

# CAPSULE

## MEMBERS PICKET AT NEWSOM'S BUDGET PRESS CONFERENCE

Scores of our members made their voices heard on January 10 during Governor Gavin Newsom's State Budget press conference and made so much good noise that *The Sacramento Bee* wrote about our issues in a story published the next day.

Newsom tried to keep the press conference's location hush-hush by announcing it the morning of the event to credentialed members of the Capitol press corps and no one else. Through well-placed sources, however, we figured out when and where the Governor would be. An energetic group wearing CAPS' signature green showed up at the downtown Sacramento office building carrying signs, blowing horns, marching, and chanting for two hours to let Newsom and anyone in the area know State Scientists deserve pay equity!



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# CAPS GRANT



## APPLY TODAY FOR A CAPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

The Member Benefits Committee is accepting applications for **\$500 Professional Development Grants**. The Committee awards up to four grants per quarter to offset the cost for scientific research and professional development activities that the state does not fully reimburse.

The next quarterly application deadline is March 31. For more details about CAPS' Professional Development Grant program and how to apply for this members-only benefit, please go to [capsscientists.org/application/benefits/grant](https://capsscientists.org/application/benefits/grant). Certain limitations apply. Questions? Please contact CAPS staff at 916-441-2629 or [caps@capsscientists.org](mailto:caps@capsscientists.org).

**CAPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of the grant and how it relates to current job: *(use additional sheets if necessary)*

I agree that any funds received by me will be spent for the purpose described.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# IS THIS YOUR YEAR TO VERIFY YOUR DEPENDENTS' ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS?

This is a good time of year for a friendly reminder about the Dependent Re-verification Program (DRV), under which all state employees and retirees with spouses, domestic partners, children, and other dependents enrolled in a state health care plan must provide documentation that those family members are eligible to continue receiving benefits. The DRV process runs on a three-year cycle with rotating deadlines for state employees and retirees to submit eligibility documentation based on their birth month.

According to the State, failure to complete the DRV process will result in the cancellation of health and dental insurance for unverified dependents.

For complete DRV details, including a list of acceptable documents to verify dependency status, please see CalHR's website at <https://hrmanual.calhr.ca.gov/Home/ManualItem/1/1424>. CalPERS also has information at <https://www.calpers.ca.gov/page/retirees/health-and-medicare/dependent-eligibility-verification>.

This table shows the three-year schedule:

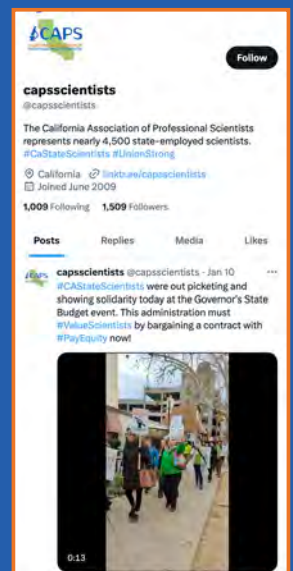
YEAR	2024	2025	2026
EMPLOYEE BIRTH MONTH	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER

# FOLLOW CAPS ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Join the thousands of our members, supporters, and other social media users who follow the latest CAPS news, events, and calls to action via our social media channels on Instagram, YouTube, and X! Share your own messages and build solidarity with members of CAPS and other unions! Connect with colleagues and friends to build support for our cause! Look for capsscientists on Instagram, YouTube and X. See you there!



This Instagram post alerted users to our January 10 "Practice Picket" at Governor Gavin Newsom's State Budget press conference.



See our latest posts on X!

# BUDGET POLITICS WON'T STOP OUR DEMAND FOR PAY EQUITY

Well, here we go again.

Governor Gavin Newsom's State Budget plan for the coming fiscal year forecasts a \$38 billion deficit that he and the Legislature must close. The question for CAPS is, does this affect our demands for a contract that appropriately values State Scientists?

The answer is pretty simple.

No.

That's why, as the Governor was rolling out his proposal for the 2024-25 fiscal year on January 10 in Sacramento, scores of our members were across the street. Fueled by being on the right side of a cause, they carried signs and pickets and loudly criticized Newsom for refusing to bargain a contract to end long-time salary inequities for State Scientists. You can see some pictures from the event on the front of this issue of *CAPSule*.

The Sacramento Bee reported on the picket, and media outlets around California and the nation picked up the story. Once again, our collective voice was heard.

If you follow state politics, you'll hear plenty over the next few months about the budget and the deficit: The economy is weak. Personal income taxes from California's highest earners have dropped. Capital gains taxes have fallen because of slowing investments in tech and rising interest rates. You might hear that there have been fewer business start-ups, which has also tamped down state revenues.

The Governor's budget assumes a projected \$38 billion budget deficit, far less than the \$68 billion shortfall forecast by the Legislative Analyst in December. The Governor proposed closing the gap with spending from reserves, borrowing, "belt-tightening," and delays and deferrals in previously planned spending. It also assumes \$51.2 million in savings from eliminating telework stipends. On the upside, Department of Finance Director Joe Stephenshaw said the budget proposal does not envision furloughs or a Personal Leave Program

(PLP) for state employees.

This does not mean the CAPS Bargaining Team will retreat from our demands for Pay Equity. Over the last two decades, three governors have played the budget/economics card to justify underpaying State Scientists. The essential talking points from the Administration and Department of Finance, which represent the Governor at the table, have remained the same:

- We're in bad times, so we won't help you.
- Bad times are coming, so we won't help you.

Our positions are clear and consistent:

- Climate change, disease, and pollution don't ebb and flow with the economy. Public health can't be bound to Wall Street wealth.
- Californians' right to clean, affordable water and a safe food supply doesn't rise or fall with Newsom's political calculations.
- The Governor has said he supports public policy and programs informed by science.
- Therefore, he must invest in the scientists whose vital work informs those policies and holds those programs together. Pay inequities that have existed since the Schwarzenegger Administration cannot continue.

Investing in fair wages for State Scientists is an investment in the vital science-based programs that confront grave existential issues for California, our nation, and our planet. When Newsom refuses to pay us equitably, he's holding open the door for us to leave – and undercutting those programs.

So, we urge the Governor to act boldly. Return immediately to the bargaining table with an acceptable contract offer that values our service, the environment, public health, and the people of our great state.

We are on the right side of this issue. We will not back down. Together, we will prevail!



# CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SCIENTISTS

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## HELP BUILD OUR STRIKE AND HARDSHIP FUND!

After nearly four years of bargaining, CAPS made history on November 15-17, 2023, by becoming the first California state employee union to go on strike against a governor. Our demand was simple: Governor Newsom, bargain a contract that appropriately values State Scientists!

That momentous action prompted the creation of the California State Scientists Strike Support and Hardship Fund to help offset some of the wages we lost when we stood up to the governor. It paid out thousands of dollars to courageous members who were determined to have the greatest need.

That was just the beginning. Through GiveButter.com, we are continuing to build the fund to support future job actions. As the account grows, it strengthens our capacity to advocate for better wages and working conditions.

We don't want to strike again, but we must be ready! So share <https://givebutter.com/StateScience> on your social media posts or donate to it yourself, if you have the means. Each dollar makes us stronger.

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