

Political Forum



Deferred Comp. Decision Made Without Notification

By Dennis Zine, Councilmember, District 3

As Chairman of the Personnel Committee, I recently introduced a motion asking the Los Angeles City Council to assert jurisdiction over the Board of Deferred Compensation Administration's (Board) decision to terminate the City's contract with Great-West Retirement Services in favor of using another provider, Nationwide.

The Board's August 17th decision sparked major concerns from City employees who would incur a 20 to 25 percent fee increase with the change from Great-West to Nationwide. The Board members who voted in support of Nationwide justified their decision by claiming that additional fees would fund more services. However, City employees were never notified that a change in providers was even a possibility, or what types of services would be provided.

My office received a number of phone calls from a variety of City employees who felt that the decision to change providers had been shoved down their throats. Once I reviewed the facts and discovered that employees had not even been notified of the pending changes to their plan, I felt compelled to take action.

Currently Great-West assists City employees by investing their money in individually selected investment plans. Each payday, employees contribute a predetermined amount of money directly from their paychecks to fund their investments. These plans allow participants a chance to invest tax-deferred dollars for retirement.

The Board of Deferred Compensation Administration's goal is to represent the will of the City employees who are members. The

employees' strong opposition to this change makes me think the Board action needs to be reviewed.

On Sept. 14, the Los Angeles City Council voted in support of my motion asking for the Council to assert jurisdiction. This move means that Councilmembers will have 21 calendar days to decide if a veto is warranted. During the 21-day period, the Personnel Committee is to hold a special meeting Wednesday, Sept. 29 at 2 p.m. in the John Ferraro Council Chambers, Room 340. I am hopeful as I write this that all City employees who may be impacted by this change will attend this meeting to voice their concerns.

The final vote on the matter will be held Tuesday, Oct. 5, during the regular meeting of the Los Angeles City Council.

The Deferred Compensation Fund has more than \$1.8 billion in assets.

Council District 3 includes these communities:

- Woodland Hills
- West Hills
- Canoga Park
- Reseda
- Winnetka
- Tarzana.

Each month, Alive! invites political leaders to speak directly to City and DWP employees and retirees. Alive! brings you these views as a public service. The opinions of those on this monthly column are independent of Alive! and the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.

Keller Out

■ Mayor, Harbor GM 'port' ways.



Larry Keller, former GM, Port of L.A.

Mayor Jim Hahn Sept. 17 announced the resignation of Port of Los Angeles Executive Director Larry Keller.

"Larry's tenure saw the Port of Los Angeles grow into America's largest maritime gateway and the prime economic generator in the Southland," Mayor Hahn said. "I wish him well in all his future endeavors."

Keller's resignation, submitted on Sept. 17, is effective immediately. "I greatly appreciate the many opportunities that the Port and City have provided me," Keller said in his letter of resignation. "It's been a privilege to work with the talented people at the Port of Los Angeles.

"Larry arrived at a critical time at the Port. His maritime industry expertise helped establish us as the leading Pacific gateway to the U.S.," said Harbor Commission President Nick Tonsich. Former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan hired Keller as the Port's chief executive officer in 1997.

Today, the Port of Los Angeles is ranked as the biggest container port in the nation and the sixth largest container port in the world. A search to replace Keller will begin immediately. In the interim, Chief Operating Officer Bruce Seaton will assume the duties of the executive director.



Bruce Seaton, Interim GM, Port of L.A.

LACECA Leadership

Story and photos by Angel Gomez,
Club Member Services Manager

■ Chicano Employees Assn. swears in new board.

The Los Angeles City Employees Chicano Association held a ceremony to inaugurate its new board, in mid-September.

The event was held in mid-September in City Hall.

The Los Angeles City Employees Chicano Association was established in March 1971. LACECA is dedicated to promoting equal employment opportunities for all sub-parity groups in City government. Although most of its members are Latinos, LACECA membership is open to anyone who is interested in supporting the goals and objectives of the organization. Some of LACECA's goals and objectives are to:

- Advance the employment, educational, economic, and social welfare of its members;
- Encourage the promotional advancement of Latinos and Latinas in City service;
- Work toward the expansion and improvement of the application of the City's Affirmative Action Program to improve diversity in the workforce, across all departments and promotional levels within City service;
- Hear grievances of employees in City service

and act appropriately as decided by the organization; and

- Work toward the achievement of these goals, together with other City and community organizations for the betterment of the community.

Throughout the years, LACECA members have worked toward the enactment of public policies that further the growth of Latinos in employment, and LACECA has been an advocacy group to educate the public, elected officials, and community leaders about issues that greatly affect the social and physical welfare of the community.

If you would like join the other 450 City employees who joined, call (213) 847-2229 or email your inquiries to: lacecmail@aol.com.

UPCOMING LACECA EVENTS INCLUDE:

October 15, LA City Fiesta Hall. At City Hall Triforium. From 5 to 11 p.m. Food, music and prizes. Free to all members. Guests welcome. Call (213) 847-2229 for more information.

December 9th. Annual Holiday Reception. Food, music and prizes at City Hall. Bring a toy or a \$10 donation for admission.

Congratulations to the new LACECA Board!



From Left: Councilman LaBonge; Leonor Garcia, LACECA 2nd VP, DWP; and Maggie Whelan, GM of Personnel at the Council Meeting commemorating the Latino Heritage Month Celebration, Sept 10, 04.



Leonor Garcia, Elizabeth DeSimone, Juno Galvan, Mario Ceja and Martha Lopez (All DWP employees)... Liz Wood (Private Industry)



From Left: The incoming officers for the 2004-2006 term are: Rosie Tavera, Treasure; Carlos Portillo, 1st Vice President; Jackie Zarate-Roberts, President; Robert Urteaga, Executive Secretary; Annette Salazar Recording Secretary; and Leonor Garci, 2nd Vice President.



The swearing-in ceremony at City Hall.