

Communication from Public

Name: Mark R Calcaterra
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Council File No: 23-0418

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Honorable Mayor Bass and the Los Angeles City Council, Last fiscal year, the LACERS Board forwarded a recommendation that the Council and Mayor adopt a 2.6% discretionary COLA for LACERS retirees. While almost 500 retirees had their public comments posted last year, unfortunately, the CAO was opposed to the 2.6% discretionary COLA and that opposition may have led to this item not being considered by the Council. The LACERS Board recently recommended a 2.85% discretionary COLA, that apparently has been placed in the same Council File Index (23-0418) as the one from last year (that was not adopted by Council). As a retiree, I have been hit with the same high inflation as everyone else and recently got married, but have a relatively fixed income. All prices for food, gas, utilities, medical expenses, as well as rising interest rates on credit card debts have continually made it challenging to live in this environment. While LACERS assumes and has been funded assuming 3.0% retiree COLAs, due to low inflation over many years, it has seldom had to pay the full 3.0%, thus creating actuarial savings. Now, with the highest inflation in 40 years, retirees need a little something extra to help make ends meet. Unfortunately, I had to retire earlier than I had anticipated since I developed Parkinson's Disease; otherwise, I would have never retired from the City. I loved my job working as a Park Ranger (peace officer) and saw several of my co-workers received promotions after I left. During my career, I volunteered for nearly every assignment available including assignments to the mounted unit, emergency response unit assembled for displaced Hurricane Katrina victims, and my last two years of service as Lead Park Ranger for the Special Problems Unit for issues involving the vast homeless population residing in our parks (led by Captain Albert Torres). I assisted countless Los Angeles citizens as well as the enormous world-wide visitors coming to our City's parks and recreational facilities representing the City proudly as an ambassador of our City. Perhaps, through the years, I helped in a small but impressionable way to make the City Council and Mayor look good by my efforts. Please move forward with consideration and adoption of the proposed 2.85% discretionary COLA, in order to help retirees cope with the recent high inflation. Sincerely, Mark R. Calcaterra Retired - L.A. City Park

Ranger