

# OUTREACH

November / December 2025

ISSUE 06, VOLUME 42

California Association of Psychiatric Technicians



**INSIDE:** ■ CAPT Marks the 15th Anniversary of Donna Gross's Passing at Napa State Hospital

■ Statewide Steward Training Prepares Members for Union Leadership and Advocacy

■ State Audit Confirms What Psych Techs Have Long Known: Contractors are Hindering Recruitment Efforts

# Welcome.

## California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

The California Association of Psychiatric Technicians is a non-profit corporation serving as the exclusive representative of all employees in Psychiatric Technician Bargaining Unit 18 in California State Civil Service. CAPT is also the professional association for approximately 11,000 state-licensed Psych Techs who work in California programs serving people with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities. The *Outreach* is CAPT's official publication and is published at least six times each year. A digital archive of the *Outreach* is maintained at [www.psychtechs.net](http://www.psychtechs.net).

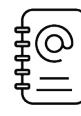


CAPT State President Eric Soto leads a steward training session at CAPT Headquarters in Sacramento on November 25, 2025, with members from the Northern Corrections, Stockton, and Integrated Community chapters participating.

**Volume 42, Issue 6**  
**November / December 2025**

*Outreach* is published by:  
CAPT Headquarters  
1220 'S' Street, Ste 100  
Sacramento, CA 95811-7138  
Toll Free (800) 677-CAPT (2278)  
or locally at (916) 329-9140  
(916) 329-9145 (Fax)

Christine Caro  
Managing Editor  
Layout Designer



You may contact your state and chapter officers directly. Their contact information is listed on page 4. Be sure to leave your name, work location, and phone number, as well as a short explanation of your issue.



# Contents

- [05 State President's View: A Year of Negotiation, Progress, and Vigilance](#)
- [06 CAPT Chapter Officer Elections](#)
- [07 Printed MOU Distribution Method Has Changed](#)
- [08 Statewide Steward Training Prepares Members for Union Leadership and Advocacy](#)
- [10 State Audit Confirms What Psych Techs Have Long Known: Contractors are Hindering Recruitment Efforts](#)
- [12 CAPT Marks the 15th Anniversary of Donna Gross's Passing](#)
- [14 CAPT Engages 2026 Statewide Candidates to Secure Strong Labor Endorsements](#)
- [16 CAPT Endorsements Announced](#)
- [17 Protect Yourself During Investigations](#)
- [18 CAPT-Backed Candidates Win CalPERS Board Seats](#)
- [19 Important Payroll Notice for DSH-Patton Members](#)
- [20 CAPT and the Working Assembly of Governmental Employees](#)
- [22 CAPT Recognizes Atascadero Psych Tech of the Year, Juan Nano](#)
- [22 Catastrophic Leave](#)

# CAPT Board of Directors

## State Officers

**State President:** Eric Soto  
CAPT Southern Regional Office  
and Training Center  
13085 Central Ave., #7  
Chino, CA 91710  
Mail to: 1220 S Street, Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95811-7138  
(909) 364-2486 (Office)  
(909) 214-4298 (Cell)  
[eric.soto@psychtechs.net](mailto:eric.soto@psychtechs.net)

**State Vice President:** Paul Hannula  
(see Atascadero listing)

**State Secretary-Treasurer:** Jaime Garcia  
(see Coalinga listing)

## Chapter Presidents

**Atascadero:** Paul Hannula  
4401 El Camino Real, Ste. K  
Atascadero, CA 93422-2708  
(805) 460-6131 (Office)  
(805) 861-2390 (Fax)  
[captash@psychtechs.net](mailto:captash@psychtechs.net)

**Coalinga:** Jaime Garcia  
578 E. Elm St., Coalinga, CA 93210  
Mail to: PO Box 933  
Coalinga, CA 93210-0933  
(559) 978-1582 (Cell)  
(559) 934-0247 (Fax)  
[jaima@psychtechs.net](mailto:jaima@psychtechs.net)

**Community Facilities:** Donald Cofer  
Mail to: c/o CAPT  
1220 S St., Ste. 100  
Sacramento, CA 95811-7138  
(909) 583-7786 (Cell)  
[captdonald@psychtechs.net](mailto:captdonald@psychtechs.net)

**Northern Corrections:** Kim Souza  
Mail to: 1000 Lincoln Road Ste. H.  
PMB 207, Yuba City, CA. 95991  
(916) 955-4807 (Cell)  
[norcalprez@psychtechs.net](mailto:norcalprez@psychtechs.net)

**Southern Corrections:** Walter Lewis  
Mail to: P.O. Box 917  
Fullerton, CA 92836  
(760) 520-5159 (Cell)  
[socalprez@psychtechs.net](mailto:socalprez@psychtechs.net)

**Integrated Community Chapter:**  
Misty Tuckness  
2621 Green River Rd. #105-188  
Corona, CA, 92882  
714-742-3449 (Cell/Office)  
[capticc@psychtechs.net](mailto:capticc@psychtechs.net)

**Metropolitan:** Carlos (Chuck) Garcia  
Metropolitan State Hospital,  
11401 Bloomfield Ave., Norwalk, CA  
Mail to: PO Box 59569  
Norwalk, CA 90652-0569  
(626) 644-8030 (Cell)  
(562) 286-8007 (Fax)  
[captmsh@psychtechs.net](mailto:captmsh@psychtechs.net)

**Napa:** Samona Booker  
1300 First Street, Suite 368  
Napa, CA 94559  
(707) 363-2667 (office)  
(707) 736-7022 (Fax)  
[captnapa@psychtechs.net](mailto:captnapa@psychtechs.net)

**Patton:** Gloria Benard  
2544 E. Highland Ave.  
Highland, CA 92346  
Mail to: PO Box 680  
Patton, CA 92369-0680  
(909) 763-2548 (Office)  
(909) 763-2822 (fax)  
[captpattonprez@psychtechs.net](mailto:captpattonprez@psychtechs.net)

**Porterville:** Jose Ramirez  
263 N. 3rd Street, Suite 126  
Porterville, CA 93257-3665  
Mail to: PO Box 8703,  
Porterville, CA 93258-8703  
(559) 333-0710 (Cell)  
(559) 781-2278 (Office)  
(559) 781-4440 (Fax)  
[capt\\_pdcprez@psychtechs.net](mailto:capt_pdcprez@psychtechs.net)

**Stockton:** Darrel Bottoms  
Atlantic Aviation SCK  
6364 Lindbergh St, Suite 218  
Stockton, CA 95206  
(209) 603-4408 (Cell)  
(209) 467-2525 (Office)  
[chcfprez@psychtechs.net](mailto:chcfprez@psychtechs.net)



## Important Reminders

### Do We Have Your Current Email and Mailing Address?

Help us keep you informed. We're updating our contact lists so we can get important news and union updates to you quickly. If you're unsure whether CAPT has your current email or home mailing address, please reach out to Aislynn at [taylor@psychtechs.net](mailto:taylor@psychtechs.net) with your updated information. Also, don't forget to keep your official mailing address current with the [BVNPT](#). If you are unlicensed, be sure to update your address with the [Department of Health Care Services](#) to ensure you receive all required notices.

### Right to Withhold Your Address

Under CAPT's contract with the State, BU 18 employees who are not CAPT members may request that their home address be withheld from CAPT. To exercise this right, a non-member must submit a written request to both the State Controller's Office and CAPT.

Please note: If you choose to withhold your address, you will no longer receive any information or communications from CAPT, including notices, updates, and publications.

### Retired? Keep Your CAPT Insurance Benefits!

Did you know CAPT offers its retired members insurance benefits similar to those available to active members? As a retired member, you will continue to receive:

- \$5,000 in Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage
- \$5,000 in Life Insurance (with no age limit)

**Important:** To maintain your coverage for just \$5 per month, you must contact CAPT Headquarters at **(800) 677-2278** within 31 days of the last day of the month in which you retired. If you miss this deadline, your policy will lapse and cannot be reinstated.

## The President's View

# A Year of Negotiation, Progress, and Vigilance

CAPT Brothers and Sisters,

Happy Holidays to all my CAPT brothers and sisters throughout the state! 2025 certainly has been a busy year. Your negotiating team began 2025 preparing for our return to the bargaining table on behalf of state-employed Psych Techs. Beginning on April 1, 2025, contract negotiations were held on a near-weekly basis through to August 14, when we reached a Tentative Agreement. Fighting off many attempts by management to weaken key provisions of our contract, your bargaining team held firm and not only fought them off but also improved some key provisions. In addition, CAPT secured wage increases despite the tough economic forecast for the state's budget. The latter part of August saw our negotiating team hold numerous ratification meetings, during which we presented the details of the TA and answered your questions. In September, CAPT members throughout the state, as well as the state legislator and the Governor, overwhelmingly approved the contract. In October, CAPT solemnly commemorated the 15th anniversary of the tragic murder of Donna Gross. Each year, CAPT renews its pledge and commitment to fight for a safer workplace for all workers.

Beginning in December of 2025, CAPT's Board of Directors began interviewing several candidates for state office. As you will read in this issue, CAPT reached out to candidates from both sides of the aisle and directly inquired how they stood on issues important to working families and to assess their commitment to core union values, such as their views on strengthening the collective bargaining process, expanding workers' rights, and workplace safety. As public employees, it is imperative that we evaluate candidates' stated positions and voting history, and assess their commitment to supporting those who have committed themselves to providing essential services to the state of California.

Solidarity Forever!



Eric Soto  
CAPT State President  
(909) 214-4298  
[eric.soto@psychtechs.net](mailto:eric.soto@psychtechs.net)



“

As public employees, it is imperative that we evaluate candidates' stated positions and voting history, and assess their commitment to supporting those who have committed themselves to providing essential services to the state of California.



# CAPT Chapter Officer Elections

Are you  
planning  
to run for a  
CAPT chapter  
office?



December 1, 2025

CAPT will soon hold elections for Chapter Officers in all 11 chapters. Elections are conducted every even-numbered year according to CAPT's Constitution, Bylaws, and Operating Policies.

## Offices up for Election

The Atascadero, Coalinga, Community Facilities, Northern Corrections, Integrated Community, Napa, Porterville, and Stockton chapters will hold elections for the following three offices: President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer. The Metropolitan, Patton, and Southern Corrections chapters will hold elections for the following four offices: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

## Eligibility

To qualify as a candidate, you must be a CAPT member in good standing and have completed Job Steward Training on or before **January 1, 2026**.

## Candidacy Declaration

Candidacy Declarations must be **signed** and submitted to CAPT Headquarters by **5 p.m. on March 10, 2026**. Declarations may be filed by Mail, Fax, or Email. If submitting your declaration by mail, a Return Receipt Requested is recommended. Email filings must include a signed attachment. Declarations must include your address, non-state email, and phone number (for CAPT's internal use only). Hand-delivered filings will not be accepted. Upon receipt, candidates will be sent a summary of the remaining election procedures.

## Candidate Statement

Candidates may submit a print ready one-page (8½ × 11) campaign statement for inclusion in the ballot packet mailed to members. Candidate statements may be Mailed, Emailed, or Faxed. Submissions delivered

by email must include a print-ready PDF attachment. Content may include your goals, background, and qualifications. Personal contact information must not be included unless specifically requested. Candidate Statements must be received by CAPT Headquarters by **5 p.m. on March 10, 2026**.

## Mailing of Ballots

Ballot packets will be mailed first-class no later than **April 1, 2026**, to all eligible CAPT members. Each packet will include: voting instructions, the ballot and candidate statements, a "Secret Ballot Envelope," and a postage-paid return envelope. If you have not received your ballot by **April 15**, contact CAPT Headquarters to request a replacement.

## Ballot Counting & Results

Ballots must be received by the close of business the day before the count to be valid. Counting will occur on or about May 15, 2026, by an independent firm. Candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be declared elected by the State President. New officers take office at 5 p.m. on the day results are announced.

---

If you have questions about the election process, please refer to the *Chapter Election Procedures* section in CAPT's *Operating Policies* or contact Aislynn Taylor at (916) 329-9140 or [taylor@psychtechs.net](mailto:taylor@psychtechs.net).



CAPT Headquarters  
1220 S Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95811  
FAX: (916) 329-9145 ■ [taylor@psychtechs.net](mailto:taylor@psychtechs.net)

# Printed MOU Distribution Method Has Changed

December 18, 2025

CAPT previously notified members that printed copies of the 2025–2028 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be mailed directly to members' home addresses. However, given the likelihood of outdated or incorrect mailing addresses and the potential for unnecessary return-to-sender costs, the CAPT Board of Directors reviewed the planned distribution process. Following that review, the Board has approved an updated distribution plan to ensure timely, efficient, and cost-effective access to printed MOUs once printing is complete.

## Local Chapter Distribution

CAPT members who work at chapters with one worksite location will receive their printed MOU through their local CAPT chapter. Printed MOUs will be available during regular chapter office hours, and at scheduled chapter membership meetings. Your chapter leadership will communicate availability dates and any additional pick-up details.

## Mailed Distribution

Printed MOUs will be mailed directly to CAPT members' home addresses in chapters where worksites are regionally dispersed. This includes CAPT members at the Northern Corrections, Southern Corrections, and Integrated Community chapters.

If you have moved recently or are not sure whether CAPT has your current mailing address, please update your contact information with Aislynn Taylor at (916) 329-9140 or at [taylor@psychtechs.net](mailto:taylor@psychtechs.net). Ensuring we have your correct address guarantees that you receive your copy of the new MOU without delay.

## Access Contract Information Now

While the printed MOU is being completed, you can still stay fully informed:

- The complete [Tentative Agreement](#) is available on the CalHR website.
- CAPT's Tentative Agreement Highlights are published in the [July/August Outreach](#), page 9, summarizing key wins, improvements, and changes negotiated for BU 18.



## Statewide Steward Training Prepares Members for Union Leadership and Advocacy

CAPT conducted a series of statewide steward training sessions to prepare members for the upcoming 2026 chapter elections and to strengthen workplace advocacy across the Association. The sessions brought together members from multiple CAPT chapters throughout the state.

Under the leadership of CAPT State President Eric Soto, a total of six steward training sessions were offered at locations statewide: November 20 at Porterville Developmental Center; November 25, December 4, and December 18 at CAPT Head-

quarters in Sacramento; and two sessions held on December 22 and 23 at the CAPT Southern Regional Office and Training Center in Chino.

Members who plan to run for chapter office in 2026 are required to complete steward training by January 1, 2026. This timeline helps ensure that future chapter leaders enter office well-prepared as knowledgeable, confident, and experienced advocates for the Association and their coworkers.



Beyond leadership preparation, steward training equips members with the knowledge and tools to enforce workplace rights under CAPT's Memorandum of Understanding. Stewards learn how to advocate not only for themselves, but also for their fellow employees. Training begins with an overview of CAPT's history, structure, leadership, and mission, then moves into key representation topics, including steward certification, roles, responsibilities, and governing policies.

Participants receive in-depth instruction on contractual issues and representation procedures, learning how to guide employees through both informal problem-solving and the formal grievance process. Psych Techs gain a clear understanding of the difference between a complaint and a grievance, and review the contract provisions most commonly relied upon in representation cases. To put their training into practice, attendees work in groups to file and analyze a "mock grievance," strengthening their hands-on advocacy skills.

Training and education remain among CAPT's top priorities for building strong chapters and empowering frontline employee advocates. All steward training is provided at no cost to members. If you are interested in becoming a job steward or want to understand your workplace rights better, contact your local chapter office to request steward training. CAPT also offers advanced steward training for experienced stewards and chapter officers who are ready to take their advocacy to the next level.

# State Audit Confirms What Psych Techs Have Long Known: Contractors are Hindering Recruitment Efforts



A newly released [California State Auditor's report](#) confirms what CAPT members have been experiencing for years inside state hospitals, prisons, and developmental centers: chronic vacancies are being filled not by permanent state employees, but by costly private contractors, often at the expense of continuity of care, workplace safety, and long-term staffing stability.

The audit, initiated at the request of Assembly-member Josh Lowenthal and strongly supported by CAPT and other public sector unions, examined medical and mental health staffing at three state facilities: Atascadero State Hospital, Porterville Developmental Center, and Salinas Valley State Prison. The findings validate CAPT's longstanding concerns about the State's growing reliance on contracted labor to perform core public services.

Rather than aggressively filling these permanent positions, departments increasingly turned to private contractors. While contract workers represent a smaller percentage of total staff, their use has grown steadily, especially in nursing classifications. At Porterville Developmental Center, for example, contract nurses accounted for 87 percent of all nursing hours worked between 2019 and 2025

The audit also found that contract workers typically cost the State significantly more per hour than state employees, even after accounting for pension and benefit costs, while offering less continuity of care due to short-term assignments and frequent turnover.

## Vacancies Grow While Contractors Multiply

According to the State Auditor, vacancy rates for medical and mental health classifications at the audited facilities ranged from 30 to 50 percent or more over the past several years. Despite ongoing recruitment efforts, vacancies continued to rise, particularly in psychiatric, nursing, and other frontline mental health positions.

## Pandemic Accelerated a Broken System

In reporting on the audit's release, [The Sacramento Bee](#) highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic intensified existing staffing problems. CAPT lobbyist Coby Pizzotti explained that many experienced state employees retired during the pandemic due to unsafe working conditions, excessive overtime, and sustained understaffing.

"A lot of our members decided to retire," Pizzotti told the Bee. "They said, 'That's it—we're out. Why would we want to endanger our lives?'"

Instead of using the pandemic as a turning point to rebuild the state workforce, departments continued advertising contract positions—often at two to three times the pay of state-employed counterparts, sometimes in the very same facilities where CAPT members work.

## Budget Savings at the Expense of Care

One of the audit's most troubling findings is that departments realized hundreds of millions of dollars in "vacancy savings" by leaving authorized positions unfilled. At Atascadero State Hospital alone, the State saved nearly \$250 million over several years by not filling budgeted positions.

But as Pizzotti noted, those "savings" came at a cost.

"You're saving money, but you're not supposed to be saving money," Coby told the Sac Bee. "These are budgeted positions."

Meanwhile, the audit found that none of the three departments consistently tracks or reports whether facilities meet required staff-to-patient ratios, making meaningful oversight nearly impossible and putting patient care and worker safety at risk.

## What CAPT Is Doing and Will Continue to Do

CAPT did not wait for the audit to act and we will not stop now that its findings are public.

CAPT advocacy directly helped trigger this audit, alongside allied unions representing medical and mental health professionals. Our work ensured legislative scrutiny, transparency, and accountability where departments had failed to self-correct.

Going forward, CAPT will continue to press lawmakers to implement the State Auditor's recommendations, including a statewide, cross-agency recruitment strategy coordinated by CalHR.

CAPT will continue to advocate for competitive salaries and retention incentives that make state service viable in high-cost regions and competitive labor markets.

CAPT will demand staffing transparency, including mandatory tracking and reporting of shift staffing and staff-to-patient ratios.

CAPT will continue its fight against the privatization of state jobs that undermines civil service, weakens continuity of care, and costs taxpayers more.

It is an unfortunate reality that frontline voices too often go unheard. Our lived experience should inform public policy—not an after-the-fact audit.

This audit confirms what CAPT members have said all along: California's reliance on contractors is not a sustainable solution to chronic understaffing. The State must reinvest in its workforce, value public service, and commit to permanent staffing solutions that protect both workers and the people they serve.



# A Day of Remembrance

## *CAPT Marks the 15th Anniversary of Donna Gross's Passing*

On October 21, Napa State Hospital Psych Techs, employees, administrators, and CAPT representatives gathered once again at the hospital's front entrance to honor the life and legacy of Donna Kay Gross, a beloved Psychiatric Technician whose tragic death 15 years ago forever changed the NSH community. A devoted mother, grandmother, and dedicated Psych Tech, Donna embodied compassion, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to patient care.

Donna lost her life on October 23, 2010, after she was attacked and killed by patient Jess Massey while returning to her unit to work an additional shift. She was 54 years old. Her assailant later pleaded no contest and is serving a sentence of 25 years to life at California State Prison, Corcoran. Donna's death shook the entire hospital system and became a defining moment in the ongoing fight for workplace safety.

Each year, the Napa Chapter officers lead this solemn memorial to ensure Donna's life is never forgotten and to reaffirm our commitment to improving the safety of those who serve in California's state hospitals. This year's gathering—marking a decade and a half since Donna's passing—carried an especially profound sense of reflection and resolve.



In Memory of  
Donna Kay Gross  
Born March 30, 1956  
San Jose, California  
Died October 23, 2010  
Napa, California

Napa Chapter President Samona Booker offered heartfelt remarks, emphasizing the continued importance of honoring Donna's memory through action. She reflected that Donna's legacy "still calls on all of us to remain watchful and united," noting that the passage of time has only strengthened the chapter's commitment to protecting Psych Techs. Samona thanked the Psych Techs and hospital employees who continue advocating for safety concerns, adding that fifteen years later, Donna's memory remains a reminder of both our loss and our purpose.

CAPT State President Eric Soto also addressed attendees, speaking to the lasting impact Donna's death had on the profession. He reminded the group that Donna's tragedy became a catalyst for long-overdue improvements, but stressed that the work is not complete. "We have made progress over the years—but progress requires vigilance," he said. "We honor Donna not only by remembering her but by speaking up, reporting hazards, documenting assaults, and insisting that safety is never treated as optional. Her memory strengthens our resolve to ensure no other family or workforce endures such a preventable loss."

Soto emphasized that the 15-year milestone is not merely a remembrance—it is a call to continue the fight for safer staffing levels, better reporting systems, and accountability across all state hospitals.

As the ceremony concluded near the Napa State Hospital sign covered in flowers, attendees gathered for lunch, enjoying camaraderie, mutual support, and a shared resolve.

Fifteen years later, Donna Gross remains at the heart of our fight for workplace safety. CAPT will continue to honor her by transforming grief into action and remembrance into lasting progress.



Napa Chapter President  
Samona Booker



CAPT State President  
Eric Soto



Napa Chapter Vice  
President Andrew Abello



Napa Chapter Secretary/  
Treasurer Antoinette  
Sandoval



# CAPT Engages 2026 Statewide Candidates to Secure Strong Labor Endorsements

## CAPT Endorses Proven Leaders for Statewide Constitutional Offices



California State Gubernatorial Candidate Tony Thurmond (center) pictured from left with: CAPT State Secretary/Treasurer and Coalinga Chapter President Jaime Garcia, CAPT Lobbyist Cobi Pizzotti, CAPT State President Eric Soto, Community Facilities Chapter President Donald Cofer, Patton Chapter President Gloria Benard, and Integrated Community Chapter President Misty Tuckness

With California's 2026 statewide election approaching, CAPT is actively engaging candidates seeking our endorsement and has extended invitations to all declared candidates to meet with the CAPT Board of Directors, ensuring the voices and priorities of state-employed Psychiatric Technicians are heard early in a crowded and consequential election cycle.

The 2026 gubernatorial election is shaping up to be one of the most competitive in recent history. Dozens of candidates are seeking statewide office, and under California's top-two primary system, only the two highest vote-getters—regardless of party—will advance from the June 2026 primary to the general election. At the same time, the State is facing ongoing fiscal constraints that will directly affect labor negotiations, staffing levels, workplace safety, and public services.

In this environment, CAPT is doing its due diligence to identify and support candidates who understand the realities facing Psychiatric Technicians and who are committed to protecting workers' rights, public safety, and quality patient care.

### Statewide Constitutional Office Endorsements

✓ Fiona Ma  
For Lieutenant Governor

✓ Eleni Kounalakis  
For State Treasurer

✓ Anthony Rendon  
For State Superintendent of Public Instruction



From Left: California State Gubernatorial Candidate Katie Porter, CAPT State President Eric Soto, CAPT Lobbyist Coby Pizzottii, and CAPT Communications Director Chrisitne Caro



State President Eric Soto speaking with California State Gubernatorial Candidate Antonio Villaraigosa

## Gubernatorial Candidates Interviewed to Date

CAPT's Board of Directors has interviewed the following candidates for Governor:

**Tony Thurmond**, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, is a former Assemblymember with a long record of supporting labor, education funding, and public-sector workers.

**Antonio Villaraigosa**, former Mayor of Los Angeles, has executive experience managing large public systems and a history of engagement with organized labor.

**Katie Porter**, former U.S. Representative, is nationally known for her work on government accountability and consumer and worker protections. Each candidate was asked to respond in writing and in person to CAPT's comprehensive gubernatorial questionnaire, which focuses on issues central to Bargaining Unit 18—including chronic understaffing, mandatory overtime, workplace violence, outsourcing, pension security, and the long-term sustainability of the Psychiatric Technician profession.

CAPT expects to conduct additional gubernatorial interviews in January 2026 and has invited all candidates seeking CAPT's endorsement to meet with the Board.

## State Constitutional Office Interviews

In addition to the Governor's race, CAPT has interviewed candidates seeking statewide constitutional office, recognizing that these positions play key roles in budgeting, fiscal oversight, and education policy that directly impact state workers and Psychiatric Technicians. Listed below are the candidates who met with the CAPT board of Directors seeking a CAPT endorsement.

### Lieutenant Governor

- Fiona Ma, California State Treasurer and former Assemblymember
- Michael Tubbs, former Mayor of Stockton

### State Treasurer

- Anna Caballero, State Senator
- Eleni Kounalakis, Lieutenant Governor of California
- Antonio Vazquez, Chair of the California Board of Equalization

### State Superintendent of Public Instruction

- Nichelle Henderson, educator and advocate
- Al Muratsuchi, Assemblymember
- Josh Newman, State Senator
- Anthony Rendon, former Speaker of the California State Assembly
- Sonja Shaw, CVUSD Board President

## CAPT Endorsements Announced

Following CAPT's interview and evaluation process, led by State President Eric Soto and CAPT consultant and Lobbyist Coby Pizzotti, the CAPT Board of Directors voted to endorse the following candidates for statewide constitutional office in the 2026 election:



### Fiona Ma for Lieutenant Governor

As California State Treasurer and a former Assemblymember, Fiona Ma has demonstrated strong fiscal leadership, support for public-sector workers, and a clear understanding of how state budgeting decisions affect frontline employees.



### Eleni Kounalakis for State Treasurer

Currently serving as Lieutenant Governor, Eleni Kounalakis has been a consistent advocate for labor, public services, and economic equity. CAPT is confident in her ability to bring experienced leadership to the State Treasurer's Office.



### Anthony Rendon for State Superintendent of Public Instruction

As former Speaker of the California State Assembly, Anthony Rendon brings deep legislative experience, a strong record of collaboration with labor, and a commitment to public education systems that intersect directly with workforce development and public service.

These endorsements reflect CAPT's confidence in candidates who have demonstrated a strong alignment with the values and priorities of Psychiatric Technicians and other public-sector workers.

## What CAPT Is Looking For

CAPT's candidate questionnaire reflects the real conditions our members face on the job every day. Candidates are asked to address:

- Collective bargaining and union rights, including opposition to privatization and erosion of due process
- Staffing vacancies exceeding 30%, mandatory overtime, and burnout
- Workplace violence, patient assaults, and facility security
- Outsourcing and contract staffing undermine work-

force stability and cost the State more in the long run

- Retirement security, including the impact of PEPRA on recruitment and retention
- Training, licensure, and professional recognition for Psychiatric Technicians
- Budget shortfalls, furloughs, and the protection of essential healthcare workers

The Governor plays a powerful role in shaping CAPT members' wages, benefits, pensions, and working conditions. Through the Department of Human Resources, the Governor sets bargaining parameters, proposes and signs the state budget, appoints department leadership, and appoints the majority of members to the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians. These decisions directly affect Psychiatric Technicians working in state hospitals, correctional facilities, and developmental centers.

## CAPT's Commitment to Members

CAPT's endorsement process is non-partisan and member focused. Our goal is to support candidates, regardless of party, who demonstrate a clear understanding of Psychiatric Technicians' work and a genuine commitment to safe staffing, fair compensation, strong pensions, and respect for organized labor.

As interviews continue and the field narrows, CAPT will keep members informed about additional endorsements and the issues at stake. This election will shape the future of our profession and our workplaces for years to come, and CAPT remains committed to advocating for candidates who will stand with Psychiatric Technicians.

# Protect Yourself During Investigations

California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

December 19, 2025

CAPT urges all Psych Techs to take extra precautions during incident investigations at your workplace. Whether an investigation is already underway or anticipated, it's crucial to protect yourself and your career by knowing your rights and following these guidelines:

## Call a Union Rep Before Giving Any Statement

After any incident, management or State Hospital Police may seek an immediate statement. Before you say anything, call a CAPT representative. Under Article 2.1.B.5 of our MOU, no Unit 18 employee can be directed to make any statement or admission to be used in a disciplinary proceeding without first having the opportunity to review the matter with an Association representative, upon the request of the employee.

This right applies the moment questioning begins—not just during scheduled interviews. If anyone pressures you to “just explain what happened,” or suggests that refusing to speak is uncooperative, stop immediately and request CAPT representation. A brief, unprepared statement given under pressure can be misinterpreted and used against you in both administrative and criminal investigations.

CAPT will ensure your rights are honored and that you are not placed at risk by speaking without representation.

## When Notified of an Interview

Contact CAPT Immediately. Reach out to your CAPT representative to secure



the support and guidance you are entitled to by law. The employer must provide 24-hour written notice before an interview. The notice must include the specific subject matter of the interview. If the topic changes during the interview, you or your representative should stop the questioning immediately and request a new notice for the additional subject matter.

## Criminal vs. Administrative Interviews

In an Administrative Interview, you are required to participate. However, you have the right to first receive a Lybarger Admonishment, which ensures that your statements cannot be used against you in a criminal proceeding. This safeguard is critical to protect your rights during the investigation.

In a Criminal Investigation, you have the right to remain silent, and you should consider consulting criminal legal counsel before deciding whether to answer any questions. If there is any refusal to provide the Lybarger Admonishment, assume the investigation is criminal and exercise your 5th Amendment right to remain silent.

## Weingarten Rights Are Your Shield

You have the legal right to union representation whenever a discussion could potentially lead to discipline, termination, or changes to your working conditions. If investigators or management attempt to intimidate or pressure you into speaking without representation, invoke your rights:

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that a union representative be present at this meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions.”

## Protect Your Job, License, & Future

Investigators may use tactics to mislead, pressure, or confuse employees into making harmful statements. Your best defense is preparation and CAPT representation. CAPT is here to ensure your rights are protected every step of the way.

Contact your chapter office immediately if you are contacted by investigators or receive notice of an investigatory interview.





## CAPT-Backed Candidates Win CalPERS Board Seats

CAPT is proud to announce that both of our endorsed candidates — **David Miller** for Position A (pictured top left) and **Troy Johnson** for Position B (pictured top right) — have decisively won their CalPERS Member-at-Large elections, according to unofficial results released by CalPERS.

These victories are a direct result of the work done by unions and their members statewide, including CAPT members who helped turn out the vote to defend our hard-earned retirement benefits.

### Why CAPT Endorsed Miller & Johnson

CAPT supported candidates with proven commitment to protecting defined-benefit pensions, advancing strong investment strategies, and strengthening retiree healthcare.

David Miller, a current CalPERS Board member and long-time union leader, has consistently fought against the privatization and erosion of pensions and has taken action to safeguard the fund's long-term investment returns.

Troy Johnson, a dedicated public employee advocate with more than 30 years of union leadership experience, ran on a firm pledge to defend pensions from political attacks and expand access to affordable healthcare.

Their platforms align with CAPT's core mission to protect the financial future of every Psych Tech, active and retired.

### Election Results & What Comes Next

Miller won his race with 53.93% of the vote, securing a third term.

Johnson earned 52.25% to win his first term.

Both will be sworn in on January 16, 2026, when they will join the 13-member CalPERS Board, which is responsible for protecting and investing the retirement funds of millions of California public workers and retirees.

Their leadership will play a vital role in ensuring that pensions remain strong and fully funded for today and for generations to come.

# IMPORTANT PAYROLL NOTICE FOR DSH-PATTON MEMBERS

## Review Your Pay Stubs Carefully



December 29, 2025

CAPT has been notified of ongoing payroll errors at DSH-Patton involving time usage, leave balances, and holiday credits. These issues appear to be systemic rather than isolated mistakes and may affect multiple pay periods for some employees.

In one recent case, a member conducted a thorough review of her payroll history and found errors in 22 of 24 pay periods involving time usage and leave accounting. CAPT has raised these concerns with management and is actively monitoring the situation. However, individual payroll discrepancies must still be identified and reported to ensure they are corrected.

### Your Contractual Rights

Our MOU requires that wages, time usage, and leave credits be calculated and paid accurately. [Article 4.9](#) (Timely Payment of Wages) and [Article 4.11](#) (Overpayments/Payroll Errors) govern how payroll mistakes must be identified, corrected, and resolved, including errors



California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

involving time usage and leave balances. [Article 6](#) (Leaves and Holidays) further establishes how vacation, holiday, and other leave credits are earned, used, and tracked. Payroll errors affecting these areas may be addressed through the contractual grievance process.

### Report Issues Promptly

CAPT strongly encourages all DSH-Patton members to review their pay stubs carefully, with particular attention to time usage, holiday credits, leave balances, and overall pay amounts for each pay period. Payroll errors do not always self-correct, and delays in reporting discrepancies can make corrections more difficult.

If you believe your pay or leave balances are incorrect, please contact Patton Chapter President Gloria Benard at (909) 763-2548 or [captpattonpres@psychtechs.net](mailto:captpattonpres@psychtechs.net) with the following information:

1. Your name
2. Dates of the affected pay periods
3. Type of error (time usage, holiday credit, leave balance, etc.)
4. Dollar amounts or hours involved
5. Any documentation you have (pay stubs, screenshots, notes)

Providing clear and specific information helps CAPT identify patterns, elevate concerns, and advocate effectively on behalf of members.

# CAPT and the Working Assembly of Governmental Employees

Professionalism and practitioner autonomy have always been strong characteristics of the California Association of Psychiatric Technicians. As the voice of Psychiatric Technicians across California, CAPT remains committed not only to representing its members, but to strengthening our profession and union through strategic alliances. That's why our partnership with the Working Assembly of Governmental Employees (WAGE) matters.

WAGE connects us to a nationwide network of independent public-employee unions while preserving our distinct mission.

This October, CAPT's delegation traveled to Glendale, CA, to take part in WAGE's bi-annual assembly. Representing CAPT were CAPT State Vice President and Atascadero Chapter President Paul Hannula (Paul serves on the WAGE Board of Directors), Atascadero Chapter Vice President Steve Wright, and Community Facilities Chapter President Donald Cofer.

## CAPT's Role in the National Network

CAPT's involvement on WAGE's Board of Directors underscores our commitment to active leadership in the independent-union movement. WAGE's mission of empowering member organizations to operate on their own terms resonates



deeply with our core values: serving Psychiatric Technicians by Psychiatric Technicians, free of outside interference.

## Highlights from the Assembly

The gathering featured a wide array of workshops and peer-led discussions designed to advance association governance, member services, and board effectiveness. Topics included:

- Strengthening board leadership: practical tips for better decision-making and oversight
- Leveraging member-benefit partnerships
- Financial transparency and fiscal best practices in union management
- Enhancing generational engagement and inter-generational communication within associations
- AI and its potential role in public-employee organizations
- Building trust through shared values and feedback loops



CAPT State Vice President and Atascadero Chapter President Paul Hannula.



Atascadero Chapter Vice President Steve Wright

## Spotlight on Affiliates

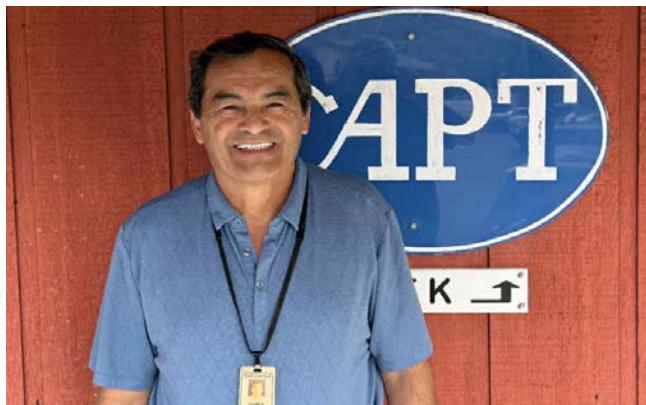
Contributions from fellow WAGE affiliates brought additional value to the event.

Presenters included representatives from unions such as the Virginia Governmental Employee Association, the San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association, the Organization of SMUD Employees, the Oklahoma Public Employees Association, the Utah Public Employee Association, and CAPT, among others. These presentations offered real-world examples of independent unions thriving through solidarity, resource sharing, and strategic autonomous decision-making.

## CAPT's Legacy of Independence

Since our founding, CAPT has embraced the same fundamental principles that WAGE promotes: autonomy, professionalism, and self-governance. Psychiatric Technicians embraced a union model tailored to our professional needs, which remains true today. Our affiliation with WAGE strengthens this resolve by adding a national-scale support structure, without compromising our independence.

To learn more about how CAPT leverages our WAGE membership — and how you can engage at the local chapter level — contact your chapter leadership or CAPT headquarters. Together, we reaffirm our commitment to the profession, to each other, and to a union that is ours to shape.



## CAPT Recognizes Atascadero Psych Tech of the Year, Juan Nano

CAPT proudly recognizes Psychiatric Technician Juan Nano, a CAPT member at Atascadero State Hospital, who was recently named Psych Tech of the Year by his professional peers.

Juan's recognition reflects the respect he has earned among his colleagues for his professionalism, clinical skill, and commitment to patient care. Peer-nominated honors such as this highlight the vital role Psychiatric Technicians play in California's state hospital system and the high standards upheld across the profession.

Under Article 2.3 of the BU 18 Memorandum of Understanding, Professional Practice Groups (PPGs) provide a forum for recognizing excellence in Psychiatric Technician practice. While PPGs are administered by facility management, CAPT fully supports member recognition that uplifts the profession and celebrates the contributions of front-line Psych Techs.

In recognition of Juan's achievement, the CAPT Atascadero Chapter honored him with a cash award, underscoring the union's pride in its members and its commitment to celebrating excellence within Bargaining Unit 18.

CAPT congratulates Juan Nano on this well-deserved honor and thanks him for the outstanding work he does every day on behalf of his patients, coworkers, and the profession.

## Catastrophic Leave



*Helping one another through Catastrophic Leave Donations*

BU 18 MEMBER(S) CURRENTLY IN NEED OF C.L. DONATIONS:

**Jacqueline Castro, SPT (IC)  
Rigoberto Rangel, PT (ASH)**

CAPT got the concept of Catastrophic Leave off the ground three decades ago; the program's been in our state Bargaining Unit 18 contract since 1989.

Article 6.9 of the CAPT contract gives state-employed Psych Techs and related professionals the right to request leave donations from coworkers in cases of financial hardship due to injury or the prolonged illness of the state Bargaining Unit 18 member or his or her family member, or for parental or adoption leave purposes.

You can help state-employed coworkers by donating vacation, annual leave, personal leave, CTO and holiday credits. Simply contact your personnel office to fill out a Catastrophic Leave donation form. And don't forget: You can donate to state employees who work in different departments or facilities.

If you need help and have received department approval to get leave donations, contact CAPT to be included in our publications. You also may qualify for reduced union dues while you recuperate. Contact your chapter president to find out more.

Those requesting donations on our online and magazine lists will automatically be removed by the next *Outreach* publication date unless CAPT is informed of ongoing needs. If you still need to remain on our lists -- no problem! Just contact Chris Caro at (800) 677-2278 or [chris@psychtechs.net](mailto:chris@psychtechs.net).

# California Association of Psychiatric Technicians



## BU 18

Psychiatric Technicians  
of California's State  
Hospitals, Prisons &  
Developmental Centers

**Fighting for dignity  
— ours and theirs**



California's Psychiatric Technicians—members of Bargaining Unit 18—are the frontline professionals who provide critical mental and behavioral health care across our state institutions. We are licensed, trained, and trusted to protect and support Californians in crisis—those with serious mental illness, developmental disabilities, and behavioral needs.

Every day, BU 18 members serve as caregivers, first responders, and essential healthcare providers in our state's most challenging environments.

Our union, the California Association of Psychiatric Technicians, advocates for the rights, safety, and recognition of over 5,000 dedicated professionals. We champion mental health care as a public good, and with a 90% plus membership rate, we stand united for strong labor protections, fair contracts, and professional respect.

## Got a solution to a problem?

All legislation begins with an idea or concept: "There ought to be a law!" Ideas and concepts can come from a variety of sources, including professional organizations like CAPT.

If you have a great idea that you would like considered in CAPT's 2026 legislative agenda, contact your local chapter office or CAPT Consultant Coby Pizzotti at [coby@psychtechs.net](mailto:coby@psychtechs.net).





California Association of Psychiatric Technicians  
1220 'S' Street, Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95811-7138

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED