

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: LOCKED UP BUT NOT LOCKED OUT: INMATE VOTING RIGHTS IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Report Date: JULY 11, 2025

Response by: HUMBOLDT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FINDINGS

The county agrees with the findings numbered 1 through 4.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 will not be implemented by the Board of Supervisors as it must be implemented by the Humboldt County Sheriff.

Date: Sept. 23, 2025

Signed: _____
Michelle Bushnell, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

Number of pages attached: 2



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

825 Fifth St. Room 112, Eureka, CA 95501

Telephone: 707-825-7266 Email: CAO@co.humboldt.ca.us

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LOCKED UP BUT NOT LOCKED OUT: INMATE VOTING RIGHTS IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY
DATE: TUESDAY, SEPT. 23, 2025

In the Grand Jury Report, “*Locked Up But Not Locked Out, Inmate Voting Rights in Humboldt County*” the Grand Jury has requested that the Board of Supervisors respond to Findings 1 through 4 and Recommendation 1. The County Administrative Office is proposing the following response as detailed below.

FINDINGS

Finding 1: *Voting procedures in the jail have improved, resulting in a record number of inmates voting.*

Agree.

Finding 2: *General election material is readily available to inmates, encouraging greater participation.*

Agree.

Finding 3: *There is good coordination between the Office of Elections and Correctional staff. This allowed inmates to become better informed about candidates and issues that appeared on the ballot.*

Agree.

Finding 4: *The Humboldt County Correctional Facility is in the process of developing an Elections Manual to preserve and record effective inmate voting procedures for future guidance. (R1)*

Agree.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *The Humboldt County Correctional Facility prepare an Elections Manual to be approved and adopted by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office by no later than December 31, 2025*

This recommendation will not be implemented by the Board of Supervisors. While the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors supports this recommendation, it must be implemented by the Humboldt County Sheriff.

The Humboldt County Sheriff has confirmed that this recommendation has been implemented. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office has created an Elections Manual outlining the process by which inmates at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility may register and vote. The manual explains that this process is coordinated by Sheriff's Office programs staff in partnership with the Humboldt County Office of Elections.

As noted in the Grand Jury's report, the Humboldt County Office of Elections and Sheriff's Office correctional staff have effectively collaborated to expand access to voting for eligible individuals in the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. This collaboration included implementing procedures for paper voter registration, vote-by-mail ballot requests and same day voter registration. The Office of Elections also supported the delivery of provisional ballots on Election Night for the November 5, 2025 General Election and collaborated with the Sheriff's Office to develop Humboldt County's first Inmate Voter Information Guide. The guide consolidated 39 ballot-specific versions into a single resource that met the security and access needs of voters inside the Humboldt County Correctional Facility.

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors commends these efforts designed to reduce barriers, increase access and ensure that every eligible voter had the opportunity to participate in the November 5, 2024 General Election.

Additionally, the Clerk-Recorder & Registrar of Voters has confirmed that the Office of Elections is committed to cultivating a continued partnership with Sheriff's Office to ensure all eligible voters have the opportunity to participate in the voting process. The Elections Office will continue to provide materials, training and logistical support to correctional staff on an as-needed basis. As resources allow, the Elections Office looks forward to working in partnership the Sheriff's Office to review and update voting-related procedures and guides on an ongoing basis and as changes in the law require.
