

OFFICE OF THE LAKE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



255 North Forbes Street, Lakeport, CA 95453

Criminal Division: (707) 263-2251 • Fax: (707) 263-2328
Victim Witness: (707) 262-4282 • (707) 263-5851

Susan J. Krones
District Attorney

Richard Watson
Chief Deputy District Attorney

Bruce Smith
Chief District Attorney Investigator

Doris A. Lankford
Administrative Coordinator

Tatsuhiro Suzuki
Victim Witness Program Administrator

To The Honorable J. David Markham
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
255 N Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453

RE: Response to 2024-2025 Grand Jury Final Report

The District Attorney's Office provides the following responses to the Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations under **District Attorney's Office Lets Potential Cases Go Unfiled Due to Expiration of Statute of Limitations**

Finding #: **F-1**

☐ AGREE with finding.

☐ DISAGREE wholly with finding. Explanation:

X DISAGREE partially with finding (*response shall specify the portion of the finding disputed*).

Explanation: I agree that there have been a small number of misdemeanor cases that were rejected due to the cases not being filed within the statute of limitations. Our office receives a significant number of misdemeanor cases throughout the year. The charging is assigned to attorneys to charge the cases. New Deputy District Attorneys do not start charging cases right away. They have to be trained, and their work is reviewed by a Senior Deputy District Attorney to provide guidance on charging procedures and decisions. This does take additional time to review cases, but it is necessary so that cases that should be rejected are not filed.

Many of the cases listed were rejected for reasons other than the Statue of Limitations. The determination to reject a case was made upon either an initial review or after follow-up was conducted. For the cases referred to in the report the rejection form may list the case was rejected due to the statute of limitations but many of the cases also provide additional reasons that the cases were not filed. Even though the decision was made to reject the case, the rejection form was not filled out in a timely manner. I understand this is not an ideal situation, and I will emphasis to staff the importance of formally rejecting a case as soon as the decision is made to reject the case.

Finding #: **F-2**

X AGREE with finding.

☐ DISAGREE wholly with finding. Explanation:

☐ DISAGREE wholly with finding. Explanation:

I understand that cases that are not filed within the Statue of Limitations could impact the morale of law enforcement. I believe that our partner law enforcement agencies know that they can contact myself or my Chief with any complaints or concerns about any case.

Recommendation #: R-1

☐ AGREE, has been implemented.

X AGREE, will be implemented within next 6 to 7 months.

☐ NEUTRAL, requires further analysis to be completed within 6 months

☐ DISAGREE, will not be implemented. Explanation:

Explanation: The District Attorney's Office will be transitioning to a new case management system that will provide an alert to the assigned attorney, DA and Chief Deputy when the statute of limitations is coming up. This new system will provide an efficient way to keep track of cases that are getting close to the statute of limitations so that they can be prioritized.

Recommendation #: R-2

☐ AGREE, has been implemented.

☐ AGREE, will be implemented within next 6 to 7 months.

X NEUTRAL, requires further analysis to be completed within 6 to 12 months.

☐ DISAGREE, will not be implemented. Explanation:

Explanation: Despite ongoing recruitment efforts our office is understaffed and down by 2 DDAs. I cannot predict when my office will be able to hire additional Attorneys. We have interviewed potential candidates on a consistent basis, but we are competing with surrounding Counties that can pay more. Still, I always emphasize the other advantages that Lake County has to offer and the recent increase in pay has been helpful.

Another factor that has had an impact on the time it takes to review and charge cases is the Racial Blind Charging law that took effect on January 1, 2025. The law requires that for most law enforcement reports information about race and gender must be redacted. The case is first reviewed in the redacted form and then must be reviewed again without the redactions. This process requires additional time for the case to be redacted, and the case has to be reviewed twice by the attorney. Since we have implemented this law, it is taking additional time for staff to prepare the reports for redaction and more time for the attorney to review each case second time. The state has not provided any additional funds to hire additional staff to do required redactions.

September 15, 2025

Respectfully Submitted,



Susan Krones
District Attorney
County of Lake
(707) 263-2540