

California child care providers get 'historic' deal^[1]

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Excerpts

For months, members of the California Child Care Providers United union rallied and marched for better pay and benefits, taking their demands to Sacramento as their contract was set to expire.

As Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the California budget on June 30, an agreement was reached, giving the union's more than 40,000 members a pay raise.

For the next two years, the state budget allocates \$600 million for pay raises in the form of increased subsidy rates for caregivers contracted by the state to provide subsidized care.

Ivonne Bejar, of Child Care Providers United, said it was a great start.

"The rates we were getting paid were very low, and, despite COVID and inflation, we hadn't had a pay increase since 2012," she said in Spanish.

The new agreement also includes something providers had never had before: funds for retirement and health care.

"There are many providers that are over 75 years old and they're still working because they don't have the luxury of retiring," Bejar said. "How would they pay their bills?"

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"This is the highest rate increase they've ever received, at 20%," she said, outlining what's in the deal. "Their historic retirement funded by the state at \$80 million ongoing, and a health care benefit that's at \$101 million ongoing."

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San Diego City Councilmember Raul Campillo has supported the union's movements. "Frankly, the people who take care of our oldest citizens and our youngest citizens are not paid enough for how difficult a job it is," he said. "You have to be very patient you have to be physically fit. You have to have the the smarts of all the different things it takes to care of a senior citizen or an infant or child, and they don't get paid nearly enough."

Ultimately, he said, "all that does is it makes the environment better because seniors get better treatment and the children get better programming young in their lives."

Members will be voting from July 19 until the end of the month to finalize the agreement.

Region: United States^[3]

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