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## Henry Jones Coasts to Victory in CalPERS Retiree Seat Election

Henry Jones beat J. J. Jelincic for the retiree seat on the CalPERS Board of Administration in a heavily contested election in September 2019. Jones received 76,570 votes (65.8%); Jelincic received 39,495 votes (34.2%).

Henry Jones is currently the board's president and is completing his third four-year term as a member. He retired from the Los Angeles Unified School District as its chief financial officer and was endorsed by former Gov. Jerry Brown and several SEIU locals in the race. Jelincic formerly worked for CalPERS and served 8 years on the board. He recently retired and was running for the retiree seat. Jones' four-year term will run from January 16, 2020 to 2024.

Jelincic was outspoken in criticizing how the board governed CalPERS when he served previously. He criticized the current CalPERS approach of allowing staff to make important decisions, with the board's role being to ratify them with little or no discussion. He received the endorsements of the Retired Public Employees' Association (RPEA) and California State Retirees (CSR). CSU-ERFSA initially endorsed Jelincic, but after renewed allegations of past instances of sexual harassment were raised in the race, the executive committee withdrew the endorsement, electing to make no endorsement in the race. In 2011, Jelincic was sanctioned for discourtesy toward three female

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## State Council Meets in San Jose - Emphasizes Increasing Membership

By Harold Goldwhite, CSU-ERFSA Executive Director

The State Council of CSU ERFSA met in the library of the San Jose State campus on October 5, 2019. Attendance at the State Council meeting was smaller than at other recent meetings, and only 14 campuses were represented. Since the State Council is the association's principal policy-setting group, and the association reimburses a delegate from each affiliate to attend its meetings, it is important for affiliates to ensure that they are represented.

Throughout the meeting there was continuing emphasis on increasing membership, spearheaded by the report from the membership committee. Affiliates will be receiving requests to increase their membership recruitment activities. The treas-

urer recommended, and the council approved, a line item amount to be used by campuses to promote a social membership recruitment activity on each campus. The association is also pursuing other

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### Pocket Calendar Final Notice

For 2020 and later, the pocket calendar will be sent ONLY to those who have opted in - please notify the office at the email, phone, or address on page 2 if you would like to continue receiving the calendar.

CSU-Emeritus and  
Retired Faculty and Staff  
Association  
[www.csuerfsa.org](http://www.csuerfsa.org)

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2019-2020

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The Reporter welcomes submissions by members of CSU-ERFSA or other appropriate individuals of advertisements for academically oriented materials or services, to be printed at the discretion of the editor. To contact the editor, email

[tanagno@calstatela.edu](mailto:tanagno@calstatela.edu).

## From the President...

Dear Colleagues,

Summer is now officially over, and fall is upon us. Unlike when I was an active faculty member, I no longer mark the days by my course schedule, but rather by what doctors appointments and meetings I have. The good news is that I no longer have to grade exam papers, essays, and course projects (I never really embraced Scantrons as I did not think the world was multiple choice).

I hope that the recent wildfires and associated power outages have not affected you greatly. I have seen more sales on generators than in past years, but generators are not a good long-term solution for the failure of our electricity providers to properly maintain their equipment.

We had our fall State Council meeting at SJSU on October 5th. Executive Director Goldwhite has a report on the meeting elsewhere in this issue of *The Reporter*. Of special note, we did elect Bob Girling (SO) to the legislative committee and Don Wort (EB) to the grants committee. Alan Wade (SAC), who has been chairing the legislative committee for several years, has expressed an interest in stepping down as committee chair, and we hope that Bob can fill his shoes.

It is always nice for CSU-ERFSA members to get together, see old friends, and share ideas. One thought I had was to use the CSU-ERFSA website to publicize campus meetings that may be of interest to retired faculty from other campuses. After conferring with our webmaster Mark Shapiro and office manager Melanie Mamakos, we have decided to launch a new feature "Around the State." This feature will enable campus chapters to post information on activities which they believe other CSU-ERFSA members will find of interest. Now, I doubt if many ERFSA members who live near Humboldt State University would want to drive to San Diego to attend a talk on a particular topic, but our members may have moved since retirement or will be in the area for vacation and would enjoy going to a particular event. As a new feature, this will roll out slowly and its success depends on the willingness of the campus affiliates to provide the CSU-ERFSA office with this information.

As I mentioned in our September issue, one of our key priorities this year is to rebuild our membership. Executive Director Goldwhite and I have been in contact with several businesses that can offer benefits to our members to make membership even more attractive. For example, I recently had a preliminary meeting with the CEO of Pedego, one of the leading electric bicycle companies in the US (see <https://www.pedegoelectricbikes.com>), to discuss possible discounts on Pedego bicycles for CSU-ERFSA members. I anticipate that Pedego will be offering a 10% discount to CSU-ERFSA members. More details on this will be forthcoming as the relationship is finalized.

However, I continue to believe that the dues collected by CSU-ERFSA are a small price to pay to help ensure that our pensions and health care coverage are protected. If you are reading this and are not yet a member, please call the CSU-ERFSA office (818.677.6522) or go to our web site for more information about joining CSU-ERFSA (<https://www.csuerfsa.org>).

My best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Barry

If you are reading *The CSU-ERFSA Reporter* online and are **not** a member, welcome!

We are glad you are here.

However, we very much need more members. Please consider joining our organization. See "Membership Information" at <https://www.csuerfsa.org>

## CSU-ERFSA Notices

**New Email Address.** The email Address [csuerfsa@csun.edu](mailto:csuerfsa@csun.edu) is now the primary email address for CSU-ERFSA. Any email sent to the old address, [csuerfa@csun.edu](mailto:csuerfa@csun.edu), will be forwarded.

**Change of Address** If you move, please notify the CSU-ERFSA office at the address on the masthead, at left. Thank you.

## Yes on March's Primary Election \$15 Billion Bond

California voters will vote in their presidential primary on Tuesday, March 3, 2020. Since you probably won't receive *The Reporter* before that time, we'd like to point out another issue on that ballot, a \$15 billion school bond issue to fund the construction and refurbishment of schools, colleges, and universities. CSU will split \$6 billion evenly with the community colleges and UC, \$2 billion for each, as part of that bond issue, and it will fund a considerable amount of the refurbishment of our badly-worn campuses. In the legislature, all the Democrats and almost all the Republicans voted to place the bond issue on the ballot.

We urge you to vote. Your presidential primary choice is yours alone, but please consider voting for the bond issue – the CSU system badly needs this money. Governors typically reduce refurbishment money to the minimum, electing to leave it for bond issues. Please vote for this one.

## Get Your Official State Marriage Certificate NOW

Please read the Pre- and Post-Retirement Committee's report, to the right on this page, on the chair's experience having his wife tossed out of their CalPERS health program with little notice. We don't know why CalPERS is being so narrow and bureaucratic about marriage certificates, but they are (They say it's the law, but we know who helped the legislature WRITE the law, so no excuses).

Better yet, complain to Henry Jones, our retiree representative on the CalPERS board. His address is: Mr. Henry Jones, Retiree Representative, CalPERS Board of Administration, 400 Q Street, Sacramento, CA 95811.

You can obtain your certificate from the state official site, which can be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which has a site listing the state vital records offices. It's here: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm>

## Pre-/Post-Retirement Concerns: What Happens When....?

By Tom Donahue, SDSU, Chair, Pre- / Post-Retirement Concerns Committee

*Q: What happens when trouble arises during the re-certification process for your spouse with CalPERS?*

A: When the time comes to re-certify your spouse for retiree health care as supported by CalPERS, a number of us might wonder what happens if your paperwork is denied – after being accepted in previous years. Here is a first-person account of what occurs in such a case. If any of you have experienced this, perhaps this account will be of some help.

What follows is a list of the events as they arose in this matter, numbered in first to last order.

1. First, we submitted the material, marriage certificate and proof of residency, as usual, ahead of the August 1st deadline.

2. Two days before the end of the month, there was a response from CalPERS that our material was found to be "insufficient."

3. After a week or so we received a letter saying that Kaiser dropped my wife from her fifty-one year membership.

4. Less than a week later we were advised that my wife could stay with Kaiser at "nonmember" rates. This was later amended to place her in the Kaiser Senior Advantage Program, but it is my understanding, absent support from CalPERS, that we would pay for everything that Medicare would not cover.

5. A phone call to CalPERS revealed that our wedding certificate was a "church copy," and the criteria require an embossed state seal of Ohio on the marriage certificate. I have not yet located that particular criterion on a CalPERS website.

6. A purchase from the web (no advertise-

ments here, but the company involved is the first one that comes up when you Google a request for copies of a marriage certificate) guaranteed an embossed state seal in about a month.

7. The newly purchased certificate with an embossed seal was received in the mail two weeks early and sent off.

8. We received a letter from CalPERS on August 28 saying that my wife was now "verified" and "approved for continued enrollment in the CalPERS Health Benefit Program."

**We had to call CalPERS to learn that our marriage certificate was invalid because it was not an official State of Ohio copy, with an embossed state seal. We can find no mention of this criterion on the CalPERS web site.**

9. But on the September payday we received \$135 less—the amount CalPERS sends to help with Medicare expenses. This deduction has continued through October.

10. We next received a chilly letter from Kaiser announcing that we were now no longer eligible and were dropped from the Medicare program.

11. I should report that at all times, however, people on the telephone from CalPERS and Kaiser were scrupulously polite, successfully coping with my inexpertly-veiled anger during this process.

An account of one experience in this matter of course is not a statistical sample. Our committee would appreciate hearing from anyone else who went through something similar this year. My wife and I have spent time wondering who at CalPERS decided to opine that our original document was insufficient, thus implying that our fifty-one year marriage had a taint of fraud about it. But we are glad the document season is over for this three-year span, although my wife said that "The stress and fretting over this thing has taken three years off my life." Please send questions and comments to: donahue\_thomas@ymail.com

# Kidney Failure: Our Experience, How It Could Affect You

## By Robert Girling, Professor Emeritus, Sonoma State University, and Sherry Keith, Professor Emeritus, San Francisco State University

It was a stormy evening in May 2010. I was just leaving my office to walk to my classroom on the Sonoma State University campus. Suddenly my cell phone rang. It was an urgent call from my daughter who said, "Dad, John just called me. He's on his way to the emergency room in Reno."

When I arrived at home, my wife, a faculty member at SFSU, was ready to leave for Reno. When we arrived at the hospital in Reno, we found our twenty-four-year-old son resting in a light-filled room. He wasn't in pain, but like us he was very concerned with the turn of events. As we waited for a doctor to arrive, we recounted the events of the preceding year. Six months earlier when visiting us in Berkeley, we heard the sound of his retching and noticed that he had lost quite a bit of weight. We suggested that he visit his childhood doctor, who at that time pronounced him in good health.

Then the doctor arrived at his hospital room. A tall, athletic man in his mid-forties looked at us seriously, "I have to deliver some very bad news," he began. "Young man, your creatinine level is dangerously high; a heart attack level of danger. It looks to me like you have kidney failure and need to begin dialysis immediately. I'm going to arrange for you to begin here in the hospital."

We were all in a state of shock. How could this be? John had been healthy and very active all his life. "He just went to his family doctor a few months ago. She said everything was fine."

"Did she do a blood test?"

We looked at John "No," he said shaking his head. "Well if she had, it would have revealed right away that his kidneys weren't functioning properly. Currently, his kidneys are working at about nineteen percent of capacity."

Then and there we were plunged into the dark world of kidney failure. We were reeling from his report. How could this be true? What caused this? What are the possible treatments? Is this a temporary condition or worse, a life-time condition? At that moment and for some time to come, we felt almost helpless.

As professors, our approach at this juncture was to try to learn as much as possible as quickly as possible. Kidneys are among our body's most vital and complex organs; they regulate blood volume, excrete acidic wastes, metabolize drugs, balance electrolytes and produce hormones.

Later we met the doctor in the hall. He attempted to answer our worries and concerns: "He could get a kidney transplant from a parent or sibling, or he could wait five years for a deceased donor kidney. He will need to be on dialysis. He can either do hemodialysis in an outpatient lab or peritoneal dialysis at home." What did these words mean? What was the difference?

The next day we met with another nephrologist. The doctor

explained that a transplant would extend and improve our son's quality of life since he wouldn't need to spend 4 or 5 hours on dialysis three or four times each week having his blood cleaned by the machine.

"We need to get him on the national transplant list ASAP," the doctor insisted. A few weeks later, he was referred for assessment for a kidney transplant. The next few years were very trying as we searched for ways to help our son and as he struggled with dialysis and kidney disease. Both of us were tested to see if we could be kidney donors for our son but were rejected. Finally after five years he was able to get a transplant from a deceased donor.

Fortunately, this freed him from dialysis and greatly improved his quality of life. Nonetheless, he must take medication each day for the rest of his life in order to halt rejection of his transplanted kidney. As a successful kidney transplant recipient he is active, works and is able to travel, but still faces a daunting array of challenges in the years ahead. We are hoping by making our experience public, others may be able to better detect and evaluate the various options for dealing with and treating kidney failure.

So what can you do for yourself and your family? Here are four tips:

1. Have regular check-ups and blood tests, and make sure that all members of your family (and friends too), do this also. This will confirm whether your kidneys are functioning as they should. It will also give you a baseline for the future.
2. If you are diabetic or pre-diabetic, take special care to change your diet. Meet with professional nutritionist or naturopath. Diabetes is the main cause of kidney failure in the United States, and it is best controlled by a plant-based diet.
3. Visit the National Kidney Foundation website to find out about kidney disease and transplantation. <https://tinyurl.com/y3z6o7bw>.
4. If you have kidney failure, you may wish to learn about the bio-artificial kidney that is being developed at the University of California, San Francisco. <https://pharm.ucsf.edu/kidney>.

# Health Benefits Report: Medicare Premiums

By David Wagner, CSU-ERFSA Health Benefits Director

**2020 Medicare Premiums.** In November, 2019 you will receive a letter from the Social Security Administration noting your Medicare Part B monthly premium payments for 2020. Please read this letter carefully. The letter will inform you if you will pay higher premiums in 2020 based on income. If your letter notes that you are subject to an income-related monthly adjustment amount (IRMAA) you may be eligible as a CSU retiree to receive reimbursement from CalPERS for part or all of these increased Medicare premium payments. You will receive a letter from CalPERS in November or early December with instructions on how to request Medicare premium reimbursements. The Fall CalPERS newsletter usually contains an article on this topic, which also explains the process for submitting a request to CalPERS.

**Flu Shots.** It seems that as soon as Halloween costumes and candy hit the store shelves flu shot reminders pop up in pharmacies everywhere. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommends that everyone over the age of 65 as well as caregivers get vaccinated against the flu.

In addition to the standard dose flu shot, there is a new high dose vaccine (Fluzone) now available. However, there is a nationwide shortage of this vaccine due to manufacturer delays and at this time health care providers have a limited supply. The CDC does not recommend one type of vaccine over the other. Visit the CDC website at <https://tinyurl.com/y5s6vza3> for additional information.

**Status Update: Long-Term Care Lawsuit.** The judge in the CalPERS long-

term care class action lawsuit (Sanchez v. CalPERS) has moved the scheduled trial date from October 30, 2019 to April 13, 2020 to allow additional time for settlement discussions. *The Sacramento Bee* reported that according to the plaintiffs' attorney, talks will resume in November. It is estimated that total damages claimed exceed \$1.2 billion. Check the CSU-ERFSA website for updates on the lawsuit as well as an archive on past articles on this subject.

**Changed Health Providers?** If you have switched health care providers during the recent open enrollment period, remember that the effective date for the change is January 1, 2020. It may be prudent planning to be sure you have sufficient prescription drugs from your current provider to cover the first few weeks in January during the transition under the new plan.

# CFA Report: CFA Fall Assembly, Prep for Bargaining

By Leni Cook, CSUDH, CSU-ERFSA Liaison to CFA

The fall agenda for CFA began with a leadership workshop on issues facing the union and the scheduling of campus meetings in advance of bargaining a new contract. Although the present contract does not expire until June 2020, the bargaining team has begun its work. Meetings have been scheduled across the campuses where state leaders will discuss how the contract is bargained, what areas of teaching are covered, and most importantly, what changes are needed in the next contract. Also, the team has constructed a survey that became available to members in late September to assist them in their upcoming negotiations.

The Fall Assembly meeting of state and campus leaders, including committee and caucus groups, was held October 18-20 in Los Angeles at the Bonaventure Hotel. The health benefits and retirement committees held a joint meeting during the Assembly to discuss the upcoming bargaining and what that could mean for both active and retired members' medical, dental, and vision benefits, which now are fully funded at a basic level for retirees in Medicare and majority funded for those actively employed in the system.

In September, as they have for the past four meetings, CFA leaders and activists spoke at the CalPERS board of administration meeting concerning CalPERS' divestiture of investment in private detention facilities. AB 32, just signed by the governor, requires the state to discontinue funding for private prisons and detention facilities. However, the bill does not prohibit CalPERS from investing in companies that have, as a part of

their business interests, private detention facilities. AB 33, which would prohibit CalPERS and CalSTRS from making or continuing investments in private prison and detention companies, was withdrawn from consideration by the author. It should be noted that CalSTRS has already taken this action. CFA will continue to advocate for CalPERS to follow what CalSTRS has done.

As *The Reporter* was going to press, CFA writes that CalPERS has agreed that pension funds would no longer be invested in prison operators CoreCivic and GEO Group, which operate the largest family migrant detention centers in the nation.

The state legislature is in recess until it begins the second session of its two year term. Bills either sponsored by or endorsed by CFA can be found on the CFA web page under legislation. Clicking on the bill numbers will take the viewer to the legislative information page where it is possible to check status/history, see legislative analyses, and determine if the bill is enrolled (passed for the governor's signature), signed into law, suspended (rolled to second session), vetoed, or cancelled.

The governor signed AB 1320, which requires divestiture from investment by CalPERS in vehicles issued by Turkey, and SB 496, expanding the category of mandated reporting of suspected financial abuse to include broker-dealers and investment advisers as defined. AB 1460, which would require coursework in diversity for CSU graduation, was rolled over to the second session.

# The Social Security Funding Problem

By John G. Kilgour, CSU East Bay ERFSA

When we say “Social Security,” we usually mean the Old Age and Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program. There are many other programs under the Social Security Act of 1935, as amended. They include Unemployment Compensation, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Of these, only SSI is administered by the Social Security Administration.

In 2010, OASDI costs exceeded income for the first time since 1982. However the OASDI and DI trust funds continued to grow because of the payment of interest from the Treasury to the Social Security Administration (SSA).

2019 will be a pivotal year for the OASDI program. It will be the first year since the 1983 amendments (fathered by the Greenspan Commission) that the combined OASDI and DI trust funds will have spent more than they take in. In 2018 total income of the combined OASDI trust funds was \$1,003.4 billion, and total cost was \$1,000.2 billion, resulting in a net increase in asset reserves of \$3.1 billion (down from \$44.1 billion in 2017). Asset reserves will be negative beginning in 2019. If nothing is done to save the program before then, the OASDI trust funds will become depleted in 2034. That’s just 14 years from now. Most of us will still be alive.

If the trust funds become depleted, the SSA will still be able to continue to pay about 75% of scheduled benefits from ongoing employee and employer contributions. A 25% cut in OASDI benefits would be manageable for those of us blessed with a generous defined-benefit CalPERS pension plan. However, it would be devastating for the huge number of people for whom OASDI is their sole or main source of income.

Fortunately, there many things that can be done to rectify the situation. They fall into three categories: (1) increase FICA contributions (taxes), (2) decrease benefits (costs), or (3) some combination thereof. As

of 2018, long-term (75-year) solvency would require (1) a permanent payroll tax increase of 2.78 percentage points, (2) a scheduled immediate and permanent benefit reduction of about 17% for all current and future beneficiaries (or of 21% for those eligible for benefits in 2018 or after), or (3) some combination thereof.

These would be serious measures. They would result an OASDI tax rate of 9.98% for employees and their employers (each) or an average monthly benefit reduction for retired workers and their dependents from \$1,368 to \$1,136.

There are a number of ways that these things could be done. They include (1) increase or eliminate the maximum wage base thereby increasing OASDI contributions on high-income earners, (2) adjust the “bend points” (or add a third bend point) to the benefit formula, (3) increase income taxation on OASDI benefits from the current 85% threshold to 100%, (4) extend OASDI coverage to the 25% of state and local government employees not now covered (mainly K-12 teachers in 15 states—including California—and many police officers and firefighters), (5) reduce the COLA calculations, and (6) further increase the full retirement age above the now scheduled 67.

Social Security’s Office of the Chief Actuary (OACT) has been warning of the OASDI underfunding problem for decades. If those warnings had been heeded and acted upon say 20 years ago, when the underfunding problems were small, the needed solutions would have been less drastic. But, they weren’t. The surpluses in the trust funds allowed our lawmakers to avoid the problem. Unfortunately, the surpluses were not real. There was never any money there.

The law requires that all OASDI revenue not needed to pay benefits and expenses go into the OASDI and the DI trust funds administered by the Department of the

Treasury. .

In return, the Treasury gives the SSA special nonmarketable certificates (IOUs). The Treasury also pays the SSA interest on the amounts on deposit with additional IOUs. These certificates count as assets by the SSA and as debt by the Treasury. For the federal annual unified budget, it’s a wash. They cancel out.

What has the Treasury done with all that money? It spent it, of course. What else could it do? The OASDI surpluses were converted to “spending authority” for other government agencies. In effect, the \$2.9 trillion accumulated surplus allowed the federal government to live beyond its means for 35 years. The OASDI surpluses have masked a big chunk of the federal deficit for the period 1984 through 2018.

**Many things can be done to rectify the situation, in three categories: increase FICA contributions (taxes), (2) decrease benefits (costs), or (3) some combination of the two.**

The surpluses have ranged from \$190.4 billion in 2007 to \$3.1 billion in 2018. Now they are gone. What will we do?

The federal government will have to offset the now-gone OASDI surpluses with increased revenue

by raising payroll taxes (unlikely), cut spending on other government programs (difficult) or borrow more from the public (likely). That, of course, will further increase the national debt. The implications of this will be discussed in a future paper. They’re scary.

Source: This paper is drawn from Kilgour, J.G. (2019). The Social Security Program and Its Funding Problems. *Compensation and Benefits Review*. 2018. Vol. 50(3), pp. 149 - 159.

# Legislative Report: Bills of Interest

## By Leni Cook, CSUDH, Member, Legislative Comm.

The first year of the two year 2019-2020 CA legislative session has ended, and the governor has taken action on all bills presented to him.

Here is a list of some of those bills that are specific to older adults and/or public sector retirees, with very short summaries of their substance:

### Chaptered (Signed by Governor):

- SB 496 – Expands the category of mandated reporters of suspected financial abuse to include broker-dealers and investment advisers as defined.
- AB 32 – Divestiture from private prisons; no investments after 2/2020, removed investments by 2028 (does not apply to CalPERS investments in funds that contain private prison and detention companies).
- AB 1320 – Divestiture from investment by CalPERS / STRS in vehicles issued by Turkey.

**Chaptered** (Signed by Governor; sent to Secretary of State for implementation language consistent with the state constitution):

- SB 228 – Master plan on aging with aging “czar” and 15 member task force to work with state departments and stakeholders to identify policies and priorities for implementation concerning the aging population of CA.

**Vetoed by the Governor** (moved to second session for reconsideration and/or override of veto):

- SB 611 – Establish master plan that responds to population housing needs of older adults and people with disabilities.

Each session of the CA legislature (Assembly and Senate) initiates bills that must be acted on by the end of the second year of a session or die. This means that various bills introduced in the first year may roll to the second year for action. Not all bills carry over, though; bills carry over only if chosen by either the Assembly or the Senate.

For instance, SB 512, which will establish a long-term services and supports benefits board to manage and invest revenue deposited in a trust fund which the bill creates, will continue to be active in the second year.

## CSU-ERFSA New Members

**Fresno** – Brent J. Auernheimer

**Fullerton** – Gayle K. Brunelle\*  
Juda J. Carter  
Gamini Gunawardane  
John D. Liverpool

**Humboldt** – Jeffrey C. Borgeld

**San Jose** – Jeanne C. Sawyer

**San Marcos** – Suzanne P. Lingold

\* Denotes lifetime member.

AB 472, which focuses on public employees retirement reinstatement provisions, will not. A bill *not* carried over will have to be reintroduced and follow the procedures required of a new submission.

Eleven or more bills of interest to older adults and/or public sector retirees may be carried over into the second session, while at least six bills from the same areas are no longer viable or dead.

## State Council Meets in San Jose - Emphasizes Increasing Membership

(Continued from page 1)

incentives to attract new members.

Next year’s pocket calendars, available only to those members requesting them, will be slimmer and lighter than previous versions. Only about 400 will be printed instead of the over 2000 ordered in previous years.

Vice President for Legislative Affairs of the California State Students’ Association (CSSA), Grace Pang, from San Jose State, addressed the council on the subjects of most pressing concern to our students including access to affordable housing; enough food; and health support. CSSA looks forward to working with CSU-ERFSA to achieve these goals.

Faculty Trustee Romey Sabalius, who has just been reappointed by the Governor to a second two year term, also addressed the council. Currently the Board of Trustees is considering budget matters, such as deferred maintenance, enrollment, and executive compensation. The CSU budget is better than in many previous years. The personnel committee recommended, and the

Council approved, the extension of the appointment of the executive director to June 30, 2022.

President Pasternack announced the appointment of three committee members: Diana Guerin of CSU Fullerton to the membership committee, Bob Girling of SO to the legislative committee, and Don Wort of CSU East Bay to the grants committee.

Two past presidents, Blischke and Sinclair, are proposing the establishment of a new standing committee for stimulating and coordinating volunteer activities. The proposal will be shared with affiliates and will be brought back as a formal resolution at a future State Council.

A delegate discussed the activities of the Association of Retiree Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE). The executive committee will consider whether our association should join this group.

CSU-ERFSA wants to thank the San Jose affiliate for their enthusiastic support of this meeting.

# ASCSU Report: A 4th Year of High School Mathematics?

By Barry Pasternack, CSU Fullerton, Emeriti Academic Senator

The first plenary meeting of the ASCSU was held September 19-20, 2019. Given that most of the resolutions the ASCSU considers go through an initial first reading and are not acted upon until a second reading, and all items not acted upon by the end of the academic year do not carry forward to the next year, the first meeting is typically made up of reports and the introduction of new items for consideration at the second plenary meeting.

There are, however, items that due to their importance or timeliness have the rules waived. One such item was the resolution “Towards Implementation of an Ethnic Studies Requirement” (see <https://tinyurl.com/y5qrdwp5>). This resolution calls for the ASCSU to explore with the campuses an ethnic studies requirement for graduation that each baccalaureate student must meet and to seek guidance from the CSU Council on Ethnic Studies and 23 campus senates based on five factors. The deadline for reporting on this was set at November 1, 2019, which was why the item was acted upon at this meeting.

As a brief background on the issue is noteworthy. Assemblywoman Shirley Weber introduced AB 1460 (see <https://tinyurl.com/yyhf6esk>) that would have mandated the inclusion of a 3 unit ethnic studies course as a baccalaureate graduation requirement. Despite the ASCSU’s opposition to the bill (primarily based on our opposition to the legislature’s determining educational requirements for our academic programs) it appeared that

the bill was likely to pass the state Senate. In response to concerns expressed by one of the members of the Senate Education Committee that CSU has been “dragging its feet” on this issue, CSU made a commitment to collect data on ethnic studies requirements for the 23 campuses and to develop a systemwide graduation requirement, if needed.

One of the difficulties in adding a new degree requirement is its impact on high unit majors such as business. For example, at CSU Fullerton, the business degree typically consists of 51 units of general education, 51 units of general business classes and 18 units of classes in a particular concentration. Some of these courses can be “double counted” to permit a student to graduate with 120 units, but it is unclear what effect adding another graduation requirement would have on the time a student needs to graduate. This can be especially problematic if a student earns a transfer AA degree that does not align with the lower division pattern in use at the receiving campus teaching the upper division classes. Additionally while a course in ethnic studies has value for students and society, one must wonder why this is not a requirement for high school graduation.

In addition, at the meeting we heard reports from Faculty Trustee Romey Sabalius, CFA President Charles Toombs, Executive Vice Chancellor Loren Blanchard, Chancellor Tim White, and CSSA Liaison Jacquelyn Acosta. I also gave a brief report about CSU-ERFSA.

We had first readings of the following resolutions:

- Creation of a systemwide searchable database of position openings that could be used by lecturers looking for tenure-track positions,
- Support for the requirement of a fourth year of mathematics/quantitative reasoning as an admission requirement to the CSU,
- Recognizing that the land on many of our campuses had been occupied by native Americans who did not willingly give up their rights to these lands, and
- Developing a systemwide action plan on ethnic studies following the data collection called for in the resolution cited above.

The issue of requiring a fourth year of mathematics/quantitative reasoning was taken up by the Board of Trustees as a first reading item at its meeting of September 24-25. There was substantial opposition to this requirement, primarily around the fact that this could have a negative effect on students who were graduating from districts that would have a difficult time staffing such a program and the roadblock such a requirement may have on minority students. My thoughts on such a requirement are that one option for students should be a course in financial literacy that could incorporate quantitative reasoning. Such a course could be of immediate benefit to all students and high schools probably could get support from companies in the banking, insurance, or brokerage communities, which would mitigate the cost of such a course.

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## Social Security Phone Scams Continue

“Spoofed” Social Security phone scams, where scammers “appear” to be from Social Security and ask for your Social Security number, continue to be reported in California, according to California Health Advocates (CHA).

CHA has received reports of these scams with new twists. In one version, the caller, saying they’re from Social Security, informs you that your Social Security number has been suspended for suspicion of illegal activity. They threaten that if you don’t contact them immediately, your account will be deactivated. In another version, it’s a recorded message from the “Social Security Administration legal department” saying that a case has been filed against you under your SSA number and an arrest warrant issued.

In all variations, scammers are misusing the Social Security Administration’s authority in phone schemes to trick you into giving them money or personal information. They state there is a problem with your Social Security number or account. They claim there as been suspicious or fraudulent activity and you could be arrested or face other legal action. They spoof SSA’s main customer-service telephone number on caller ID. But, don’t believe them, and don’t provide any information. SSA employees will never threaten you for information or promise benefits in exchange for information. In those cases, the call is fraudulent. Just hang up. If you suspect you’ve been contacted by an SSA scammer call the Social Security Fraud Hotline at 1-800-269-0271. You can also report such scams to CHA’s California Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at 1-855-713-7080.

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# PG&E and Fire Safety

By Robert Girling, Sonoma State University

PG&E's impending bankruptcy presents a massive set of challenges to state policy-makers and the people of California. The bankruptcy, which came to a head with the Northern California wildfires, puts state policymakers at a crossroads, and they will have to decide how to move forward. The foremost issue that must be addressed is can PG&E take action to prevent infrastructure-produced wild fires while ensuring that California's communities and businesses have reliable sources of energy?

While PG&E's bankruptcy stems from wildfires sparked within the past few years, state Sen. Bill Dodd has noted that PG&E's "hubris and mismanagement have led to this unfortunate point."

Moving California to an economy of sustainable, clean energy will require broad collaboration. Without question is the necessity that our investor-owned utilities dramatically improve their performance and orientation toward safety.

Whatever strategy is chosen there must be a guarantee that the state's utilities adapt to a rapidly evolving energy market that includes "Community Choice" providers that are committed to sustaining California's drive toward renewable, clean energy. This important topic was discussed at Sonoma State University's annual Sustainable Enterprise Conference.

The company's Chapter 11 filing could be traced to its financial structure. Jamie Court, president of Consumer Watchdogs says, "They care more about profits than public safety."

It is widely argued that the incentives for an investor-owned utility to prevent and respond to fires going forward are simply inadequate. The California Public Utilities Commission found that in the years leading up to the fires PG&E steered \$495 million intended for facilities and maintenance into corporate uses. Investigations by the CPUC and the CalFire determined that PG&E cut corners on equipment upgrades and maintenance, ignored laws requiring the trimming of encroaching vegetation and submitted falsified reports.

According to a recent article in the East Bay Express, the CPUC has considered reshaping the company into a publicly owned utility much like Sacramento Municipal Utility District and Alameda Municipal Power. This could put the engineers who care about making things work rather than financial managers who are riveted on quarterly profits for stockholders in charge of decision making. This would also give the people of California more control over PG&E's management decisions potentially saving lives and millions of dollars in property. Court adds, "it makes sense that a publicly-owned PG&E would care more about homeowners and ratepayers who are endangered by fires."

## Clean Energy and Community Choice.

Could a publicly owned PG&E focus on the electricity system democratization through Community Choice already in progress? Would it invest in local infrastructure that supports rooftop solar and batteries, managed electric-vehicle charging, and smart grid tools to allow customers to use clean power when it's most available and least expensive? Perhaps making PG&E a "wires only" delivery utility, as is the case of public utilities in much of the world, could be an alternative. This would allow the Community Choice entities to use the grid as needed and have the delivery utility be compensated fairly but only for the services it provides, avoiding the perils of investor ownership.

Industry reliability data show that public-owned utilities, which serve about 25% of California's customers, tend to have better reliability, in large part because public owners don't shortsightedly scrimp on maintenance for better quarterly returns. And what's more, customers across the U.S. enjoy rates that are on average about 20% less than investor-owned utility rates

We have models of publicly-owned utilities in Missouri, Texas and Vermont that have already deployed 100 percent renewable electricity systems. Sacramento's municipal utility famously and democratically shuttered a costly nuclear plant, pioneered rooftop solar programs nearly 20 years ago and is committed to ambitious renewable energy deployment.

The CPUC has also proposed dismantling PG&E—dividing its energy production and energy delivery systems. Community Choice energy providers from California are saying the time has come for Pacific Gas & Electric Co. to move out of its retail energy business and be restructured as a "wires-only" company. This would put financial stewardship, responsibility and control over programs such as demand response, energy efficiency, and transportation electrification under local control. Putting the people of California in control of PG&E's management decisions and procedures could put people over profits and ultimately save lives.

Transforming PG&E into a publicly-owned-utility and removing the company from the power generation business will likely require passing state legislation. The California Public Utilities Commission could move the process forward by making it easier for Community Choice agencies, which already serve more than 2.4 million of the 5.4 million customers in PG&E's service territory, to expand.

California's Community Choice policy allows municipalities to take charge of their own energy procurement. Local energy suppliers like Sonoma Clean Power and Marin Clean Energy better reflect local interests, including renewable energy, local power generation, and a desire to align power generation with local economic development.

A growing chorus of analysts maintain that the government needs to ensure that communities have the authority to pursue affordable clean energy. Many will recall that PG&E spent \$46 million of rate payers' money in an unsuccessful attempt to pass Proposition 16 aimed at limiting the creation of Community Choice agencies like Marin Clean Energy and Sonoma Clean Power.

Across the state, 750,000 customers have installed solar to reduce their electricity costs, taking advantage of power production that doesn't require extensive transmission hardware. A publicly-owned utility would be able to pursue public benefit opportunities, such as installing backup batteries with solar panels at key sites like hospitals and fire stations or more elaborate microgrids throughout the state.

We must find a safer way to provide electricity and gas for California's residents in the face of climate change. The old finan-

# Committee Proposed to Promote Volunteer Activities

By Bill Blischke and Barbara Sinclair, Past CSU-ERFSA Presidents

One of the items on our Oct. 5th State Council agenda was our proposal to create a CSU-ERFSA Volunteer Activities Coordinating Committee. We believe this committee would be a plus for both our organization and the campus affiliates. Such permanent committees of our organization can only be created after initial discussion by the State Council followed by an action item vote at a subsequent biannual meeting of our group.

We would like to share some background regarding this proposal and solicit your response and suggestions. Several years ago, we surveyed the campus affiliates to find out what types of volunteer activities their members remained involved in after their retirement. To our surprise, we delineated 21 types! If you are interested in the list, you can find it on the CSU-ERFSA website "Volunteer" link. We would like to emphasize one of them and

add a new one. Number 20 is "voter registration". In our political memory, there has never been a more important election than the impending one. And, unfortunately, there is a longstanding inverse relationship between age and voting. This is the case despite the fact that young folks will be affected much more and for many more years by the outcomes than us ancient retirees! Most, if not all of the campuses, usually led by Associated Students Incorporated (ASI), have initiated voter registration programs. We strongly urge you to find out how you and your colleagues might volunteer to assist them.

The twenty-second type of volunteering we would like to add to the list is assisting in 2020 US Census participation. The estimates we have seen are that more than half a million California residents did not respond to the 2010 Census. As a result, California lost seats in the House of

Representatives, the Electoral College, and billions of dollars of Federal funds based on population statistics. There have been some efforts in our nation's capital to discourage US residents to respond to the next census. We would like to encourage our campuses and our members to work in their local communities to get folks to be counted!

As our next step, we would like to create a permanent CSU-ERFSA Volunteer Coordinating Committee. Its purpose would be to encourage each affiliate's members to continue to be or begin to be involved in their campus's variety of volunteer opportunities. We would survey the campus groups to decipher the ways in which each group is currently involved and then share that information with all of the campuses. If you have moved away from your home campus but live near one of the other CSU campuses, you might want to contact your colleagues there and become involved.

## Jones Wins Hotly Contested CalPERS Election

(Continued from page 1)

co-workers. He was given the minimum punishment, a reprimand. According to the Sacramento Bee, "Two women sitting on the CalPERS board, along with state Sen. Connie Leyva, D-Chino, in July urged Jelincic to drop out of this year's election over the harassment finding."

Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent, mostly, it appears, by the Jones' side. Two committees representing several unions spent \$442,000 to elect Jones, according to campaign filings. One of the mailings was a campaign mailer made to look as if it was sent by State Treasurer Fiona Ma. In fact it was funded by a political action committee formed by the state SEIU. The mailer included a letter – real – urging Jelincic to drop out of the election based on the administrative judge's finding in 2011 that there was merit to claims that Jelincic had been discourteous to three women when he worked for CalPERS. Groups supporting Jones included the California Correctional Peace Officers Association, California Professional Firefighters, SEIU local 1000, and other SEIU unions. By comparison, in the last two CalPERS

board elections, three of the four candidates spent under \$100,000, and the fourth spent under \$150,000. In both of these elections, the candidate spending less had won.

About 116,000 of the roughly 600,000 CalPERS retirees in the state voted, producing a political participation rate of 17.6%. In the notoriously poor turnout rates of CalPERS elections, this is relatively high. Several recent board elections have had turnouts between 5% and 10% of those eligible. Members were allowed to vote for a full month, from August 30th to September 30th, by mail, phone, and online.

The practice of allowing voting via the Internet runs afoul of state law that prohibits Internet voting, according to *Naked Capitalism*, a web site frequently critical of CalPERS and its operating practices. *Naked Capitalism* also noted in October that the envelopes used for the mail-in ballots could be held up to the light and the ballot was visible, violating a state law that "voting shall be secret." In spite of these repeated allegations, CalPERS' voting practices have not changed over the last several elections.

The purpose of this committee would not be to pressure affiliates or individual retirees to become involved. It would merely make them aware of the opportunities and put them in contact with others who are similarly engaged. We have agreed to co-chair the committee and, if it is formally created, we would like to have several others serve on the group. We would conduct the majority of our meetings via the Internet so that it would involve minimal costs for CSU-ERFSA and rarely, if ever, involve the travel and inconvenience of participating in face-to-face committee meetings.

Please let us know what you think of this idea by emailing us ([wblischke@csudh.edu](mailto:wblischke@csudh.edu), [bsinq@msn.com](mailto:bsinq@msn.com)) and copying our Executive Director, Harold Goldwhite ([hgoldwh@calstate.edu](mailto:hgoldwh@calstate.edu)).

# Invasive Mosquitoes Plunge Deeper into California

By Harriet Blair Rowan, Kaiser Healthline

Two invasive species of mosquitoes that can carry Zika, dengue, yellow fever and other dangerous viruses are spreading in California — and have been found as far north as Sacramento and Placer counties. There are now 16 counties where *Aedes aegypti*, commonly known as the yellow fever mosquito, has been detected, according to the state Department of Public Health. Five of those counties have also detected *Aedes albopictus*, the Asian tiger mosquito.

These mosquitoes, distinguished from other species because they primarily sip human blood during the day instead of at night, can spread the Zika virus, which infected more than 1 million people during an epidemic that began in 2015 in Brazil. The virus also can spread during sex.

More than 3,000 babies were born with microcephaly in Brazil during the epidemic. Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby's head is much smaller than expect-

ed, and can occur because the baby's brain has not developed properly.

In California, these invasive mosquitoes were detected in 2011 in Los Angeles County, and since have spread northward into the Central Valley. Although the invasive mosquitoes now inhabit a large swath of the state, authorities have recorded no cases of "local transmission" of the dangerous viruses, which means there's no evidence these *Aedes* mosquitoes in California are carriers. The California residents who have fallen ill with the dangerous viruses became infected during international travel to areas where the viruses are endemic.

But the potential for in-state transmission remains. "We do have people in California traveling abroad and bringing back those viruses every year, and now that the mosquito is spreading across the state, the risk has increased, but it's still very low," said Jeremy Wittie, president of the

Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California.

The number of reported travel-associated cases of Zika has dropped from 509 in 2015 and 2016 combined to 25 so far this year, according to the California Department of Public Health.

Public health officials work with people who were infected overseas to minimize the risk that they will spread the virus in the state.

While state and local vector control agencies keep a close eye on these species of *Aedes* mosquitoes, their biggest concerns are still West Nile virus and St. Louis encephalitis, which are spread by different species of mosquitoes, more common in California. This year, there have been 89 human cases of West Nile virus reported in 15 counties, including two deaths, the department said.

## California State Student Association VP Grace Fang With CSU-ERFSA Officers at State Council



From left: Bill Blischke, past CSU-ERFSA president; Rita Jones, CSU-ERFSA secretary; Harold Goldwhite, CSU-ERFSA executive director; Grace Fang, California State Student Association vice president for legislation; Mark Shapiro, CSU-ERFSA webmaster; and Barry Pasternack, CSU-ERFSA president.

## In Memoriam

**Bakersfield** – Kathleen N. Ritter

**Dominguez Hills** – James E. Sudalnik

**Fresno** – Frederick Brengelman  
Edward R. Gammon  
Mildred Thatcher Rochelle

**Humboldt** – Dwight J. Zulauf

**Long Beach** – Leonard Olguin

**Los Angeles** – Erwin Dale Carter  
Alan N. Crawford  
Lawrence P. (Pete) Goodman  
Louis Negrete

**Sacramento** – Priscilla M. Alexander  
Floyd McAlister

**San Bernardino** – James Thomas

**San Diego** – Stuart H. Gilbreath  
James M. Kaatz  
Rod Plotnik

**San Francisco** – Ross L. Arrington  
Carol M. Severin

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
EMERITUS AND RETIRED FACULTY  
AND STAFF ASSOCIATION**

**The Retirement Center  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge, CA 91330-8339  
<https://www.csuerfsa.org>**

Have you moved? If so, please report your new address to the CSU-ERFSA office at the above address.

**Address Service Requested**



**California State University  
Emeritus & Retired Faculty and Staff Association**

**SJSU Annual Fall Lunch**

SJSU-ERFA held its annual fall luncheon at the Flames restaurant on the edge of SJSU's urban campus. It was an appropriate setting for the sixty members and guests who heard Kim Welsh, the city's chief development officer, describe the many building projects planned and underway in San Jose's upwardly expanding downtown.

One of these projects has already attracted wide interest. The city's railroad station, currently a hub for Amtrak and three interurban lines as well as light rail, will eventually have an underground BART connection and even (the biggest dreamers hope) a high-speed rail connection. Around this transit center Google plans to build a "transit village" with office space for 25,000 workers along with extensive retail and residential space. Other companies are buying land in the same area. Can a project of this scale, big enough to shift the center of downtown a few blocks west, be built in a way to mitigate, rather than exacerbate, the city's already woeful traffic? Urban planners worldwide will be watching.

**CSU-ERFSA  
Calendar of Events**

**January 30, 2020 - CSU-ERFSA Executive Committee meets through video conferencing.**

**March 2020 - next issue of the CSU-ERFSA Reporter.**

**April 2020 - next meeting of the CSU-ERFSA State Council, most likely at CSU Long Beach - check [www.csuerfsa.org](http://www.csuerfsa.org) for updates as available.**

**104 Things Everyone  
Should Have at Home,  
Somewhere**

Those who might be moving at some point in the future may find this list of 104 items that everyone should have at home to be useful.

It covers "Tools and Supplies," "Kitchen Equipment," "Cleaning Supplies," "Furniture," "Décor," "Storage and Organizational Items," and "For

Emergencies."

Even those who aren't moving might find the latter category of interest, given that our utilities are promising that electricity will be cut off at times of high winds all over the state.

See <https://tinyurl.com/y65n7zrf> for the article and more information.

It's from a web site called "Apartment Therapy."