

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Peter Persic

**Date Submitted:** 06/15/2024 04:58 PM

**Council File No:** 23-0418

**Comments for Public Posting:** As a retiree, who served the city and its residents for over 30 years, I urge the Executive Employees Relation Committee (EERC) to take action and APPROVE the first request for a 2.6% discretionary COLA and the currently recommended 2.85% discretionary COLA. Many active City employees have recently accepted negotiations to significant pay increases. It is only fair that retirees also receive the COLA approved by LACERS, especially because retirees face the same high prices as employees, but with a much lower income. I urge EERC to do the decent and right thing and approve the COLA for retirees.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** RUTH B. PERRY  
**Date Submitted:** 06/19/2024 12:47 PM  
**Council File No:** 23-0418  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Attached is correspondence addressed to Mayor Bass and Councilmembers regarding the request for approval of a discretionary COLA for LACERS retirees dated June 19, 2023.



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**Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.**

P.O. Box 86264, Los Angeles, CA 90086

(800) 678-4145

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June 19, 2023

The Honorable Karen R. Bass  
Mayor, City of Los Angeles  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Bass:

On June 18, 2023, you sent an email endorsing the re-election of President Joe Biden. In this email you stated your "lifelong commitment to fighting for social and economic justice." You also state that "as mayor of our country's second-most populous city" you would like to "ensure every resident is treated equally and has an equal shot at success."

On behalf of RLACEI's (Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.) membership of over 6,000 City retirees, we hope you are true to your words and assist all City of Los Angeles retirees in receiving a 2.6% discretionary Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) so desperately needed for their financial well-being in these inflationary times.

On April 11, 2023, I delivered the following public comments before the Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement Systems (LACERS) Board of Administration:

"Good morning, Commissioners and LACERS staff.

I'm Ruth Perry, President of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. also known as RLACEI, speaking on Item 8A.

I'll begin with a rhetorical question: Did you know that 36% of LACERS retirees and beneficiaries receive a pension of less than \$36,000 per year? It's true, according to LACERS' last actuarial experience study.

I'm here on behalf of our over 6,000 retired members to strongly encourage you to vote in favor of staff's recommendation to:

- (1) Adopt the 3% cost of living adjustment that is within the Board's purview; AND
- (2) Request that the City Council and Mayor consider and adopt the 2.6% discretionary COLA that the LACERS staff has recommended.

In addition to the 36% of retirees and beneficiaries receiving less than \$36,000 a year, a total of about 14,000 or 63% of retirees and beneficiaries receive less than \$60,000 per year.

As you can imagine, these retirees and beneficiaries have been hit especially hard by the high inflation we all have felt over the last couple of years.

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Providing these and the other LACERS retirees the additional 2.6% COLA will not fully return them to the standard of living they had previously, but it will help make up for the sharp increases in rent, food, gas, and other daily expenses they incur – expenses that have increased in price more quickly than their pension has been able to keep up with.

Again, on behalf of our thousands of members, as well as all other retirees and beneficiaries, adopt the 3% COLA increase and request the City to adopt the additional 2.6% increase. These actions will help give LACERS pensioners a bit of quick relief and ease some of their financial worries.

Thank you for your consideration.”

It appears, the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Matthew W. Szabo, isn't in favor of ensuring the well-being and welfare of City of Los Angeles retirees, as Council File Number [23-0418](#) (Discretionary Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)/Retired Members and Beneficiaries/Los Angeles City Employees Retirement System has yet to be placed on any committee or council agenda. There is an unprecedented number of public comments attached to this council file and RLACEI encourages you to read as many as possible to get an idea of how important this minor increase in a retiree's pension can make.

It is important to note that LACERS actuarial assumption for COLAs has been 3.0% for many years now and due to the low inflation, before the last couple of years, has seldom had to pay the whole 3.0% to retirees. Therefore, LACERS has had actuarial gains over many of the past years. Approving a much-needed increase of 2.6% to retirees effective July 1, 2023, after all those years of savings will go a long way in giving them that “equal shot at success” in this financially draining period.

It is within your and the City Council's discretion and authority to bring this matter to a vote, with or without the CAO's recommendation. For the sake of all City retirees – do not allow this matter to die!

Please “be a part of the solution” and request your office to make every effort to get this matter on a Council agenda for action immediately.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,



Ruth B. Perry  
President, RLACEI  
and

2023 RLACEI Board of Directors

Beverly Anderson, Lucy Artinian, Mark Blunk, Beverly J. Clark, Nancy Hammoudian,  
Vicky Keoseian, Tom Moutes, Ann Seales, Elizabeth Torres

C: LACERS Board of Administration  
Neil Guglielmo, LACERS General Manager  
Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer  
Council Ad Hoc Committee on Government Reform (Krekorian, Raman, Blumenfield)  
Councilmembers Districts 1 through 15

## Communication from Public

**Name:** RUTH B. PERRY  
**Date Submitted:** 06/19/2024 12:49 PM  
**Council File No:** 23-0418  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Attached are public comments delivered to the Executive Employee Relations Committee (EERC)is correspondence addressed to Mayor Bass and Councilmembers regarding the request for approval of a discretionary COLA for LACERS retirees dated February 2, 2024.



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**Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.**

P.O. Box 86264, Los Angeles, CA 90086

(800) 678-4145

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February 2, 2024  
Executive Employee Relations Committee (EERC)  
Public Comments

Good morning, Mayor Bass and Councilmembers.

Ruth Perry, President and City retiree, Lucy Artinian, Treasurer and City retiree, Nancy Hammoudian, Secretary and City retiree, and Leonard Torres, Director and City retiree, present to speak on behalf of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.

On today's agenda you are conspiring two particularly important matters pertaining to retirees and active City workers. I speak on behalf of the over 6,000 RLACEI members and take the liberty of speaking on behalf of all LACERS retirees.

We do not begrudge our fellow City workers the opportunity to earn a decent living wage, however, we would like to point out that over 36% of LACERS retirees earn less than \$36,000 per year.

In addition, a total of about 14,000 or 63% of retirees and beneficiaries receive less than \$60,000 per year.

Retirees built and supported the City of Los Angeles over many, many years. They and their beneficiaries have been hit especially hard by the high inflation we all have felt over the last couple of years. They deserve no less than the current City employees do.

Providing RLACEI members and other LACERS retirees the additional 2.6% Cost of Living Adjustment will not fully return them to the standard of living they had previously, but it will help make up for the sharp increases in rent, food, gas, and other daily expenses they incur - expenses that have increased in price more quickly than their pension has been able to keep up with.

We are here to encourage you and request that you move this important matter to the City Council for action and adoption of the additional 2.6% discretionary COLA as LACERS staff has recommended. This matter is of foremost importance to our retirees, as evidenced by the large volume of public comments submitted. These actions will help give LACERS pensioners a bit of quick relief and ease some of their financial worries.

Thank you for your consideration and your time.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** RUTH B. PERRY  
**Date Submitted:** 06/19/2024 12:50 PM  
**Council File No:** 23-0418  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Attached is correspondence addressed to Mayor Bass and Councilmembers regarding the request for approval of a discretionary COLA for LACERS retirees dated June 19, 2024.



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**Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.**

P.O. Box 86264, Los Angeles, CA 90086

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June 19, 2024

The Honorable Karen R. Bass  
Mayor, City of Los Angeles  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Bass:

Exactly one year ago today, I wrote to you on behalf of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) 6,000 members to request you recommend approval of a 2.6% discretionary Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), to the City Council.

On February 2, 2024, a coalition of RLACEI Officers appeared before the Executive Employees Relation Committee (EERC) to encourage you to move the discretionary COLA to the City Council for approval. Both our requests fell on deaf ears, and the EERC moved and voted unanimously to take no action on this important matter after the City Administrative Officer, Matt Szabo, stated the City could not afford to approve this discretionary COLA “as it would compound year after year, forever.” On that same agenda you considered and approved contract negotiations for active City employees with significant wage and benefit increases.

Today, we again reach out to you in the hopes that you are still true to your word and to your “lifelong commitment to fighting for social and economic justice.” We do not take the City’s financial hardships lightly, nor do we begrudge our fellow City workers the opportunity to earn a decent living wage. We would hope that those same benefits that were provided to City workers over the next five years, resulting in an almost 25% wage increase, would be afforded to all City retirees by approving the minuscule, by comparison, 2.85% discretionary COLA proposed by the Los Angeles City Employees’ Retirement System (LACERS) Board of Administration for the second time in less than one years’ time.

This slight increase is so desperately needed for City retirees’ financial well-being in these inflationary times. I reiterate the public comments I made on April 11, 2023, to the LACERS Board that 36% of LACERS retirees and beneficiaries receive a pension of less than \$36,000 per year. How can that possibly be considered a living wage? Let’s also think about the 14,000 or 63% of retirees and beneficiaries who receive less than \$60,000 per year.

Most City salaries currently offer more than \$60,000 per year, on average. The COLAs being afforded active employees will also “compound year after year, forever,” yet there was no issue approving the Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) for them. Providing LACERS retirees with the additional 2.85% COLA will help them greatly over the same span of time that active City employees will receive their increases, despite Mr. Szabo’s compounding concerns.

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An unprecedented number of public comments have already been submitted to this council file item. If you haven't done so already, please make the time to read as many as possible to get an idea of how important a difference this minor increase in a retiree's pension can make.

Fortunately, while LACERS actuarial assumptions for COLAs have been 3% over many of the past years, the actual COLAs that LACERS has provided have been less due to low inflation. After all those years of savings, this much needed COLA will go a long way in giving retirees some relief in this financially draining period.

Again, on behalf of our thousands of members, as well as all other retirees and beneficiaries, adopt the 2024 3% COLA increase and request the City to adopt the additional 2.85% increase.

It is within your and the City Council's discretion and authority to bring this matter to a vote and approval.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,



Ruth B. Perry  
President, RLACEI  
and

2024 RLACEI Board of Directors

Beverly Anderson, Lucy Artinian, Mark Blunk, Beverly J. Clark, Nancy Hammoudian,  
Vicky Keoseian, Joe Quan, Ann Seales, Leonard Torres

C: LACERS Board of Administration

Neil Guglielmo, LACERS General Manager

Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer

Council Ad Hoc Committee on Government Reform (Krekorian, Raman, Blumenfield)

Councilmembers Districts 1 through 15

## Communication from Public

**Name:**

**Date Submitted:** 06/19/2024 05:56 PM

**Council File No:** 23-0418

**Comments for Public Posting:** To the Honorable Mayor Karen Bass and Los Angeles City Council Members: We are appealing to you to approve a 2.85% discretionary Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in addition to the 3.00% COLA adopted by the Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) Board for retirees for the coming fiscal year. As you are aware, this is the second request for a discretionary adjustment in two years. Please refer to Council File Index 23-0418. Both my wife and I were loyal long-term Los Angeles City Police Department (LAPD) civilian employees. We were dedicated hard workers with excellent attendance and notably positive records, each having received several certificates and awards for outstanding performance in our field of expertise. My wife was first employed as a Police Service Representative, working in an underground level of City Hall East at that time. It was a highly stressful position, yet she performed her duties with focus and dedication to keep police officers safe and to compassionately assist the residents of the great City of Los Angeles. She performed these essential duties with integrity and fairness to all. Later in her career, she worked administratively alongside LAPD detectives in the then Burglary-Auto Theft Division and helped develop a system to track stolen vehicle tags. She also provided support to LAPD's gang units, entering dangerous gang members' information into LA County's CalGang System, used by law enforcement officer inside and outside of LAPD. While at LAPD's Northeast Area, during the time when the Chief of Police ordered Senior Lead Officers (SLOs) back into basic patrol, she helped develop the LAPD Problem Solving Detail to fill in the gap for the SLOs. She enlisted the help of LA City Council Members and various other City Departments to assist community residents to report ongoing neighborhood issues which negatively affected community health, safety and quality of life. Later in her career, she promoted to Management Analyst II and administratively supported LAPD Internal Affairs Group during the Consent Decree in an effort to improve Police/Community relations. As for me, I spent my entire career with LAPD's Motor Transport Division, initially employed as an Equipment Mechanic, responsible for maintaining LAPD's police vehicles at several police facilities. Upon promotion to Senior Equipment Mechanic, I supervised employees who performed

those duties. I was responsible for the safety of City employees under my supervision, ensuring they were educated in safety procedures and monitored while using mechanical tools and equipment, as well as hazardous chemicals. We kept the City's police officers and detectives rolling safely in City vehicles as they responded to and investigated crimes. It was our great honor to serve the City of LA and we are deeply grateful to be cared for in our retirement by our City pensions and health insurance, of which the premium cost has increased over the years. However, while it is a blessing to be receiving a 3.00% COLA for this fiscal year, it is not sufficient by any means to bridge the gap in the true cost of living. We have seen our money stretched to the point where we are having a difficult time finding more ways to cut back on the our needs, let alone our wants. Many things have had to be curtailed in order to meet the cost of our day-to-day necessities and we are concerned about our financial future. While many active City employees have recently accepted negotiations to significant pay increases, City Retirees are facing the same high prices as active employees, but at a much lower income. We believe the City can and should do better by its loyal retired employees who gave the best years of their lives to the City, in our case to support those that ensure the safety of the public and the protection of property. Other City Retirees have worked equally hard in other areas by keeping the aging City infrastructure operating, maintaining City buildings and streets, disposing of waste materials, issuing permits of all kinds, staffing the City's libraries, Personnel and Payroll Departments, and many other City departments. Los Angeles is a significant and important city, a beacon and model in many ways for the rest of the country and globally. Its employees are and were crucial to her successful operation and reputation. We also believe the funds are available to fulfill this request, therefore we implore and encourage Mayor Bass and the City Council's Executive Employee Relations Committee to adopt the 2.85% discretionary COLA. and We extend our gratitude in advance to the Mayor and the Council for considering this request. Respectfully, Retired Senior Equipment Mechanic, LAPD Motor Transport Division (self) and Retired Management Analyst II, LAPD Internal Affairs Group (spouse)