

2021-2022 CIVIL GRAND JURY

2022 Continuity Report

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, a Continuity Committee of the Civil Grand Jury performs a review of the responses received from the preceding Grand Jury reports in order to follow up on implementation of the reports' recommendations.

The California Penal Code Section §933(c) specifies response times.

- **PUBLIC AGENCIES.** The governing body of any public agency must respond within 90 days from the release of the report to the public.
- **ELECTIVE OFFICERS OR AGENCY HEADS.** All elected officers or heads of agencies/departments are required to respond within 60 days of the release of the report to the public.
- **FAILURE TO RESPOND.** Failure to respond, as required to a Jury report, violates California Penal Code Section §933.05 and is subject to further action that may include additional investigation on the subject matter of the report by future Juries.

The 2021-2022 Grand Jury reviewed the progress of recommendations and responses of previous reports back to 2015. The 2021-2022 Grand Jury selected its 2020-2021 report, "Was the Riverside County November Consolidated General Election Administered Fairly and Impartially?", to follow-up on the status of the responses received.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury requested an interview with the Riverside County Registrar of Voters (ROV) to provide an update and status of the Grand Jury recommendations.

SCOPE

The responsibility of the Civil Grand Jury is to follow-up on previous reports and the recommendations and evaluate the responses to ensure compliance with California State Penal Code §933(c) and §933.05. The area of focus is on how the responses comply as noted below:

- 1) The recommendations have been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- 2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
- 3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

- 4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

FINDINGS

The Report included thirteen recommendations. The response of the ROV agreed with all thirteen recommendations and indicated they would be implemented. Currently nine of the thirteen recommendation have been completed. Below is a listing of the recommendations not currently completed. It should also be noted that the response from the ROV Department was due by October 1, 2021, however, was not received until November 16, 2021.

- **Recommendation #2**, addressing a detail plan to be provided to the County Executive Office outlining the steps and plans for administering the election process and submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

Response: The plan was developed in January 2022 and is out for public comment. This will be completed by the end of 2022.

- **Recommendation #3** recommends a video series be developed that illustrates the steps the Registrar of Voters Department goes through in the election process.

Response: The videos are partially complete. The video on a ballot life cycle will be completed by mid-2022.

- **Recommendation #5** addresses the need to provide faster election results.

Response: This is partially completed. The delay is caused by back orders of necessary supplies. The anticipated completion is September 2022.

- **Recommendation #12** addresses the electronic tracking of ballot containers as they are transported.

Response: This recommendation is still open requiring a feasibility study and waiting for Riverside County Information Technology to assist in the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the future RCCGJ follow-up in six months for a status of all recommendations with a focus on the recommendations listed above.

SUMMARY

The responses provided by the ROV and the Board of Supervisors (BOS) complies with the California Penal Code. Although the Registrar of Voter's response was submitted and approved by the Board of Supervisors on November 16, 2021. The late responses are attributed to the timing of the BOS meetings and not necessarily to the ROV.

The established time frames for the completion of the remaining four recommendations are reasonable.