

SACRAMENTO COUNTY GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT 2021-2022

A CALL FOR LEADERSHIP





**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
Grand Jury**

June 30, 2022

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The Honorable Michael G. Bowman
Presiding Judge
Sacramento County Superior Court
720 9th Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Judge Bowman,

It is a privilege to submit the 2021-2022 Sacramento County Grand Jury Final Report, "A Call For Leadership." This document represents thousands of hours of work conducted by the 19-member Grand Jury over an 18-month period, involving extensive research and inquiry. The investigative reports found here reflect the belief that the county's elected officials and leaders must be held responsible for their actions. This is also true for the Grand Jury itself, which is entrusted to serve as advocates for the residents of Sacramento County.

For the first time, the Grand Jury has released its investigative reports to the public upon completion, rather than holding all reports to the conclusion of the Jury's term. This has resulted in a more immediate awareness by the public to information impacting their lives. The Grand Jury values this process as a critical change which has also resulted in increased and significant media coverage, bringing a timely recognition of concerns to the community. Follow-up Status Reviews, also carried out in this single jury term, provide an added measure of assurance that government entities are held answerable to their constituencies.

Additionally, considerable progress has been achieved in providing improved access to the Grand Jury's mission and work through a newly updated website and outreach materials. Greater understanding and appreciation for what the Grand Jury can do on behalf of Sacramento County's residents are provided through these tools.

Thank you, Judge Bowman, Judge Hom, Judge Hersher and particularly Advisory Judge Stephen M. Gevercer for your support in authorizing the Grand Jury to maximize the value of our work. We also acknowledge the support and assistance of Assistant County Counsel Krista Whitman, Public Information Officer Kim Pederson, and especially Grand Jury Coordinator Erendira Tapia-Bouthillier.

Sincerely,

Deanna Hanson, Foreperson
2021-2022 Sacramento County Grand Jury

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SACRAMENTO COUNTY GRAND JURY FINDS: WHEN IT REALLY MATTERED, COUNTY ELECTEDS FAILED TO LEAD

With the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic as its backdrop, the 2021-22 Sacramento County Grand Jury was empaneled for 18 months, from January 2021 through June 2022. This allowed jurors, who traditionally serve a 12 month-long term, to complete their mandated work while strict COVID-19 protocols were in place.

The 19-member Grand Jury is charged with reviewing citizen complaints, conducting investigations, and performing inspections as advocates for the county's residents. Investigation topics included public health and safety, education, environmental services, public agency financial and administrative operations, and the criminal justice system.

The reports found here represent thousands of hours of work. Scrutiny of Public Hearings, documents and data, interviews with public officials, research into government entity procedures and authorizations, and the analysis of laws have led the Grand Jury to find:

- The County Board of Supervisors and several other elected officials have been indifferent and neglectful in their role to protect the very people they represent;
- County elected officials appeared uninterested and unresponsive to the critical problems facing their county and its residents;
- Nowhere was this indifference and neglect more evident than in the multiple investigations undertaken by jurors who examined the impacts of COVID-19 on the Sacramento community;
- The Grand Jury was appalled to find that in a countywide health crisis like no other, the record reveals a lack of attention and transparency by elected leaders. From merely handing over millions of federal COVID-19 dollars to the Sacramento County Sheriff to ignoring the emergency needs of the County Office of Public Health;
- This was also the case for investigations regarding smaller entities. An assessment of oversight by the Board of Directors for the Del Paso Manor Water District resulted in the Grand Jury's determination that elected officials had been ignoring mounting safety risks for decades. A complaint regarding a vacant seat on the Isleton City Council led the Grand Jury to find that elected officials blatantly ignored the law and their own oath of office by failing to fill a vacant position on the City Council.

The reports also found laudable instances where public officials have acted with transparency, focus and leadership to address the challenges facing their agencies. The City of Sacramento, in stark contrast to the Sacramento Board of Supervisors, actively solicited input from the Community and then distributed its COVID-19 funds to directly assist the agencies and businesses struggling under the impacts of the pandemic. The County Public Health Officer, in

Executive Summary

the absence of support and funding from the Board of Supervisors, marshalled her staff and volunteer resources to implement her Office's pandemic response plan and protect the health of County residents. The Office of Public Health conducted extensive testing and outreach, and directed preventive actions such as stay-at-home orders, non-essential business closures and masking requirements which limited expansion of the pandemic.

Across these reports, the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations point to the absence of transparency and accountability among elected officials and their administrators. Each report then outlines specific areas where improvement in responsive and accountable operations is most urgently needed.

The 2021-22 Sacramento County Grand Jury has been honored to serve this region with the goal of ensuring that the institutions of government perform at the highest level and in the best interest of Sacramento residents.

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2021-2022 GRAND JURY INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS

SACRAMENTO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ABANDONS RESPONSIBILITY FOR COVID-19 CARES ACT SPENDING

The Sacramento County Grand Jury is calling into question the use and distribution of more than \$181 million received in federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act funding by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. Following a nearly year-long secret investigation, the Grand Jury has learned that in the midst of a countywide emergency, the Supervisors made questionable and opaque maneuvers that skirted the intent of the CARES Act, to the benefit of County coffers and with scant regard for the needs of its citizens.

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento County Board of Supervisors](#)
- [Sacramento County Sheriff's Office](#)

Sacramento County Grand Jury Status Review: Sacramento County Board of Supervisors Non-Responsive to Covid-19 Investigation

When required to respond to a Sacramento County Grand Jury report showing a less than robust record of leadership at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Grand Jury found that, Board of Supervisors has opted to dodge and deflect. But the Grand Jury's deep concern, plainly stated in that February 2022 report, continues.

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

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2021-2022 Grand Jury Investigative Reports

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE ABANDONED BY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN COVID-19 CRISIS

An extensive investigation into the handling of the COVID-19 crisis by the Sacramento County Office of Public Health (OPH) has led the Grand Jury to find that the County Board of Supervisors ignored its Public Health Officer for five months before finally engaging in any sort of dialogue regarding the County's COVID-19 activities and its impact on County residents.

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento County Board of Supervisors](#)
- [Sacramento County Sheriff's Office](#)

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REQUIREMENT FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR ELIGIBLE SACRAMENTO COUNTY PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Sacramento County Grand Jury recommended that all eligible persons in Sacramento County's Public K-12 school districts be required to have the COVID-19 vaccine. The report calls upon the 13 school districts, representing more than 260,000 children and thousands of personnel within the County, to mandate vaccinations for all eligible public-school students and staff as a prerequisite for in-person attendance of classes or school activities.

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento City Unified School District](#)
- [Sacramento County Office of Education](#)

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2021-2022 Grand Jury Investigative Reports

DEL PASO MANOR WATER DISTRICT FLOODED WITH PUBLIC SAFETY DANGERS

A seven-month investigation into a formal complaint against the Del Paso Manor Water District has led to a scathing report by the Sacramento County Grand Jury identifying a literal flood of concerns ranging from water contamination to aging infrastructure to non-compliance with State of California water monitoring requirements. The report cites an on-going significant lack of public transparency by the District's Board of Directors to act on numerous recommended improvements made by its own consultants and other entities. A failure to complete an estimated \$35 million in repairs and upgrades could have disastrous results, including the potential failure of the entire water complex.

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Del Paso Manor Water District President](#)
- [Del Paso Manor Water District](#)
- [Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District](#)
- [Sacramento County Board of Supervisors](#)
- [State Water Resources Control Board](#)
- [Sacramento County District Attorney](#)
- [Sacramento LAFCo - Initial](#)
- [Sacramento LAFCo - Additional](#)

Sacramento County Grand Jury Status Review: Del Paso Manor Water District

There are more than 100 special districts in Sacramento County, with a staggering 3,400 spread across the state. From local water and sanitation services to lesser known entities like cemetery districts, each operates under individualized budgets and authorities. While some work well and have a large revenue support base, many others struggle to provide essential resources.

The **Full Status Review Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento LAFCo](#)
- [Supervisor Rich Desmond](#)
- [Del Paso Manor Water District President](#)

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2021-2022 Grand Jury Investigative Reports

ISLETON CITY COUNCIL VIOLATES STATE 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 **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [City of Isleton - Initial](#)
- [City of Isleton - Update](#)

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PUBLIC CONFINEMENT REVIEW

The Sacramento County Grand Jury is mandated each year by California Penal Code 919 (b) to inquire into the conditions and management of public confinement facilities in Sacramento County. In fulfillment of this obligation, the 2020-2021 Sacramento Grand Jury toured all six confinement facilities within its jurisdiction, as well as the Sacramento County Sheriff's Work Release Division.

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

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RESPONSES TO THE 2019-2020 GRAND JURY REPORTS

ELK GROVE PARKS: WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Cosumnes Community Services District](#)
- [City of Elk Grove](#)

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IMPACT OF GENTRIFICATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ON THE DISPLACEMENT OF RESIDENTS

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento County Board of Supervisors](#)
- [Downtown Sacramento Partnership](#)
- [Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency](#)
- [City of Sacramento](#)

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HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS: HOW ARE DISTRICTS IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY DOING AND WHAT ARE THE BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPROVEMENT?

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento County Office of Education](#)

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Responses to the 2019-2020 Grand Jury Reports

911 – THE SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFFING CRISIS

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento Police Department](#)
- [City of Sacramento](#)

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ELECTION SECURITY IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento County Board of Supervisors](#)

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CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 1022: A GIFT TOO GOOD TO IGNORE

The **Full Report** can be found [HERE](#)

Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations

- [Sacramento County Board of Supervisors](#)
- [Sacramento County Sheriff's Office](#)

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2021-2022 SACRAMENTO COUNTY GRAND JURY



Pictured (Left to Right)

Front Row:

Rachel Kaldor, Deanna Hanson (Foreperson), Jeannine English

Second Row:

Fran Bremson, Olivia Washington, Tina Bonilla, Steve Holland, Barbara Marquez

Third Row:

Norv Wellsfry, Gregg Magaziner, Ken Smith, Jill Sherrill, Jim Parvis, Chris Budwine, Endy Tapia-Bouthillier (Grand Jury Coordinator)

Back Row:

Greg Williams, Scott McDonald, Marc Remis, Brian McElroy, Patty Murray-Turner

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