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EA VOICE



BAAQMD Employees' Association Newsletter

Spring 2014



Message from the President

Recently, while examining the contents of the EA's storage files, members of the EA Board found a stack of old issues of the EA Voice. One thing that stands out in those issues is the amount of content that was actually contributed by individual EA members. It's easy to see how this publication got its name!

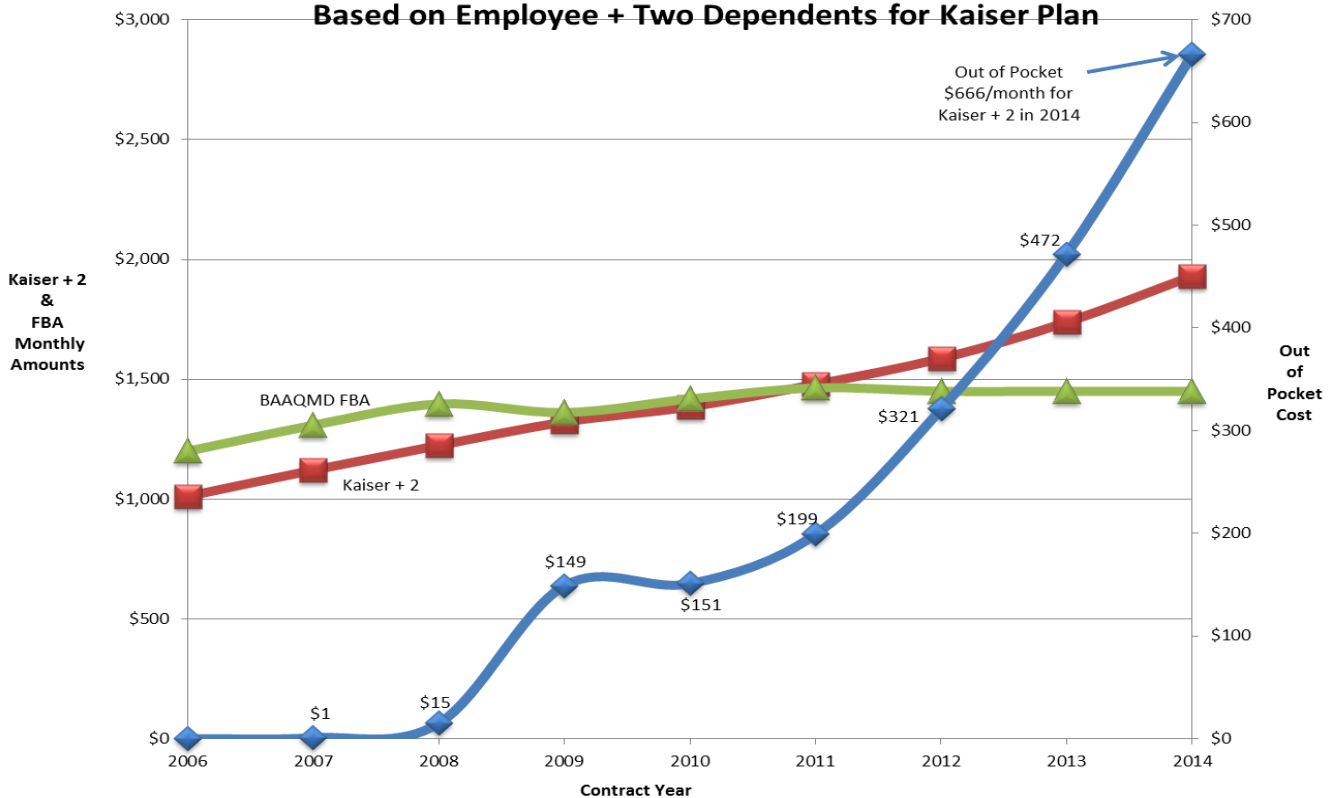


This issue harkens back to that era. I am happy to see the increase in member contribution to the Voice. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the members who have contributed to this issue and encourage all EA members to share their thoughts in future editions of the Voice. Your voice is important and we look forward to hearing from you!. *Best, Paul Grazzini: EA President*

Inside this Issue:

President's Message	1
Union	2-3
Trends	4-7
Finances	8
Spotlight	9
Contacts	10

Employee Monthly Out of Pocket Cost for Medical, Dental & Vision Based on Employee + Two Dependents for Kaiser Plan



Reality Snapshot: Graph by Kurt Malone, Supervising AQ Meteorologist

Part II: The New-and-Improved 21st Century U.S. Union! By Mike Wall, Supervising AQ Specialist



Before I follow-up my Voice Vol.2, Issue 2 'Part 1 – The History of Unions' article with this [*hopefully more optimistic*] Part 2 conclusion, I think it's valuable to begin by briefly re-visiting (in part) my previous contribution in the Winter 2013 edition by Toronto's York University Political Science Professor Sam Gindin:



Mike Wall

*“...There's only one way that Public Sector Unions can survive: if Public Sector workers just try to bargain as usual and just **defend their membership only** – they're finished...For Unions to be taken seriously [they must demonstrate how] they **relate to members of their working-class community.**”*

I agree.— after all, as I mentioned in my last article, Unions were created in the first place to improve the lives of the working class plain and simple. Professor Gindin's observation is directly supported in the recently published book 'Strike for America: Chicago Teachers Against Austerity' by Micah Uetricht.¹ The book highlights how the 26,000-member Chicago Teachers Union's 2012 strike ultimately prevailed by employing Gindin's exact strategy. I think it's valuable for our EA to examine the CTU's path:

The CTU originated from the first U.S. Teachers Union = the American Federation of Teachers founded in 1900. Chicago city government started pushing for public education roll backs including budget cuts and privatization in the early 2000s, which culminated in 2004 with the “Renaissance 2010” Plan. The Plan resulted in many school closures, and ‘turnarounds’ which didn't outright close schools, but instead fired all the previous staff and turned the property over to (non-union) private charter operations. The result was widespread upheaval for students, and 1000s of teachers without their job.

Union leadership had grown apathetic and supported the 2010 Plan, along with endorsing the firing of 10% of their membership. Outraged members accused the leadership of being “asleep at the wheel” and “joyriding,” because at the same time they paid themselves high salaries [our leadership are all volunteers of course, so that's likely a good mechanism to curb corruption; but we also don't have 26,000 members...]

Rank and file teachers began to mobilize in an attempt to reform the Union and convince Union leaders to fight school closures and the assault on Chicago's public education system. Union leadership remained unresponsive, so R&F took matters into their own hands and, without the official backing of the Union, began **organizing alongside community members** in low-to-middle working class communities who were also voicing opposition against the city's education reforms (Chicago public schools are attended by severely impoverished students – according to a Reuters 9/18/2012 article² following the CTU's victory: “More than 80 percent of public school students qualify for free meals based on low family incomes”).

The R&F leaders and community members formed a grassroots coalition called Core. The group began taking actions that the Union leadership should've been doing for years, such as voicing opposition against the city's plans directly to pertinent city officials. The group began realizing some **victories**, including successfully getting several schools removed off of the school closure list several years in a row, which the Union leadership never even tried. According to Uetricht, the tangible victories of Core continued until, at the behest of their partner community members, the leading teachers of Core ran for Union leadership offices in 2010.

They were successful and took-over the leadership in 2010. The new leadership immediately began creating new structures within the Union that improved internal levels of democracy, recruiting/development of the future leadership among the R&F, and began training teachers on issues (political and non-) that are of interest to the broader working class of Chicago.

Meanwhile, as Uetricht states, free market education reformers passed a bill in the Illinois state legislature that made it illegal for state teacher unions to strike *unless* they received greater than 75% of *voting members* to vote in favor of the strike (vs. the previous simple majority required). The Emanuel Administration then proposed a successor MOU for the CTU that would remove caps on class sizes, and require teachers to work longer hours for the same amount of pay. The CTU rejected the contract, and held a strike vote. A resounding 90% of members voted 'yes' (98% of voting members).

I'm sure we all remember seeing the overwhelming solidarity and uproar of cheers from the Chicago general public on the news (including the vast majority of parents most hampered by the strike). During the 7 day strike teachers went door-to-door in working class neighborhoods explaining why they were striking resulting in even more support. Their efforts to identify with the community resulted in an unequivocal victory for the teachers – in sports parlance it was a blowout. As Uetricht puts it they clearly won the “PR battle” against Emanuel. Emanuel retracted his demands, and agreed to an average pay increase of 17.6% over four years, in addition to other benefits improvements.

Compare this outcome to the 2013 Bart strike where public sentiment was overwhelmingly negative against the Union – when's the last time you've heard of the Bart Union reaching-out to Bay Area working class people to build coalitions and create solidarity? Never, right? As Uetricht concludes in his book: 'What's needed going-forward is the type of unionism that acts on behalf of the entire working class and sees itself as an anchor for a broader movement of fairness and equality.' (sound familiar? Professor Gindin above, yes?)

So ask yourself: How many Bay Area residents currently know who/what our EA is?

I hear examples of other Bay Area Unions following this model. For example, voicing support for the current “low pay is not ok” **minimum wage movement** by fast food and other low wage workers across the country seeking \$15 an hour. A rally was held in Oakland last December³ in which SEIU Local 1021 and the Oakland Chapter of the California Nurses Union participated in support, as well as local labor and community groups such as the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE), the Oakland chapter of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), and the SF Labor Council.²

Other examples: on February 27 SEIU Local 87 members turned-out at a SF rally to support a national bus tour pushing **immigration reform**⁴, and on March 18 the SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW) held a free healthcare enrollment fair in SF to help people sign up for free and low-cost health coverage through Medi-Cal or Covered California.⁵

A Union that's doing a great PR outreach campaign in my opinion is the SFPD Union. View their videos at <http://sfcitycops.com/> for those that haven't seen yet. They also highlight their charitable contributions on their Union website at <http://www.sfpoa.org/giving-back/charity>.

As I alluded to in my first article, I personally refuse to believe we live in a 'race to the bottom' era, but rather all members of the working class deserve a livable wage. As members of a very fortunate minority benefiting by belonging to a Union, I believe we have a duty to encourage other non-members to mobilize to do the same. If you also believe you enjoy this benefit (hopefully you do), perhaps start by: 1) creating unity within our EA, and then, if you haven't already, 2) (at an appropriate time, of course) share the foundational benefits of Unions with your family/friends who may not yet be aware – such as establishing a fair living wage, good health benefits, and safe humane working conditions. And our Union leadership can begin being more vocal in support of local Bay Area working class struggles as discussed above (for starters a statement saying as much added to our Mission Statement on the EA Voice website?)

We have the honor of working for most premier Air District in the world in best city in the world, so naturally it follows that we should continue to strive to also have the best EA we can.

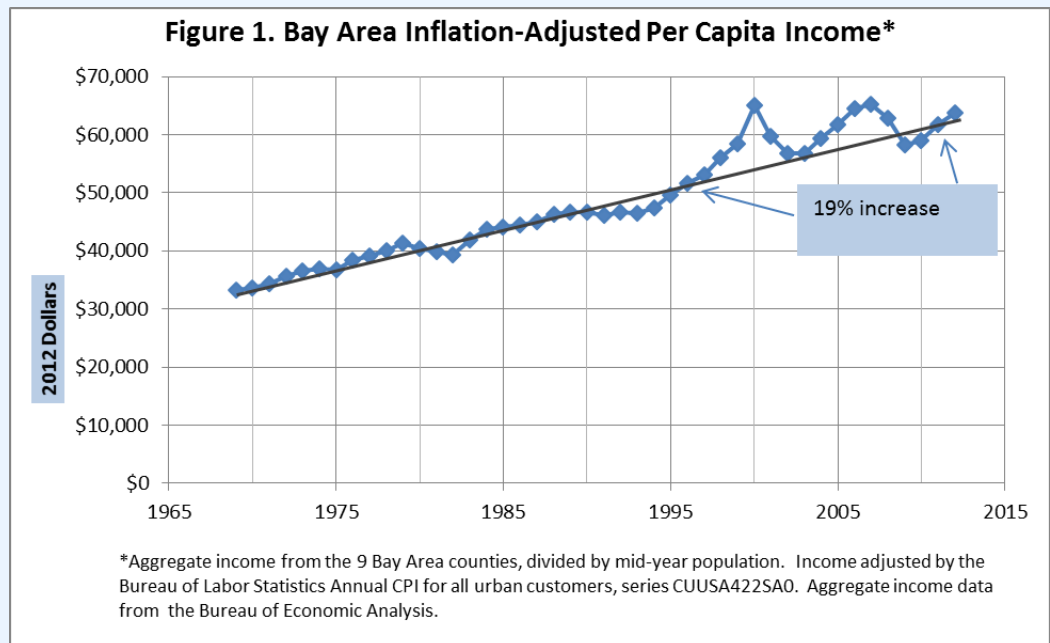
* Other examples of other local community/labor outreach organizations include: The U.C. Berkeley Labor Center, the Revive Oakland Coalition, and the SF Office of Labor Standards
Sources: <http://i.imgur.com/JDMkGQd.png>

A Look At Trends in BAAQMD Pay & Benefits By David Fairley, Statistician

Over the past few years, the EA has made wage and benefit concessions because of the recent recession. Now that the economy appears back on track, it seems like a good time to look at where we stand and what is reasonable to ask for in negotiations.

Here I've taken some District data I found, plus data from my own pay stubs where, being a pack-rat, I've saved them back to when I started at the District in 1987. I

reached the top of my pay scale in the early 1990s so, for the past 20 years, my pay rate has been the same except for negotiated cost of living adjustments (COLAs). This analysis looks back at changes over this period.



Trends in Bay Area Income

I'm not an economist, but this is an attempt to ask how the Bay Area is doing economically relative to historic trends. Figure 1 shows the trend in Bay Area per capita income adjusted for inflation. Specifically, this is the total income for a year for the nine Bay Area counties divided by the counties' population, and adjusted to 2012 dollars. The figure shows steady growth until about 1990, with the exception of the 1982 recession. There was another recession in the early 1990s. This was followed by the dot-com bubble through 2000 and burst through 2002-3, and the housing bubble through 2007, followed by its burst. Now the economy has picked up again. What's clear is that any estimate of economic growth depends on where you start. I've drawn in a line that fits the data from the 1970s and 1980s pretty well. Let's assume that this is the Bay Area's level of sustainable growth. The line projects this growth forward. The line goes through the points for 1996 and 2011. Over this period, Bay Area per capita income increased about 19% in real terms (that is, adjusting for inflation).

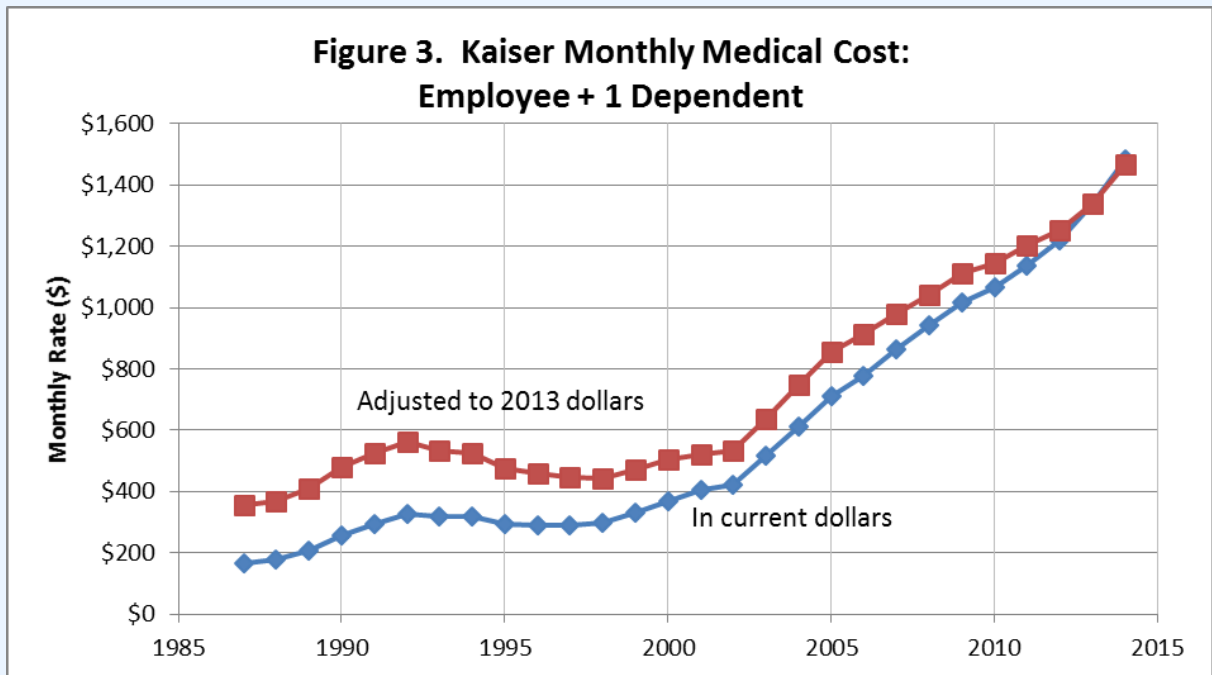
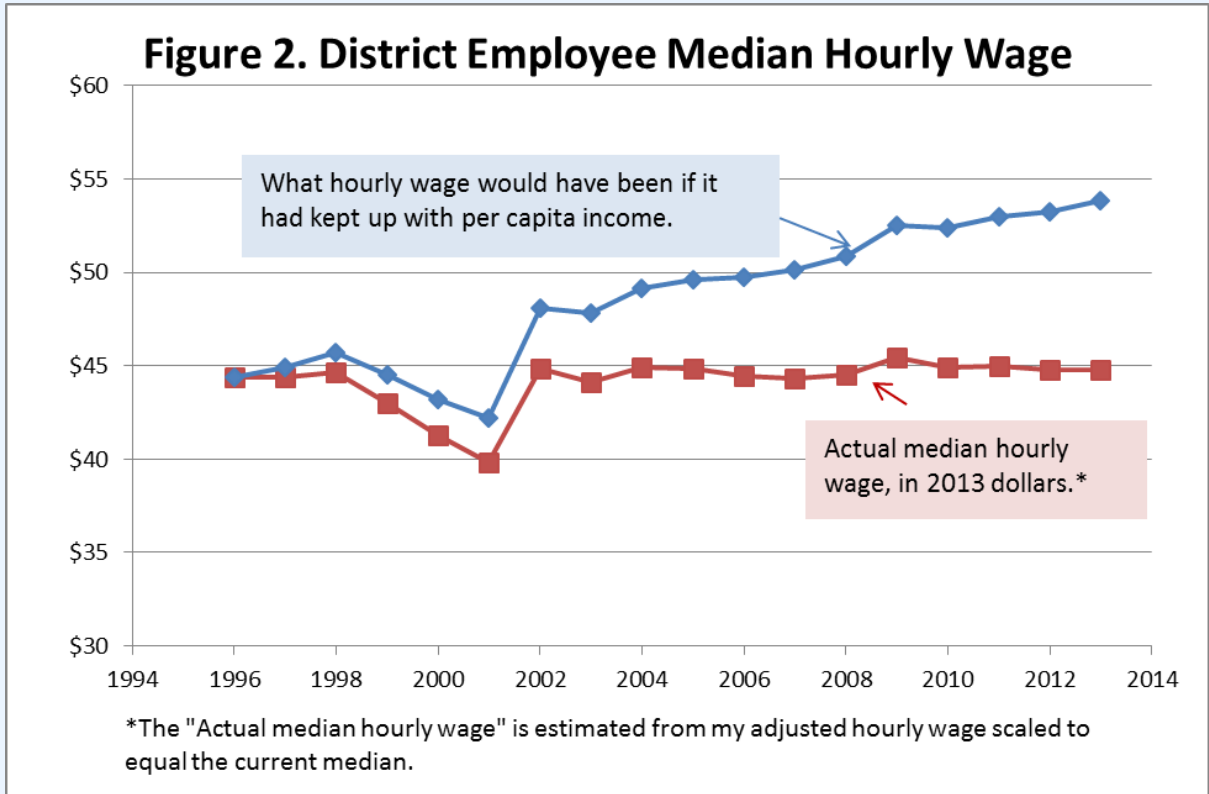
Hourly wage trends

Figure 2 uses my hourly wage from 1995 to the present. Shown in red, it is adjusted for inflation and scaled to the median of the hourly wage for District employees today. I've been classified as statistician this whole time, and there are no I, II, senior,... steps, so my job classification has remained the same. Thus, the only changes have been COLAs. Any District employee whose job classification and level hasn't changed would have a similar-looking line.

Note that the line is *flat*, as in, no increase. The figure shows that we would be making \$8 per hour more on average if pay rate had kept pace with the Bay Area's per capita income. That's \$16,000 per year more.

Inflation in medical costs

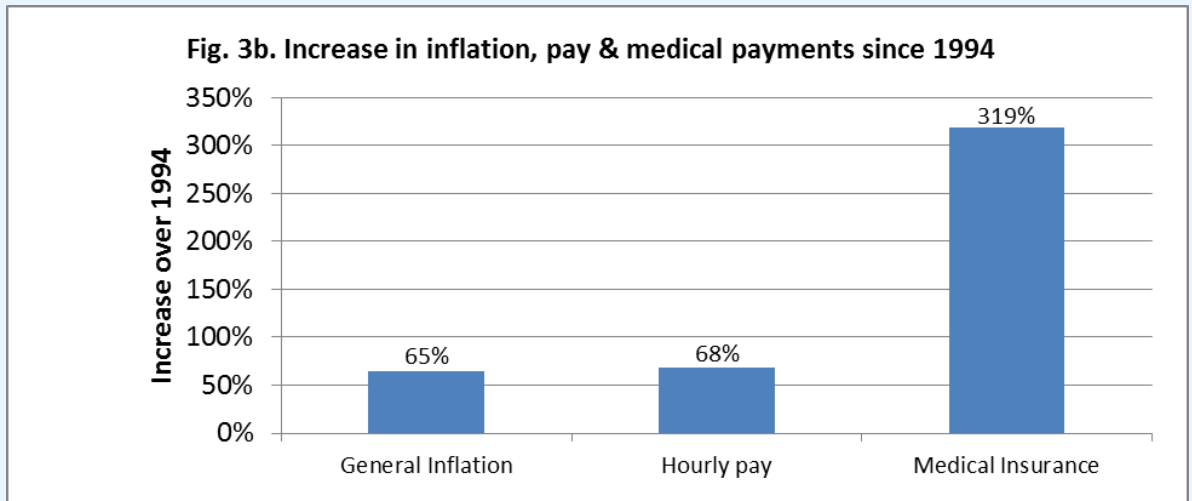
From the District's point of view, it has to consider all its costs, including our fringe benefits. Before factoring this in, I'd like to provide a discussion of what's happened with the costs of medical care. Briefly, medical costs are out of control. Even accounting for inflation in all items, medical costs have more than tripled since the late 1990s.



The rest of this section presents my rant on just how much the District pays for medical care. You may want to skip to the next section on Fringe Benefits.

Figure 3b shows a comparison of the increase in medical inflation with the increase in total inflation and my hourly pay. The latter two have gone up 65% and 68% since 1994. Meanwhile, the cost of medical coverage has increased over 300%.

We can also consider how much extra the District would have to pay me if medical inflation had increased at the same rate as ordinary inflation. Figure 3c shows that, had the inflation in medical costs been kept at the rate of ordinary inflation, the District would have saved \$11,428.21

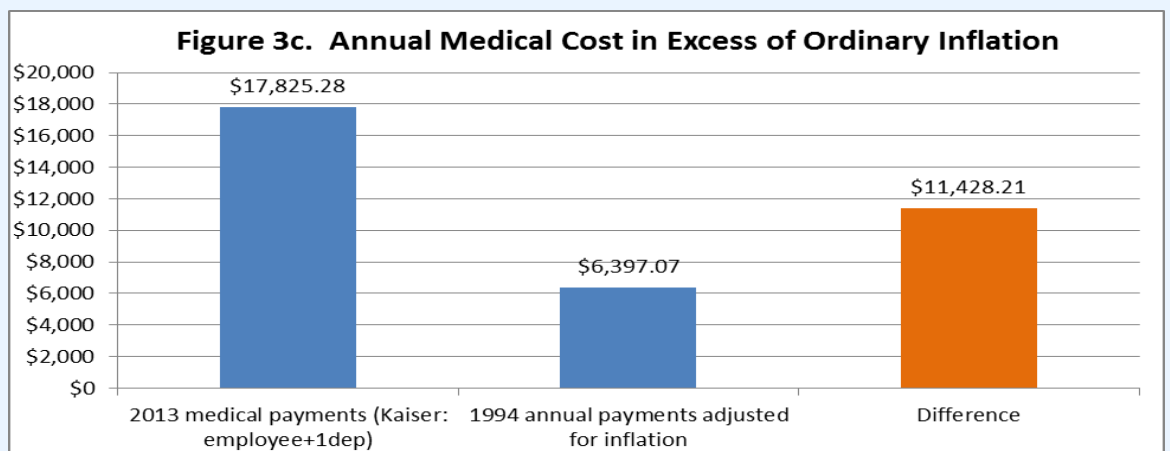


for an employee who has Kaiser coverage for herself and one dependent. Wouldn't it be nice if we could all get \$11,000 raises? And don't forget that the District also pays over \$1,000 per employee toward Medicare.

My point is that the US health care system is very much a labor issue. The fact that it is tied to employment makes it even more so. Lose your job and you lose your employer-provided health care. We should all remember that it doesn't have to be this way. In no other industrialized country is health care coverage contingent on having a job. In every other industrialized country, equal quality health care is a *right*. And in no other industrialized country does medical care even come close to costing as much as it does in the US. In the US, 2013 per capita health care costs were \$8,508. In Canada, per capita costs were \$4,522, barely 50% of US costs. The only country that spends more than \$5,000 is Switzerland, at \$5,643 per capita (http://pgpf.org/Chart-Archive/0006_health-care-oecd). But by many measures, the health of US citizens is mediocre. For example, the US ranks 40th on a UN list, beaten out by Chile, Costa Rica and Cuba, with Canada's life expectancy more than 2 years longer than here. (I know, why would you want to spend 2 years in the freezing north?). Providing universal care a la Canada would be easy – just extend Medicare to the whole US population. The solution is there, just not the political will to make it happen. (End Rant)

Medical Care vs. Fringe Benefits

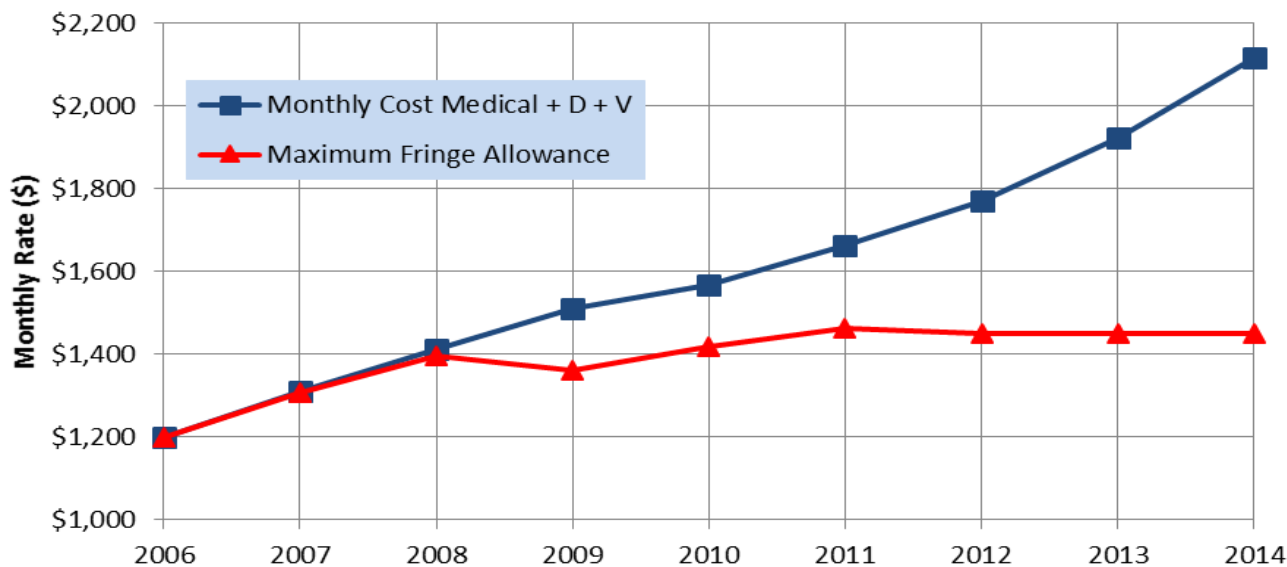
Our fringe allowance has historically been intended to cover the full cost of medical, dental and vision care for an employee and two dependents. Figure 4 shows a comparison of our maximum monthly fringe allowance with the monthly cost of Kaiser plus dental plus vision for an employee with two dependents.



In 2006, the fringe allowance covered the costs of medical, dental and vision coverage for this employee's family. By 2014, this employee has to pay \$665 per month out of pocket.

Figure 5 combines the information from above. It compares our actual compensation with what it would have been if it had kept up with the economy and with medical inflation, starting in 2006, the last year when fringe kept up with Kaiser. The red line shows an estimate of what the total compensation has been for a District employee who earns the District median wage and is in Kaiser with two dependents. Our total compensation has been essentially flat since 2009.

Figure 4. Total Monthly Medical Cost vs. Monthly Fringe Allowance



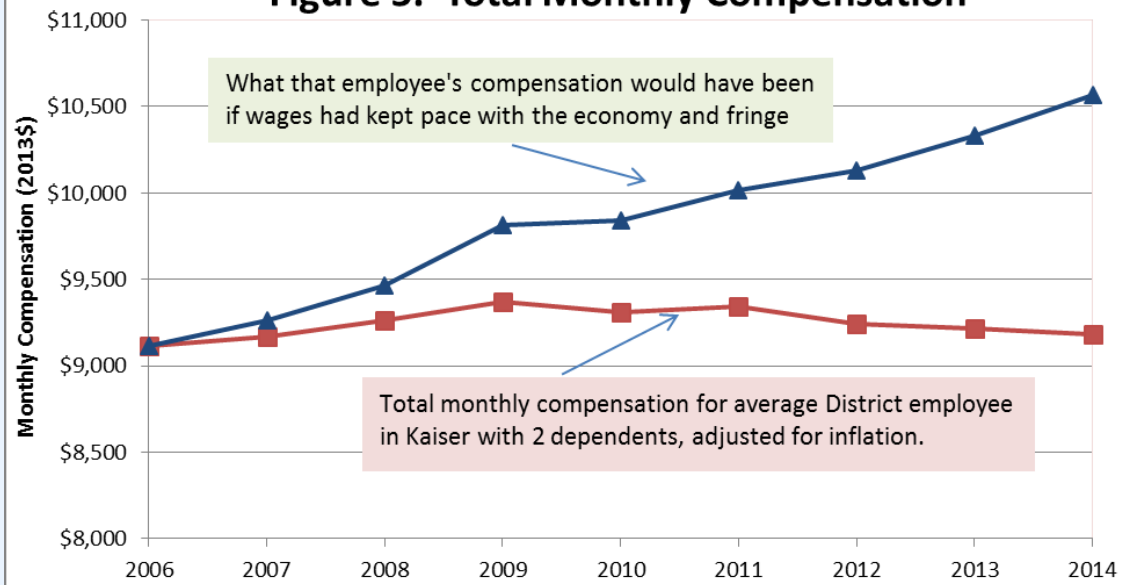
Cost of Kaiser + dental + vision for an employee and 2 dependents versus the maximum fringe 2006-2014.

The blue line shows what the monthly compensation would have been if our wages had kept pace with the Bay Area economy and our fringe had kept pace with the increases in Kaiser costs. The graph shows that the average employee would be getting almost \$1,400 more per month.

The Bay Area economy has recovered from the recession of 2008-09, as shown in Figure 1. Per capita income grew 19% in real terms between 1996 and 2011. During that time, our agency has helped clean the air in the Bay Area significantly. The health benefits are large. I estimate that Bay Area residents are living several months longer on average because of cleaner air. And they lead healthier lives with fewer deaths from respiratory and heart disease, and fewer asthma attacks.

This translates into real savings to Bay Area residents – savings that far exceed the costs of operating the District and cleaning up the air. Now we are embarked on an even more important project – reducing our greenhouse emissions and saving a habitable planet for our children. My point is that we do a good and valuable job. We deserve to get compensated for it.

Figure 5. Total Monthly Compensation



Annual Treasurer Report

April 1, 2013 – April 1 2014

Balances as of 4/1/2014

EastWestBank:
\$24,368.15

EastWestBank Money Market:
\$42,883.77

EastWestBank CD:
\$100,980.36

SFFCU 12 MO:
\$101,735.15

SFFCU 12 MO:
\$101,249.12

SFFCU Regular:
\$5.02

Total: \$371,221.57



Banking Summary

4/1/2013 through 4/1/2014

Category Description	4/1/2013- 4/1/2014
INCOME	
EA Dues	16,067.11
Investment Income	
Interest	954.25
Other Investment Income	50.76
TOTAL Investment Income	1,005.01
TOTAL INCOME	17,072.12
EXPENSES	
Activities	
Meeting	2,523.10
Party	6,517.61
TOTAL Activities	9,040.71
Bookkeeping	9.20
Business Agent Fees	14,140.00
Education	
Other Education	550.00
TOTAL Education	550.00
Gifts	609.68
Legal Service Fees	22,736.60
Legal Services Fees	11,813.30
Misc	1,448.00
MOU & Contract Expenses	1,625.00
Reimbursement	4,192.01
Reimbursement - Printing Of MOUs	186.04
Supplies	
Postage	41.40
TOTAL Supplies	41.40
Tax	
State	25.00
Other Tax	20.00
TOTAL Tax	45.00
Web Site Hosting Fee	250.20
TOTAL EXPENSES	66,687.14
TRANSFERS	
FROM EastWestBank Money Market 6 Check ...	25,000.00
TO EastWestBank Standard Business Checking	-25,000.00
TOTAL TRANSFERS	0.00
OVERALL TOTAL	-49,615.02

Mission Statement

To **ASSIST** in the maintenance of the higher standards of public service.

To **IMPROVE** the wages, hours and working conditions of its members.

To **REPRESENT** its members as a bargaining unit on all matters affecting the welfare of the members, including but not limited to wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment.

To **UNITE** all employees who are members of the Association for the purpose of maintaining, protecting and advancing their interest, both individually and as a group; and to foster and advocate professional competency and proficiency of its members.

To **FOSTER** a better understanding and cooperation between the Association and the District.

www.eavoice.org



Photo of Social Committee & EA Members + Family/Friends Enjoying Movie Night

Spotlight: EA's First Movie Night!



On the first day of spring, the EA Social Committee hosted its first movie night. The movie was "Non-Stop" starring Liam Neeson and Julianne Moore. It was an action packed thriller filled with every action movie stereotype and keeps you guessing until the end. Attendees received a ticket and concession vouchers—guests paid a small fee of \$5.00.

Our next Social Committee meeting will be Tuesday April 23 at 11:30 in the 3rd floor conference room. All members are welcome to join us as we start planning our Summer Picnic.

The Move! Comments Wanted!

The new building. We want to hear from you. Due: May 9th



April 1 & 2 the District hosted employees to check out the new building and to look at several office furniture mock ups. Now that some thinking time has passed; we would like to hear your thoughts! It can be positive or negative but please keep it constructive. We will post comments anonymously in our next issue of The Voice. You can either hand a letter to you EA representative or you can send us a letter to:
BAAQMD Employees Association P.O. Box 420434 San Francisco, CA 94142



EA Newsletter Archives

Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement as to when old archived issues—as far back as 1973—of EA Voice (and earlier EA newsletters) will be available for online viewing and downloads. This project is coordinated by the EA's new Archive Committee in preparation of digitizing the EA files for the upcoming move.

Meet your EA Board Members & M&C Team

EA Board Members

President:

Paul Grazzini

Air Quality Inspector II, In the Field

Vice-President:

Christopher Coelho

Air Quality Inspector II, In the Field

Treasurer:

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Administrative Analyst, 4th Floor, Main Office

Corresponding Secretary:

Tina Landis

Administrative Analyst, 4th Floor, Main Office

Recording Secretary:

Christopher Rumm

AQ Instrument Specialist II, In the Field

Professional Stewards:

Kurt Malone

Senior AQ Meteorologist, 5th Floor, Main Office

Franklin Dickey

AQ Case Settlement Specialist

7th Floor, Main Office

Technical Stewards:

In-Field:

Robert Schusteritsch

Air Quality Instrument Specialist II

In House:

John Foster

Air Quality Specialist II, 4th Floor, Main Office

Inspection Stewards:

Arnold Argao

Air Quality Inspector II, In the Field

Patricia Barnes

Air Quality Inspector II, In the Field

Clerical Steward:

Ruby World

Accounting Assistant II, 4th Floor, Main Office
(EA Voice Editor)

Meet & Confer Team:

Robert Cave (Captain)

Senior Air Quality Specialist

Paul Grazzini

Air Quality Inspector II

Christopher Coelho

Air Quality Inspector II

Will Saltz

Air Quality Specialist II

Michael Wall

Supervising Air Quality Specialist

Derek Klein

Programmer Analyst II

Tina McRee

Supervising Air Quality Specialist

Kurt Malone

Supervising AQ Meteorologist

Ruby World

Accounting Assistant II

Business Agent:

Will Saltz

Air Quality Specialist II



<http://tinyurl.com/EAVoiceFB>



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Employees Association
P.O. Box 420434
San Francisco, CA 94142
Email: info@eavoice.org



Ask

for EA Representation
if You Suspect Disciplinary
Action During a Meeting
with Your Manager...It's
Your Right!

Your EA Steward can accompany you into any meeting with the District that could lead to disciplinary action but you must speak-up before or during the meeting:
ASK FOR YOUR STEWARD!

To learn more, please refer to the MOU, EAVoice.org and/or Google the Weingarten Act.

When in doubt, contact your Steward or the EA President/Vice President ASAP.