



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT NO.1616: "OUR CHILDREN IN NEED"

FINDINGS – California Penal Code Section 933.5(a) requires a response to the designated findings of the Grand Jury.

Most of the findings and recommendations contained in this report are covered in separate reports which have been responded to individually. However, one new finding and several new recommendations not covered in other Grand Jury Reports are included as follows:

F74. The present levels of personnel, support, and financing are inadequate to protect the County's children in need.

Response: Respondent disagrees with the finding. While the County does provide extensive services that protect children in need, staff in each department impacted continuously seek additional resources to perform these activities more effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS - California Penal Code Section 933.05(b) requires a response to the designated recommendations of the Grand Jury.

R1. The Board of Supervisors should enact the recommendations directed to them made in Grand Jury reports 1605, 1609, 1612, and 1615.

Response: Refer to responses in referenced reports 1605, 1609, and 1612 made by the Board of Supervisors. Report 1615 on Truancy is not related to County functions.

R2. The Board of Supervisors should issue a policy statement of the County's intention to provide the personnel, facilities, training, and administrative support necessary to protect the county's children in need.

Response: This recommendation will be implemented through the annual County Budget process in which the Board establishes program priorities based on available revenue. The children's programs examined by the Grand Jury in reports 1605 and 1612 are mandated by federal and state laws, and as such are the responsibility of those entities to provide policy direction and adequate funding for personnel, facilities, training and administrative support.

R3. The Board of Supervisors should create a position of "Youth Advocate", with the power to:

- a. Investigate all county agencies charged with providing services to children;**
- b. Report his/her findings and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and to the public every six months;**
- c. Recommend to the Board of Supervisors the amount of money necessary to accomplish his/her recommended actions; and**
- d. Advocate before the Board of Supervisors on all matters related to children in need.**

Response: This recommendation will be evaluated through the annual County Budget process in which the Board establishes program priorities based on available revenue. A "Youth Advocate" could be a beneficial voice and champion for children in need in our county. However, rather than a charge to investigate county agencies, a better role for a Youth Advocate would be to lead and facilitate the development of a children's system of care and a network of safety net services in the county, linking public agencies, community based organizations, school based programs and law enforcement into a team of multi-disciplinary services that can be funded through the creative use of federal and state funds, private foundation funds, grants, and local funds.

R4. The Board of Supervisors should issue a policy statement of the County's intention to provide material increases in the funding for the county's agencies in order to create, and accomplish the recommendations of the Youth Advocate in protecting our children in need, and identify the funds to do so.

Response: This recommendation will be implemented through the annual County Budget process in which the Board establishes program priorities based on available revenue.