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## **SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY RELEASES REPORT ON UNCOUNTED 2014 PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOTS**

Poor record keeping and ballot tracking documentation had the potential to undermine confidence in the County's part of the 2014 Gubernatorial Primary Election, an election where more than 800 uncounted ballots were discovered the next morning, an investigation by the 2015-16 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury found.

The Grand Jury recommends the County Board of Supervisors order election officials to develop written procedures for tracking Vote by Mail ballots. The Grand Jury further recommends policies be developed for immediately informing the public of election discrepancies before the vote is certified. The Grand Jury's findings and recommendations, made public today, are based on a months-long investigation that included witness interviews, tours of various facilities and the review of election documents.

County election officials waited nearly a year after the 2014 Gubernatorial Primary Election to admit that more than 800 ballots went uncounted and then acknowledged the situation only after The Record newspaper began making inquiries. Those 800 Vote by Mail ballots were picked up by elections personnel from the Post Office the morning after the election but were not counted based on existing state law. The Election Code has been changed, a move it is believed will alleviate some of the problems of mailed ballots. However, the Grand Jury investigation uncovered lax ballot tracking and raised concerns about ballot storage security.

The Grand Jury's findings and recommendations are meant to draw attention to issues and to suggest ways to remedy problems. Only the Grand Jury foreman is allowed to comment publicly about Grand Jury investigations.

The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors is required to submit a response to each finding and recommendation in the report. Those responses must be sent to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days.

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