



# CSLEA ALERT

October 5—October 19, 2009

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## Special legislative sessions to start *Furlough bills on hold until January*

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has until Oct. 11 to sign bills the California Legislature sent to him at the conclusion of its regulation session, but lawmakers will be back in Sacramento only two days later to begin one of two special sessions he has called on education and tax reform. And there could be others on water and prison reform.

The first half of the 2009-2010 legislative session was almost entirely dedicated to surgical work to stop the state's hemorrhaging of red ink, but it left undone many other important matters, especially for state employees. At the prodding of CSLEA's lobbying team, two vital bills were introduced in the last week of the regular session aimed at reducing the anxiety of future furloughs and clarifying furlough scope.

- Assembly Bill 181, sponsored by Assembly Speaker Karen Bass and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg would reduce furloughs from three days to two, by allowing the governor to make unallocated cuts to state spending equivalent to the amount of one furlough day.
- Assembly Bill 1215, authored by Assemblyman Hector De La Torre, would exempt all special fund agencies from inclusion in furloughs, because there is very little or no savings for the general fund.

Neither bill was brought up for a vote in the final week, but they will be discussed at length during the interim and heard when the Legislature reconvenes beginning on January 4. The governor is opposed to any legislation that reduces his furlough order, so there is a steep hill still to climb in getting Assembly Bills 181 and 1215 passed and having the governor's almost certain veto overridden. There also remains the possibility of winning the governor's approval by

sweetening the bills with something even more for him.

Because CSLEA members are found in both general funded and special funded agencies, it will be taking a leading role among other bargaining units in working for passage of these two measures.

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### **The San Diego Union-Tribune.**

**September 26, 2009**

#### **Brown hints about political future**

**"... The 71-year-old once and possibly future governor, who has been coy about whether he plans to try to return to the job he held a generation ago, lamented how California's chronic budget deficit is likely to get worse as federal stimulus money runs out, temporary tax increases expire and money borrowed from schools and local government has to be repaid. 'People ask, who's going to be the next governor? You have to ask who in their right mind would want to be the next governor?' Brown jokingly suggested the job is ideally suited for somebody at the end of a political career. 'Anybody who thinks that they're going to be governor and going to have a great future doesn't know what's going on in Sacramento. You want somebody to take that job who has no future.' "**



Sept. 24, 2009

## Union contracts for state workers remain in limbo

**Most of California's unionized state employees are working under expired contracts and there appears little likelihood that new pacts will be negotiated in the near future. A tangle of lawsuits and a bad economy, among other factors, could even push back a resolution into next year. Twenty of the state's 21 bargaining units are operating under old contracts.**

**... The largest state workers' union, the 92,000-member SEIU Local 1000 which encompasses nine of the 21 bargaining units, negotiated a contract with the Schwarzenegger administration but that pact was snared in budget issues and Capitol politics, and it has not yet received legislative approval. The Legislature is in recess and doesn't resume session until January, although if contract agreements are reached, Gov. Schwarzenegger could call a special session to consider them.**

**... The longest-expired contract covers the California Correctional Peace Officers' Association, the state prison guards, whose pact expired in 2006. The 31,000-member CCPOA and the Schwarzenegger [administration] failed to reach agreement on a new contract, and the officers are now on the job under state-imposed conditions. Of 7,000 layoffs announced by the governor, most are in Corrections.**

## Contract Update

As the excerpt from the *Capitol Weekly* story to the left makes clear, CSLEA -- like all but one of the state's 21 bargaining units -- remains without a contract.

Given this historically unprecedented time the state of California finds itself living in at the moment, being without a contract is not necessarily a bad thing—as strange as that may seem.

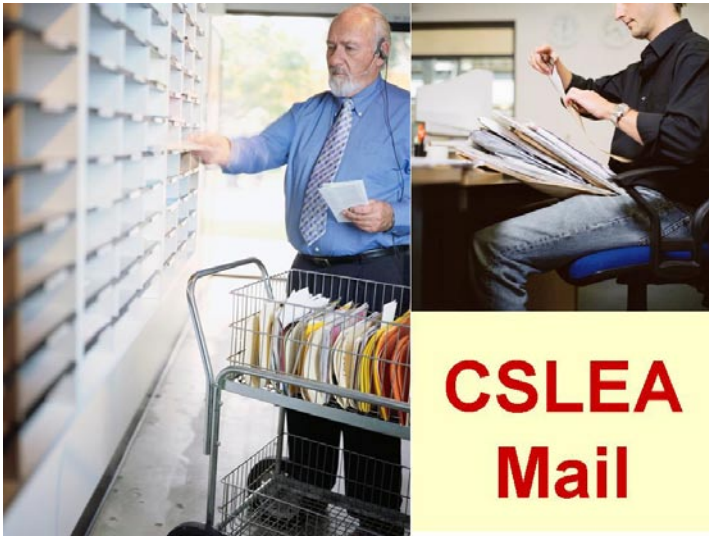
“If all the other side wants to talk about is take-backs, why meet?” says CSLEA President Alan Barcelona. “If, for instance, all the Department of Personnel Administration wants to discuss are so-called ‘reforms’ that only mean less salary and benefits, you can see how easily it would find us speaking in a foreign language when we want to negotiate higher salaries, better benefits, and improved working conditions.”

Discussions with DPA are going on all the time, as CSLEA continually tends to the case-by-case problems



of its membership, but talks on basic salary and benefits have – as with 19 other bargaining units – come to a stand still. And that will remain so for almost all state employees until the economy turns around.

“We can see what’s coming down the pike not only with DPA, but even more importantly, with some ballot initiatives brewing out in the public—and that is a frontal assault on our pensions,” said Barcelona. “Protecting the retirement and healthcare we’ve justly won and justly deserve will require all our resources. If there comes that chance when we can re-address the recruitment-and-retention issues we were close to solving before the recession of 2008 walloped the nation, we will do so in a second, and I believe the professional and above-board working relationship we’ve developed with DPA will serve us better than the antagonistic stances other associations have adopted.” Until that time, however, a continued operation under the old contract is not the worst things for our members, said Barcelona.



insurance policy. You hope to never have to use it, but it is there if you need it.

The economics of reducing dues doesn't add up. If we reduced dues by 13.8 percent, roughly the amount of lost wages from three furlough day, your savings would only be about \$10.35 out of the roughly \$75 a month most members pay. But that \$10.35 multiplied by 7,000 CSLEA members comes to \$72,000 a month, or \$864,000 a year.

So cutting dues by \$10.35 loses CSLEA nearly a million dollars damages our ability to protect our retirement and benefits and eliminates the only legal team in Sacramento dedicated solely to protecting the rights of CSLEA members.

## Pension Update

As we reported in the last issue of the CSLEA Alert, attempts by a rather clownish and cranky retired Santa Monica accountant to gather enough signatures for a ballot initiative asking voters to allow state and local governments to amend pension contracts without negotiations has failed.

But an even greater threat is building and gathering steam fast. The so-called California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility will soon start gathering signatures for its Public Employee Benefits Reform Initiative for the November 2010 ballot.

As reported in the *Orange County Register*, "It's the brainchild of Keith Richman – physician, former Republican assemblyman and longtime advocate for overhauling the state's pension system – who thinks now is the time to strike ... The foundation is revising the text of its 2007 initiative to reflect 2009 realities. In coming weeks, it will post a new version online and invite people to weigh in with suggested changes – including employee unions."

CSLEA President Alan Barcelona said protecting his members' retirement and benefits are Priority 1 for his association from now through 2010. "If the economy does not improve, if government gridlock continues over the next budget, if another initiative calling for a return to a part-time legislature also makes it on the ballot, I worry voters will stream to the polls in a damn-them-all mood and pass Richman's initiative unfairly punishing state workers."

**Q.** Times are tough. Why can't CSLEA reduce my dues until the economy turns around?

**A.** A reduction in dues would expose CSLEA members to loss of legal protection and raids on their retirement and benefits.

First, the governor wants our pensions. He badly wants to chop the 3-percent-at-50 formula for peace officers and firefighters down to 2.5-percent-at-55 and cut the 2.5-percent-at-55 formula for public safety employees to 2-percent-at-60. But through its political action committee, CSLEA has supported legislators who are philosophically aligned with our views on pensions. If dues are cut, we hamper our ability to support candidates who see things through a similar lens as we do.

Second, CSLEA's legal/labor representatives are the envy of all 21 state bargaining units. When you call CSLEA for a question regarding the contract or there is a disciplinary action being taken against you, CSLEA is the only state employee union where you get an attorney every time you phone. Not a referral to an outside attorney, but a CSLEA staff attorney. Not SEIU, not CCPOA, not even CAHP provide their members with this type of legal counsel and labor representation.

In the past month alone, CSLEA's legal team was able to reverse the dismissal of three members. With the state laying off 7,000 people and furloughing managers and employees alike, tensions are running high and morale is at an all-time low. This has increased disciplinary actions against staff. Your dues are like an

# Meet Your CSLEA Field Representative

***In addition to its own in-house legal team, CSLEA also has four field representatives to handle member needs, ranging from help with a difficult supervisor to reminding them of their many benefits to being a CSLEA member. They travel long distances, spend many sleepless nights at discount motels, and have stomachs constantly sloshing with slices of Domino's pizza and Safeway cola, and they are of incalculable value to CSLEA members. This edition of the CSLEA Alert profiles **Chris Scrimiger**. Future issues will profile Richard Cota, Dave Fernandez, and the newest member of the team, John Knight.***

The pleasant and friendly demeanor Chris Scrimiger greets everyone with belies this former Army drill sergeant's determined drive to deliver the best member services for CSLEA's CALEE affiliate.

"All of our field representatives are top notch," said CALEE President and CSLEA Controller Ricardo Sanchez, "but Chris's particular qualities are a perfect fit for the wide range of jobs our CALEE members perform in every far-flung part of California."

Scrimiger brings a first-hand knowledge about the needs of the CALEE members he serves, having spent 26 years in employment with the state of California.

Even before that, however, the interaction of people to one another and with the organizations they labor under was the career path he started on and continues to this day, first as a drill sergeant with the U.S. Army at Fort Ord and immediately afterwards as a social worker in the hard-scrabble city of Richmond in Contra Costa County.

After leaving social work, Scrimiger started state service in 1980, first as a deputy real estate commissioner, next as a special investigator for the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and ending as an investigator for the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, where he spent 20 years.

Scrimiger grew up in Concord (Contra Costa County) and graduated from San Jose State University in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in History.

Along his work life, he also graduated from the Golden West peace officers' academy, served as an FBI-certified range master and background investigator, and was active in the AMVIC affiliate of CSLEA, serving as its vice president and secretary from 1999 to 2006. He has been a CSLEA field representative since 2006.



Scrimiger and his wife, Vanessa, make their home in Cambria, San Luis Obispo County, and have two sons.

One connection that remains unbroken to his past is his season tickets with the San Francisco 49ers pro football team, which he has had since 1969, when they played at Kezar Stadium.

It was there that he started witnessing all the infinite varieties humanity has to offer, such as the nearby man who had two season tickets, one for himself and one for his beer cooler.

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