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Solano County Grand Jury Challenges Measure Q Oversight in 2nd of 2 Critical Reports

July 8, 2015 | By Jess Sullivan | www.dailyrepublic.com

EXCERPT: FAIRFIELD - The Solano County grand jury issued its second report on Solano Community College administrative practices, blasting the management and oversight of the \$348 million Measure Q bond passed by voters in 2012.

The grand jury report noted the Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee as it is being used by the college violates the California Constitution, state law and legislative intent. ...

Citizen Oversight

The bond oversight committee is supposed to ensure the public that taxpayer money is being spent legally, appropriately and efficiently. ...

It was clear the bond oversight committee members believe they were not in charge of their own meeting agendas, the grand jury reported. The oversight committee lacks independence with their oversight agenda; one board member said the agenda is created by the administrators who are spending the bond money, according to the grand jury report. Others members said they believed agenda items had to be approved by what they described as the "bond team."

The grand jury report pointed out that some bond oversight committee members repeatedly expressed the need to change their structure to provide better oversight of bond money spending. However, oversight committee members were told the Solano College board of trustees did not want them to meet more frequently, and that the trustees created the bond oversight committee bylaws and they could not be changed by the committee members, according to the report. ...

Annual reports of the bond oversight committee are questionable, according to the grand jury, because they are almost entirely prepared by the company hired to serve as the bond program manager. ...

To read the complete article please visit:

www.dailyrepublic.com/news/education-news/grand-jury-challenges-measure-q-oversight-in-2nd-of-2-critical-reports/

The most recent grand jury report can be viewed at

www.solanocourts.com/materials/CBOC.pdf

The grand jury on June 28 issued a report claiming that local voters were duped in 2012 by Solano College staff and supporters of the bond measure, titled "**Measure Q: We Have Your Money, Now What?**" :

www.solano.courts.ca.gov/materials/Measure%20Q.pdf

Appellate Court Ruled Against Leaseback School Contract Construction industry wants Legislature to intervene

Opinion: Contractor lobbyists Seek Relief from California Legislature

July 9, 2015 | By Dan Walters | www.sacbee.com

EXCERPT: "Gut-and-amend" has a harsh ring, which may be appropriate, since it refers to a rather harsh legislative maneuver. A moribund bill is "gutted" - its contents are stripped away, leaving only a number - and "amended" with entirely new language. It short-circuits the laborious legislative process that might make passage difficult - at best unseemly, and at worst sneaky.

That brings us to Assembly Bill 975, a minor change in school construction law, and another bill.

They are being fully amended, complete with new authors, at the behest of lobbyists for Associated General Contractors and the Coalition for Adequate School Housing to counteract a state appellate court declaration that a "lease-leaseback" contract to build a new school violates state competitive bidding and conflict-of-interest laws.

The decision (Davis v. Fresno Unified School District) involves a \$36.7 million middle school and, as noted in this space earlier, could invalidate dozens of such contracts involving hundreds of millions of dollars throughout the state - money that might have to be repaid by contractors.

Just a week after the June 1 decision, a lawyer for affected companies, P. Randolph Finch, outlined a plan "to mitigate our losses" by urging Fresno Unified to appeal to the state Supreme Court and seeking legislation "overruling the Davis case." It would also exempt contractors that do pre-construction planning and then receive no-bid leaseback contracts from conflict-of-interest laws. ...

Amendments had been prepared to Senate Bill 374 to enact Finch's conflict-of-interest exemption but late Thursday, its author, Sen. Isadore Hall III, said it wouldn't be used, so apparently another vehicle will be sought. AB 975, meanwhile, would compel school districts whose "good faith" leaseback contracts are invalidated by lawsuits to pay contractors anyway. ...

One other fillip: A Fresno school trustee, Brooke Ashjian, said this week that the FBI had interviewed him about the contested leaseback contract. The feds are apparently interested in the conflict-of-interest aspect.

To read the complete article please visit:

www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/dan-walters/article26896666.html

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To promote school district accountability by improving the training and resources available to California's Proposition 39 School Bond Oversight Committees and educating the state legislature, local school boards and the public about the oversight and reporting powers these Citizens' Bond Oversight Committees (CBOCs) have, and to advocate on a state level, where appropriate, on issues of common concern to all CBOCs.

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