



CAS

California Associate Staff



Your Bargaining Voice

CAS Bargaining Team
2008-09

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CAS Bargaining Q&A

Did CTA present specific changes or cutbacks in their proposal on Tuesday, March 17? CTA's initial proposal was a *verbal* proposal predicated on the Retirement Trust certifying to the Red Zone for 2009, and was discussed in terms of a general framework. They offered to make a permanent 8% additional contribution to the Retirement Trust, so long as CAS/CSO come up with another 4% by selecting from options that were listed in the CSO/CAS Tripartite Update that went out via email on Tuesday, March 17. Each option is discussed below. CTA stated that the retirement funding issue would be settled as part of a total compensation package to staff.

Which specific health and welfare benefit cuts were proposed by CTA? CTA presented an overview of health and welfare benefit cuts that could be made, each with a corresponding projected percentage savings. No specific proposal was made.

Are they planning to eliminate either Blue Cross or Kaiser? CTA explained that Kaiser rates are currently higher than Blue Cross rates but there was no discussion of eliminating either the Kaiser or Blue Cross plans.

How would CTA's proposal to redirect 401(k) contributions work? CTA discussed the option of "redirecting" a portion of the contributions that they currently make to our individual 401(k) accounts. For CAS, CTA makes a 6% total contribution to our 401(k) account: 5% unmatched and 1% matched. CTA advised us that they believe that IRS guidelines would require them to redirect funds from the unmatched contribution only. For example purposes only, if the unions agreed to redirect 1% of CTA's contribution, that 1% would then go directly into the Retirement Trust, and CTA's unmatched contribution to your 401(k) would be adjusted to 4%, and you would still receive your 1% match, for a total of 5%.

Give us your input about these options...

Hurry—Take the CAS Bargaining Survey

Email CASBargaining@yahoo.com, submit your name and personal email address, and we will email you the link to the online survey. **PLEASE DO NOT COMPLETE THE SURVEY ON A CTA COMPUTER.** Survey opens tonight at 8:00 p.m. and closes Wednesday, March 25th, at 8:00 p.m. **Don't delay** — your responses will help guide the CAS counter-proposal to CTA this Thursday, March 26th. **Remember** — please complete the survey from your home computer, not at the office! *Thank you!*

**“Our Contract...
Our Future”**



Mark Your Calendars!

Next Tripartite Bargaining
March 26, 2009!

Contract Expiration Date:
8/31/09



California Associate Staff - Founded 1971

How would CTA's proposal for reducing CTA FICA and MediCare reimbursements work?

There was no specific proposal made, but basically CAS members would experience some amount of salary reduction and a corresponding reduction in take-home pay.

How would employee contributions work? Currently, CTA employees do not make contributions to their pension plan, but CTA presented an option for that to change. The funds could likely be drawn automatically from your paycheck. No percentages or amounts were discussed. NSO has a very firm bargaining standard against employee contributions to pension plans.

What are the specific adjustments to retirement benefits that were proposed by CTA? The last option CTA proposed was the adjustment of retirement benefits, but no specific recommendations were presented. There is some debate among pension experts about the adjustments that may be made, but here are some adjustments to retirement benefits changes that might be considered (as explained in previous retirement briefings):

1. Raising the unreduced early retirement age of 55 to something higher (in the range of 56-65).
2. Changing the current accrual factor of 3% for each year of service to something lower.
3. Changing the basis for calculating pension amount. Currently, the basis is the highest monthly salary, but it could be changed to a career average, or an average of three or five highest years.

What exactly does "using career earnings, not highest month" mean? Instead of basing your pension on your highest monthly pay, it would be based on your average pay over your entire career at CTA. This could significantly reduce your monthly retirement income amount.

Other Questions You May Have...

Would you please explain the rationale for the CAS salary proposal? The CAS Bargaining Team attended the NSO Winter Advocacy Retreat earlier this year in anticipation of the upcoming bargain and received training on salary schedule analysis. After reviewing the CAS schedule, it was clear there was no logic behind the step or column advancements. There are uneven intervals between many rows and columns on the salary schedule. We also observed that there was a very large gap between the lowest and highest paid employees. It is the bargaining team's goal to gain equitable pay for every CAS member.

This year, instead of applying a percentage increase to the schedule (which continues to widen the gap between the lowest and highest paid employees), we proposed a flat dollar increase for all employees. With a flat dollar increase, every employee enjoys the same bump in salary, which means a more equitable distribution. The CAS Bargaining Team also proposed (per the NSO recommended salary schedule guidelines) that the current schedule be compacted to fewer columns. This would make the gap between the lowest and highest paid employees smaller. Note that many NSO affiliates have a single column schedule, including CSO. It is also important that employees reach maximum salary as quickly as possible to increase career earnings as well as pension earnings. That is why we also proposed a vertical compaction, so that employees could achieve maximum salary (with longevity) in 20 years, instead of 30.

Isn't it a double standard for the Bargaining Team to communicate using the CTA email system, and then ask the members to only use personal email? Please keep in mind that the bargaining updates are very carefully crafted, written with the expectation that CTA is likely to see them. The Bargaining Team would prefer not to give CTA any other insight into what CAS members are considering or curious about. Bargaining is very strategic and we believe it is in our best interest to have CAS discussions and inquiries **specifically about bargaining away from the CTA email system.** We're ready to start a list of personal email addresses and will send our replies out to anyone who wants to see them; we just want to keep that communication off the CTA network. If you'd like to be included in the CAS personal email list, please send an email to CASBargaining@yahoo.com with your personal email address. Your personal email address will not be disclosed to other CAS members and will be hidden in all email communications.

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Your Bargaining Voice



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2008-09

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We are on the Web!

www.cas-nso.org

We're also concerned that there is a negative impact associated with conducting bargaining inquiries and discussions via the CTA email system. Any perceived lack of unity weakens our position at the bargaining table.

How do I get on the CAS personal email list? Please send your personal email address to CASBargaining@yahoo.com.

What if I have additional questions? Please feel free to call any of the CAS Bargaining Team members or email us at CASBargaining@yahoo.com from your personal email if you have any questions or input to share.

Please keep in mind, because we don't open our Yahoo mail on the CTA network system and we are also very busy with our CTA jobs as well as our volunteer bargaining work, we do ask for your patience and understanding. We will respond as soon as we possibly can after standard work hours.

The CAS group on Facebook is another great place to have these kinds of discussions, so we hope more of our members join and take advantage of this opportunity for information-sharing and networking. Log-on to Facebook and look for the **'California Associate Staff'** group.

This is Our Contract...Our Future!

Got Questions, Concerns or Input to Share?

We'd like to hear from you!

Email: CASBargaining@yahoo.com
(from your home/personal computer)



CAS Bargaining Dates

- **March 26 (Tripartite)**
- **March 30 (Tripartite)**
- **April 3**
- **April 9 (Tripartite)**
- **April 14**
- **April 17**
- **April 28 (Tripartite)**
- **May 7**
- **May 11**
- **June 1, 3, 4, 8 & 10 (CAS CSO, or Tripartite if needed)**
- **August 31, 2009 — CONTRACT EXPIRES!**



Involvement = Commitment = Success!