

2025 RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Humboldt County Sheriff's Office – Locked Up, But Not Locked Out: Inmate voting rights in Humboldt County

Report Date: June 2025

Response by: W. Honsal, Sheriff, County of Humboldt

FINDINGS

See Following Pages

RECOMMENDATIONS

See following pages

Date: 9/5/25

Signed: W. Honsal

Number of pages attached: 2

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT – RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE SUMMARY STATEMENT

Finding 1:

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

Response: Agree

Finding 2:

General Election material is readily available to inmates, encouraging greater participation.

Response: Agree

Finding 3:

There is good coordination between the Office of Elections and the Sheriff's Office Correctional Facility staff. This allowed inmates to become better informed about candidates and issues that appeared on the ballot.

Response: Agree

Finding 4:

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Correctional Facility is in the process of developing an Elections Manual to preserve and record effective inmate voting procedures for future guidance.

Response: Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1:

The Humboldt County Sheriff's office prepare an Elections Manual to be approved and adopted by the Sheriff for use at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility, by no later than December 31, 2025.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office has created a three-page 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 Programs staff in partnership with the Humboldt County Office of Elections (HCOE). Registration forms must be completed in pen, with medical accommodations provided if necessary. Staff are required to log each registration, provide a receipt to the inmate, and submit the forms via outgoing mail. Prior to elections, Programs staff collect voter materials from HCOE, ensure distribution to housing units, and obtain same-day registration envelopes after the mail-in deadline. On Election Day, staff confirm ballot delivery, set up privacy barriers, and facilitate voting in both dorm and celled units, using general ballots when appropriate. After voting, ballots are sealed in registration envelopes, and staff update the Jail Management Records System with each inmate's voting status, ensuring that only eligible individuals' ballots are submitted. Valid ballots are then delivered to HCOE for processing.

