

MONTHLY OPINION REPORT

CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE



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March 1, 2023

The Attorney General's Opinion Unit is responsible for researching and drafting the formal opinions of the Attorney General. This Monthly Opinion Report lists all of the questions that are currently under consideration for formal opinions.

The Attorney General welcomes and solicits the views of all interested persons concerning the issues raised in any question submitted for an opinion. Views should be in writing and directed to the deputy assigned to prepare the opinion. Contact information for deputies is included at the end of this report. All views submitted before publication will be considered, but early submissions are greatly preferred. All submissions will be treated as public records subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act.

For more information about the Opinion Unit, or to retrieve a copy of a published opinion, please see our website at <http://oag.ca.gov/opinions>.

NEW QUESTIONS ASSIGNED DURING FEBRUARY 2023

23-101 requested by Senator Steven M. Glazer

Do the disclosure and recusal provisions of SB 1439 apply to political contributions made before January 1, 2023?

(Assigned to Deputy Attorney General Heather Thomas.)

23-102 requested by Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko

1. Is it a violation of the Brown Act for a mayor to deliver a “State of the City” address to attendees at a fee-only private event specifically held to facilitate the address, where all or a quorum of fellow council members are in attendance?
 2. Does the “conference exception” of the Brown Act apply?
 3. Does the “community meetings exception” of the Brown Act apply?
- (Assigned to Deputy Attorney General Ryan B. McCarroll.)

23-103 requested by State Department of Cannabis Control Director Nicole Elliott

Whether state law authorization, under an agreement pursuant to Chapter 25 of Division 10 of the Business and Professions Code, for medicinal or adult-use commercial cannabis activity, or both, between out-of-state licensees and California licensees, will result in significant legal risk to the State of California under the federal Controlled Substances Act.

(Assigned to Deputy Attorney General Karim J. Kentfield.)

23-201 requested by Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig

1. Does the probable cause standard for a grand jury criminal indictment state a lower standard of proof than preponderance of the evidence?
2. Must the word “shall” as used in Penal Code section 939.8, pertaining to the grand jury’s issuance of a criminal indictment, be construed as “should” in order to avoid possible constitutional infirmity?

(Assigned to Deputy Attorney General Ryan B. McCarroll.)

23-203 Quo Warranto Application

May Karen Macedonio serve simultaneously as a member of both the City Council of California City and the East Kern Health Care District Board of Directors?

(Assigned to Deputy Attorney General Catherine Bidart.)

OPINIONS ISSUED OR CONCLUDED DURING FEBRUARY 2023

No opinions were issued or concluded during this period.

OPINIONS PENDING

Opinion Requests

- 23-201** 1. Does the probable cause standard for a grand jury criminal indictment state a lower standard of proof than preponderance of the evidence? 2. Must the word “shall” as used in Penal Code section 939.8, pertaining to the grand jury’s issuance of a criminal indictment, be construed as “should” in order to avoid possible constitutional infirmity? (McCarroll)
- 23-103** Whether state law authorization, under an agreement pursuant to Chapter 25 of Division 10 of the Business and Professions Code, for medicinal or adult-use commercial cannabis activity, or both, between out-of-state licensees and California licensees, will result in significant legal risk to the State of California under the federal Controlled Substances Act. (Kentfield)
- 23-102** 1. Is it a violation of the Brown Act for a mayor to deliver a “State of the City” address to attendees at a fee-only private event specifically held to facilitate the address, where all or a quorum of fellow council members are in attendance? 2. Does the “conference exception” of the Brown Act apply? 3. Does the “community meetings exception” of the Brown Act apply? (McCarroll)
- 23-101** Do the disclosure and recusal provisions of SB 1439 apply to political contributions made before January 1, 2023? (Thomas)
- 22-1201** Given that California wineries applying for a direct shipper license in another state are often asked to provide a criminal record check in connection with that application, if a California winery owner or manager obtains a criminal record check from the California Department of Justice, would furnishing that criminal record check—or notification no such record exists—to another state’s alcohol control agency constitute a violation of California Penal Code sections 11121, 11125, 11142, or 11143? (Duncan Lee)
- 22-701** 1. Does Penal Code section 904.6 require a court to impanel a grand jury at the district attorney’s request? 2. Do the prosecution’s discovery obligations under *Brady* and Penal Code section 1054.1 include criminal grand jury materials? (Bidart)
- 22-602** Does the State Bar of California have the jurisdiction to regulate non-attorney legal document assistants who are not engaged in the practice of law? (Kentfield)
- 22-402** Is the governing body of the San Bernardino County District Advocates for Better Schools (SANDABS), a lobbying association within the meaning of Government Code section 53060.5, a “legislative body” within the meaning of the Brown Act, Government Code section 54952? (Medeiros)

- 21-1001** 1. May a county adopt policies to address the environmental impacts of pesticides in a Local Coastal Program without violating Food and Agricultural Code section 11501.1? 2. May a county adopt ordinances to regulate pesticides in the coastal zone to implement Local Coastal Program requirements? (Duncan Lee)

Quo Warranto Matters

- 23-203** May Karen Macedonio serve simultaneously as a member of both the City Council of California City and the East Kern Health Care District Board of Directors? (Bidart)
- 22-1101** Are certain members of the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District Board of Directors—appointed by the Kings County Board of Supervisors in March 2021—lawfully holding their offices, or were their seats required to be filled by an election conducted under Water Code section 41000 et seq.? (Kentfield)
- 22-1002** Has David Marquez vacated his seat on the Moreno Valley City Council due to unexcused absences from council meetings for the time periods specified in Government Code section 36513? (Duncan Lee)
- 22-802** May Paul Keefer serve simultaneously as a member of the Sacramento County Board of Education and as the President, Chief Executive Officer, and Executive Director of the Pacific Charter Institute, a charter management organization which operates charter schools in Sacramento and other California counties? (Medeiros)

CONTACT US

The Opinion Unit invites comments on the questions posed in pending opinion requests. To share your views, please contact the deputy assigned to prepare the opinion. Deputies can be reached at the following email addresses and telephone numbers:

Catherine Bidart, Deputy Attorney General:

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To submit an opinion request, please contact Marc J. Nolan, Acting Senior Assistant Attorney General, at Marc.Nolan@doj.ca.gov or (213) 269-6392.

To submit a quo warranto application, please contact Marc J. Nolan, Acting Senior Assistant Attorney General, at Marc.Nolan@doj.ca.gov or (213) 269-6392.

For all other inquiries, please contact Stephanie Grimes, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, at Stephanie.Grimes@doj.ca.gov or (916) 210-6005.

You may also contact the Opinion Unit at the following address:

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