

SACRAMENTO COUNTY GRAND JURY STATUS REVIEW:

SACRAMENTO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS NON-RESPONSIVE TO COVID-19 INVESTIGATION

A critical investigative report into the distribution and use of more than \$181 million federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors (Board) was released by the Sacramento County Grand Jury in February 2022. Titled, “SACRAMENTO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ABANDONS RESPONSIBILITY FOR COVID-19 CARES ACT SPENDING,” the Grand Jury found that the Board abdicated its leadership and oversight responsibilities to the County Executive for at least five months into the pandemic emergency.

In its report, the Grand Jury provided evidence that the Board handed off important pandemic response decision-making and CARES Act funding responsibility to its County Executive without requiring him to provide regular public updates or conduct community outreach. The deep concern plainly stated in the February 2022 Grand Jury report continues.

The Board’s responses to the Grand Jury report reflects their continuing refusal to acknowledge or accept responsibility for any deficiencies of leadership, accountability or engagement during a countywide emergency. The Board unfortunately cloaks itself in bureaucratic, misleading, and at times inaccurate statements. The record of Board sessions showing the actions NOT taken to publicly account for use of emergency funding, engaging with local residents and businesses, and even with its own agency heads, stands on its own, and is documented in the Grand Jury report. It was this pattern of lack of leadership, engagement and oversight that was contained in the Grand Jury’s report, and the basis of its Findings and Recommendations.

The Board of Supervisors did not demand regular public briefings on emergency response activities and emergency funding utilization. To be clear, and as the Grand Jury has reported, the County Office of Emergency Services, and the Office of Public Health were prepared and responsive, and homeless population COVID-19 containment efforts were effective. However, the Board failed to provide a public forum to explain what was going on between County government services and County residents given the unprecedentedly widespread impact of the pandemic.

This was the focus of the Grand Jury report; the Board of Supervisors should have been, and must become, an engaged and active overseer of County government operations and residents’ well-being, especially during all-encompassing public emergencies. Shrinking behind the letter, rather than following the spirit of federal relief funding intended for community relief; relying solely on one or two County executives rather than initiating regular and public briefings by agency directors. These were the deficiencies the Grand Jury found and still hope to see corrected.

A new County CEO initiated a 2022-2023 Community Engagement Plan to more adequately address allocation of relief funding received after 2020. However, the Board seems to have

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missed the point of the Grand Jury report: County Executives and plans come and go, but Sacramento residents deserve its elected leaders to maintain watchful and engaged oversight of County government activities and services.

The following elected officials and City Managers are being provided with a copy of this Status Review since they were either required or invited to respond to the original investigative report. No response to this Status Review is required.

- Don Nottoli, Chair
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Ann Edwards, County Executive
Sacramento County
700 H Street, Room 7650
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Rich Desmond, Vice Chair
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Darrell Steinberg, Mayor
City of Sacramento
915 I St., 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Phil Serna, Supervisor
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Howard Chan, City Manager
City of Sacramento
915 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Patrick Kennedy, Supervisor
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Porsche Middleton, Mayor
City of Citrus Heights
6237 Fountain Square Dr.
Citrus Heights, CA 95621
- Sue Frost, Supervisor
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Christopher W. Boyd, City Manager
City of Citrus Heights
6360 Fountain Square Drive
Citrus Heights, CA 95621
- Scott Jones, County Sheriff
Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
4500 Orange Grove Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95841
- Bobbie Singh-Allen, Mayor
City of Elk Grove
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758
- Jason Behrmann, City Manager
City of Elk Grove
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758
- Eric Pene, Mayor
City of Isleton
P.O. Box 716
Isleton, CA 95641
- Kerri Howell, Mayor
City of Folsom
- Charles Bergson, City Manager
City of Isleton

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50 Natoma St.
Folsom, CA 95630

P.O. Box 716
Isleton, CA 95641

- Elaine Andersen, City Manager
City of Folsom
50 Natoma St.
Folsom, CA 95630
- Shawn Farmer, Mayor
City of Galt
380 Civic Drive
Galt, CA 95632
- Lorenzo Hines Jr., City Manager
City of Galt
380 Civic Drive
Galt, CA 95632
- Garrett Gatewood, Mayor
City of Rancho Cordova
2729 Prospect Park Drive
Rancho Cordova CA 95670
- Cyrus Abhar, City Manager
City of Rancho Cordova
2729 Prospect Park Drive
Rancho Cordova CA 95670