

Grand Jury Report

RESPONSE FORM

Grand Jury Report Title: *Elections Redux*

Report Dated: June 22, 2017

Response Form Submitted By:

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
501 Low Gap Road
Ukiah, CA 95482

Response MUST be submitted, per Penal Code §933.05, no later than:
October 6, 2017

I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the FINDINGS portion of the report as follows:

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered:
F2, F6
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered below, and have **attached, as required**, a statement specifying any portion of the Finding that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons therefore.

I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the RECOMMENDATIONS portion of the report as follows:

- The following Recommendation(s) have been implemented and **attached, as required**, is a summary describing the implemented actions:
R3, R5
- The following Recommendation(s) have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, **attached, as required** is a time frame for implementation:

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- The following Recommendation(s) require further analysis, and **attached as required**, is an explanation and the scope and parameters of the planned analysis, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared, discussed and approved by the officer and/or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed: (This time frame shall not exceed six (6) months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report)
R2
- The following Recommendations will NOT be implemented because they are not warranted and/or are not deemed reasonable, **attached, as required** is an explanation therefore:
R1

I have completed the above responses, and have attached, as required the following number of pages to this response form:

Number of Pages attached: 2

I understand that responses to Grand Jury Reports are public records. They will be posted on the Grand Jury website: www.co.mendocino.ca.us/grandjury. The clerk of the responding agency is required to maintain a copy of the response.

I understand that I must submit this signed response form and any attachments as follows:

First Step: E-mail (word documents or scanned pdf file format) to:

- The Grand Jury Foreperson at: grandjury@co.mendocino.ca.us
- The Presiding Judge: grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov

Second Step: Mail all originals to:

Mendocino County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 939
Ukiah, CA 95482

Printed Name: John McCowen

Title: Chair, Board of Supervisor

Signed:  Date: October 4, 2017

MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT TITLED:

ELECTIONS REDUX

The Board of Supervisors welcomes this opportunity to respond to the above entitled report. The Grand Jury correctly notes (F6) "members of the Board of Supervisors stated a willingness to dedicate resources to improvement, including increasing the budget for hiring more election workers and reserving more physical space for ballot counting." This is not merely based on statements by individual members of the BOS, but is the consensus opinion of the BOS stated in open session of one or more meetings of the BOS. The Board of Supervisors is committed to making available the resources necessary to hire personnel, purchase equipment and/or reconfigure physical space to improve the timely processing of election ballots. Specifically, the BOS supports hiring and training additional personnel to process ballots that are not counted on election day. The BOS applauds the dedication to accuracy of the Registrar of Voters but believes it is a disservice to the public when thousands of ballots remain uncounted for weeks after Election Day. In addition to supporting any reasonable method for increasing the processing of votes not counted on Election Day, the BOS also supports increasing the number of polling place voters and is willing to make resources available to do so. Thousands of voters who no longer have the option to cast a vote at a polling place on Election Day choose instead to mail or drop off their ballot at the last minute with the result that it is not counted until days or weeks after the election.

Pursuant to the request of the Grand Jury, the Board is responding to the following:

F2. Lack of timely results frustrates candidates and voters.

Agree.

F6. To achieve more timely results, members of the Board of Supervisors stated a willingness to dedicate resources to improvement, including increasing the budget for hiring more election workers and reserving more physical space for ballot counting.

Agree.

Recommendations:

R1. The BOS and the Registrar of Voters review SB 450 and either adopt the provisions of SB 450 or change the current ballot counting procedures for more timely results. (F1, F2, F4-F8)

The BOS will not implement this recommendation at this time as it is not reasonable. The first opportunity Mendocino County will have to adopt the provisions of SB 450 would be for the 2020 election cycle. The BOS, as stated in

F6, has stated a willingness to increase the budget for more election workers and equipment in order to improve result timelines.

- R2. Regardless of the adoption of the provisions of SB 450, the Registrar of Voters requests updated more efficient equipment and software. (F2-F8)

This recommendation requires further analysis. The BOS has stated a desire to purchase improved equipment independent of the provisions of SB 450. In a timeframe not to exceed six (6) months the BOS would like a discussion on recommended equipment and software needed to ensure a more efficient election.

- R3. The Registrar of Voters hires and trains more workers to provide more timely results. (F1, F2, F5-F7)

This recommendation has been implemented. As stated by the Registrar of Voters, "For every election we attempt to hire more poll workers and extra help...We place a request to fill with the County's Human Resources Department for extra help on an annual basis." The Registrar is actively pursuing increased poll workers. The Board of Supervisors would like an emphasis placed on an increase in persons hired to process ballots not counted on Election Day and encourages the Registrar of Voters to provide periodic updates on election results prior to completion of the final canvas.

- R5. The Registrar of Voters provides training and outreach education instructing voters how to correctly cast a vote with the aim to reduce the number of spoiled and provisional ballots. (F6, F8, F9)

This recommendation has been implemented. Every voter receives instructions on how to complete ballots properly and poll workers are well trained on how to aid voters with questions. These instructions are on both the mailed sample ballot and the official ballot. The BOS would welcome statistics on the number of spoiled ballots and specifics on errors.