the CAPS Bargaining Team (caps@capsscientists.org). The CAPS Team thanks you for your support.

CAPS ISSUES PRESS RELEASE URGING EQUITABLE PAY FOR STATE SCIENTISTS

Following Governor Gavin Newsom's release of his revised 2021-22 State Budget proposal in May, CAPS issued the following press [statement](#):

CAPS Urges California Governor Newsom to Support Science and State Scientists

The California Association of Professional Scientists has announced its support for Gov. Gavin Newsom's 2021-22 budget proposal to increase spending for scientific programs – and renewed its call for the Administration to provide competitive salaries for state scientists.

"We are thrilled the Governor's budget proposal substantially increases budgets for many state science programs," said CAPS President Margarita Gordus. "But it would be ironic, to say the least, if the Administration continues underpaying the state scientists' who run those programs."

A record state-revenue windfall afforded Gov. Newsom's May Budget Revision the means to propose boosting, for example, the California Natural Resources Agency's budget next year to

\$12 billion. That's up from \$7.5 billion – nearly 60 percent – allocated in the Governor's January budget plan. The California Environmental Protection Agency's budget is \$6 billion under the latest proposal, a 41.6 percent increase from \$4.3 billion the Governor suggested four months ago.

Meanwhile, CAPS is currently bargaining for the state scientists at those agencies and throughout state government whose wages have not kept pace with the market for nearly 20 years. The inequitable pay has turned California's scientific corps into a de facto academy for local government and federal employers routinely paying salaries at least 30 percent higher than state wages for similar work. The pay disparities also put California at a competitive disadvantage when luring scientists to public service.

"Ultimately, underpaying state scientists weakens the very programs the Governor wants to fortify in this budget," Gordus said. "And that hurts the well-being of all Californians, our economy, and our natural resources."

President's Column

Margarita Gordus



BARGAINING ENTERS CRUCIAL PHASE, AND YOU CAN HELP

As highlighted in CAPS' emails and this edition of *CAPSule*, the CAPS Bargaining Team (CAPS Team) reached an agreement with the Newsom Administration to end PLP 2020 on July 1. On that same date, the COVID-19 Recession Recovery Side Letter implements the 5% General Salary Increase (GSI) deferred a year ago, plus other pay increases of 2.63%.

With the 9.23% of pay restored from ending PLP 2020, gross income for State Scientists starting with the July pay period will increase 16.86%.

But I want to be clear: The COVID-19 Recession Recovery Side Letter is not a remedy for pay inequities CAPS members continue to endure. It resets our salaries to where they would have been before the pandemic panicked lawmakers into deeply cutting the State Budget – needlessly, as it turned out.

The CAPS Team remains firmly resolved to bargain equitable salaries for State Scientists. Here's what we are doing:



We frequently meet with CalHR (representing the Governor) at the bargaining table. While salaries have been a subject of discussion since we started bargaining more than a year ago, recent sessions have zeroed in on this topic. It remains the most significant challenge to reaching an agreement.



We issued a press statement, following the Governor's mid-May budget revision, that urged him to match significant funding increases proposed for science programs with appropriate salary adjustments for the scientists who run those programs. You can read the press statement in this issue of *CAPSule*.



We continue to solicit members' powerful testimonial letters about how inadequate State wages negatively impact their lives, hampers their work, and undermines their departments' ability to serve Californians. We share the letters during bargaining to add the voices of inequitably treated scientists to our sessions. Please consider sharing your [story](#) to support the CAPS Team's efforts. The Governor's representatives are listening.



With bargaining entering such a crucial phase, the CAPS Team launched a social media messaging campaign to fortify their efforts at the table. At least twice weekly, posts on Twitter and Instagram advocate pay equity for State Scientists. The messages highlight State Scientists' roles in protecting the environment and California's natural resources, providing food security, and promoting public health. Some of the messages directly address Governor Newsom through his social media accounts, while others use words and phrases sure to get his attention.

Here's how you can help: If you do not have an account, please consider signing up for or downloading the app for [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#). (Facebook users can log in to Instagram without creating a separate account.) Enter @capsscscientists in the search field and, once the homepage opens, click the "FOLLOW" button. Look for posts every Tuesday and Thursday between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to retweet @capsscscientists posts on [Twitter](#), like them on [Instagram](#), or share by copying the posts' links into your other social media accounts, such as Facebook.

On behalf of the CAPS Team, thank you for your support during this key time. Together, we are stronger.

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out of the program **any time** within the first three months after the new agreement goes into effect. That gives members until November 1, 2021, to modify their participation (including starting or stopping) in the VPLP before the option returns to a quarterly schedule.

CAPS PROPOSED RETROACTIVITY TO RECOUP THE DEFERRED PAY RAISE

The CAPS Team vigorously proposed other terms the State declined, such as retroactively restoring CAPS members' deferred 5% GSI to July 1, 2020. The State also rejected "me too" language to ensure that should any other bargaining unit achieve a higher GSI, the State would match it for CAPS. And the CAPS Team pressed the State to retroactively enact the 5% GSI "on the books" to July 1, 2020, then make the payment to members in fiscal 2021-22. The State refused all of CAPS' proposals because the Administration did not want to include non-operational terms in any agreements – another way to say that they would not contemplate retroactivity for any bargaining unit.

NO MEMBER RATIFICATION VOTE IS REQUIRED, SO THE EFFECTIVE DATE FOR THE NEW SIDE LETTER IS JULY 1

This agreement amends the 2020 COVID-19 PLP Side Letter Agreement. It is not a full and final Tentative Agreement for a new successor MOU, so it does not require membership ratification. Side letters are considered ratified once signed by both parties. The terms take effect "the pay period following ratification of the agreement by both parties." CAPS and the State agreed to the Side Letter terms on June 9, 2021. Assuming the State Legislature passes a budget that includes funding for this new Side Letter Agreement and the Governor signs the budget on time, these changes will be **effective July 1, 2021**.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The CAPS Team continues bargaining for a successor MOU with the State's team in Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) sessions with the assistance of a third-party facilitator. As always, fair pay for State Scientists is CAPS' highest priority.

CAPS-SPONSORED STEM FAIR WINNERS TAKE PRIZES IN GLOBAL COMPETITION

Three students whose projects won honors at this year's Sacramento Regional STEM Fair – which CAPS has sponsored for many years – went on to win Grand Prizes in their respective categories at the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in late May. The global competition, considered among the most competitive of its kind anywhere, featured 1,500 virtually presented projects this year.



Ayesha Mahfuz won the 3rd Place Grand Prize in the Sacramento competition before taking 4th Place in ISEF's Plant Sciences category for her research into tomato plant genetics. ISEF judges awarded 2nd Place in Energy, Sustainable Materials, and Design to Jordan Prawira for designing a high-efficiency fan for HVAC systems, which won the 2nd Place Grand Prize in Sacramento. And Jacqueline Prawira's formula for an environmentally friendly alternative to plastic wrap took 2nd Place in ISEF's Materials Science category. Her project won the 1st Place Grand Prize at the Sacramento STEM Fair.

CAPS congratulates the winners and thanks the many members who mentor kids and serve as judges for STEM events statewide.



CALPERS HOSTS MEMBER EDUCATION EVENTS ONLINE

Understanding CalPERS benefits is important whether you are early in your State career or nearing retirement. Until last year, CalPERS held Benefits Education Events (CBEE) around the State that featured informative classes and one-on-one sessions with experts who could answer State employees' retirement questions.

COVID-19 restrictions and public health concerns prompted CalPERS to offer online videos covering retirement benefits, health benefits, and deferred compensation. Members can select to view the information by career stage: early through mid-career or nearing retirement. (The Social Security and myCalPERS & Your Retirement Options classes are designed for everyone.)

CalPERS plans to revive in-person CBEE conferences in 2022 and offer the information online. You can view all of the online materials on CalPERS' Event Classes [webpage](#).