

NEWS RELEASE

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ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY

700 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE WEST • SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92701 • 714/834-3320
www.ocgrandjury.org • FAX 714/834-5555

TO BE CONTINUED...FOLLOW-UP FOR OPEN FORMAL GRAND JURY REPORT RESPONSES

Santa Ana, California--- When a California Grand Jury issues its reports each year, the affected agencies and departments referenced in those reports are required by law to respond to the report's findings and recommendations within a specified time (60 or 90 days). In practical terms, this means the sitting Grand Jury (GJ) must record, track, and evaluate the responses to the findings and recommendations of the prior year's Grand Jury reports. This process is generally referred to as "Report Continuity" or "Report Tracking." This is an important function when one considers that Grand Jury recommendations are thoughtfully formulated after serious, in-depth investigations requiring several months of study, and that commitments are made by the respondents to implement changes, or at least to do further analysis of the issues raised.

The 2015-2016 Orange County Grand Jury focused on recent years when tracking by County administration of the required responses to Grand Jury report recommendations fell short of the established practice of earlier years. The County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the County agencies and departments they govern (referred to here as the Target Audience), left a number of responses open for fiscal years 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 (referred to here as the Focus Period). This report looks at whether the commitments made by the Target Audience respondents were actually fulfilled and if open responses were ever resolved.

While each sitting Grand Jury has a central role to play in ensuring report continuity for the preceding term's reports, there is nevertheless often great difficulty in tracking the final outcome of non-rejected recommendations that could not reach closure within the statutory 60 or 90 day response period (aka open recommendations). The Grand Jury also determined that effective tracking by County administration of open recommendations has not been consistent over the years, despite a 1994 directive from the BOS that the County Administrative Office (CAO)/County Executive Office (CEO) track and provide an annual update six months after the initial response submission date. This commitment apparently got lost in the organizational and leadership changes that occurred in the CEO's office in recent years. The Grand Jury investigation concluded that this review process needs to be reinstated and formally integrated into the best practices and procedures of the BOS and CEO and that this review should include all currently open report responses originating from the BOS and the Target Audience..

The Grand Jury report, including Findings/Conclusions and Recommendations, can be found on the Orange County Grand Jury's website, www.ocgrandjury.org. This report will also be included as part of the Final Report of the 2015-2016 Grand Jury, to be published later this year.

2015-2016 Orange County Grand Jury

A blue ink signature of Peter Hersh, written in a cursive style.

Peter Hersh, Foreperson