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**2019-2020 SAN JOAQUIN GRAND JURY
RELEASES REPORT ON
THE SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

Today, the San Joaquin County 2019-2020 Civil Grand Jury released its [report](#) investigating the San Joaquin County Office of the Public Defender. The Public Defender's Office affords indigent persons the legal right to competent and effective counsel across a broad range of criminal and civil situations.

The Grand Jury decided to investigate after it received a complaint from a citizen alleging mismanagement of the Public Defender's Office. In addition, the Grand Jury reviewed a June 2019 article published in The Record newspaper, which outlined details alleging sexual harassment and the failure of Management to adequately address complaints.

The Grand Jury investigated the disproportionately high number of internal complaints filed against the Public Defender's Office. The effect of Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, lawsuits, attorney improprieties, questioning of leadership, and the formation of cliques, cast a cloud of distrust and created a lack of cohesiveness throughout the Public Defender's Office, even though many allegations were not substantiated. The Grand Jury found the lack of respect and professionalism within the Public Defender's Office contributed to division and disruption and although the Public Defender followed County HR policies, problems continued to escalate.

The Grand Jury recommends San Joaquin County hire an independent consultant to conduct a thorough operational review of all aspects of the Public Defender's Office and develop and implement a plan to utilize the recommendations from the operational review.

The public is encouraged to read the complete report by visiting the [Grand Jury's website](#).

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