



## **SACRAMENTO COUNTY GRAND JURY NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HOMELESSNESS DEMANDS STRONGER COLLABORATION BETWEEN OUR COUNTY AND CITIES**

Despite nearly 10,000 men, women, and children homeless every night in Sacramento County, local government leaders have failed to respond effectively, according to an investigative report issued by the Sacramento County Grand Jury.

Homeless individuals and families are at risk. Homelessness issues are complex including a lack of affordable housing complicated by individuals with mental and substance abuse issues. Those experiencing homelessness are sleeping in places not intended for human habitation, eating from garbage cans, and unable to clean themselves or seek medical attention.

The numbers skyrocket yearly, and local government has failed to respond effectively. The issue continues despite spending over \$300 million on homeless services annually. The cost does not include the cost of law enforcement, public health, sanitation, lost commerce, or the impact on the quality of life of various communities.

During its eight-month investigation, which included a review of voluminous documents, policies and interviews of elected leaders, the Grand Jury found no comprehensive plan to stymie the recent dramatic rise in homeless tents and encampments.

The Grand Jury report recommends forming a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to tackle the development and management of a comprehensive county-wide strategic plan. Such a JPA would include local elected officials who would be directly accountable to all voters in the county and cities.

"It's not the first time a JPA has been proposed for Sacramento County and its seven cities," Norv Wellsfry, Grand Jury Foreperson said. "The 2018-19 Grand Jury recommended a JPA after its investigation found no coordinated organizational model to attack the homeless issue. But that fell on deaf ears."

Leaders in Sacramento County must prioritize a more effective regional approach to solve the growing homelessness problem. County and city leaders must band together with a comprehensive homelessness strategy. Too often, jurisdictions work independently or informally together, spending hundreds of millions of dollars, and they have failed. The Sacramento County Grand Jury recommends that a Joint Powers Authority will provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the challenge of homelessness.

*The Sacramento County Grand Jury is the independent watchdog over public entities within the county. Concerned citizens can contact the Grand Jury on a confidential basis through written complaints that alert the Grand Jury to issues within public entities; we would like to hear from you at [www.sacgrandjury.org](http://www.sacgrandjury.org).*