

Editorial: California's continuing pension woes

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Sometimes it takes a worst-case example to show that pension reforms in California remain elusive.

For years, critics have railed about spiraling public employee pensions, which dwarf retirement benefits for most private sector workers – those few who are fortunate to have any.

In 2016, state employee pensions cost taxpayers \$5.4 billion, according to the state Department of Finance.

That's more than 30 times what the state paid for retirement benefits in 2000, before the effects of a new pension law kicked in. The law made 200,000 civil servants eligible to retire at 55 – and in many cases collect more than half their highest salary for life. CHP officers were allowed to retire at 50 and receive as much as 90 percent of their peak pay for as long as they lived.

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