



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

**NEWS RELEASE**

**Release Date:**

**February 10, 2022**

**FROM:** Michael G. Bowman, Presiding Judge  
Steven Gevercer, Grand Jury Advisor Judge

**CONTACT:** Kim Pedersen  
Public Information Office  
(916) 591-0050  
sscpi@saccourt.ca.gov

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GRAND JURY FINDS  
CITY OF ISLETON IS BREAKING ELECTION LAWS**

A Sacramento County Grand Jury investigation has found that the Isleton City Council violated state law, and ignored voter concerns by failing to properly fill a council seat following the death of one of its members in April 2021. The position continues to remain empty some nine months later and could potentially go unfilled throughout 2022, diluting the public's representation in government.

The Isleton City Council is comprised of five council members elected by voters to four-year staggered terms. On April 23, 2021, one of the Isleton City Council members unexpectedly passed away leaving a vacancy. California law requires that a vacancy be filled either by appointment or by calling for a special election within 60 days from the date of the vacancy. The City of Isleton posted to its website a "Notice of Appointment" asking for candidate applications and specifically stated that the seat would be filled in June 2021. But that never happened.

At its June meeting, council members learned that the cost to hold a mail-in ballot special election would be \$32,000. While several applicants applied to fill the vacancy, the remaining council members stated publicly that they did not want to pay for a special election nor, did they wish to appoint anyone to the position. This decision was made despite the advice of legal counsel that failure to fill the vacancy would be a violation of state law, and the request from area residents to fill the vacancy.

"The Council essentially voted unanimously to break the law," explains Sacramento County Grand Jury Foreperson Deanna Hanson. "They did not adequately explore options available to them to remedy the situation. This is a disservice to the residents of Isleton who are not fully being represented in government decisions and actions."

In its report, the Sacramento County Grand Jury details the violated laws and discusses the potential impacts, including split decisions and lack of citizen representation which could open up the city to lawsuits. The full investigation is available for public review on the Grand Jury website: [www.saccourt.ca.gov](http://www.saccourt.ca.gov).