

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment.

For the first time in a long time I woke up after an election and was happy. I endorsed Ryan Sundberg, Virginia Bass and Maggie Fleming; and all three won. More times than not, not a single local candidate that I endorse wins their election. I often joke to candidates that if you want to win an election have me endorse your opponent. I was at Physical Therapy yesterday and there was a police officer doing some rehab on his knee and the conversation came around to Maggie Fleming. He was very happy with the outcome of the election. He said it has been a long time since the police officers felt that after they have arrested someone and collected all the evidence that they felt they had a good chance of getting a conviction. Before our current DA took office we had a highly qualified pool of prosecutors who took the evidence and were able to get guilty verdicts from the jury. Many of these fine Assistant District Attorney's have left Humboldt County. The current staff in the District Attorney's Office are not incompetent, they are just inexperienced. Maggie Fleming needs to recruit quality prosecutors, like Worth Dikeman, to come to Humboldt County. We have lost over a hundred years of courtroom experience in the last twelve years. The only ones who benefited from this exodus were the criminals. Starting on January First, Humboldt County will open a new chapter in regards to our law enforcement system. For the first time in twelve years the police officers will have a District Attorney who is on the same page with them. I know that our jail is overcrowded, but letting so many criminals walk because of this overcrowding has unleashed a horde of thieves on Humboldt County. My hope is that our Board of Supervisors will work into their budget money to build more jail cells. I'm really opposed to any new taxes, but I would endorse a bond to build

another jail. I think that the criminal element in Humboldt County knows that they will not be incarcerated for many non-violent crimes and without fear they are free to prey on the rest of us. The extremely high crime rates in Humboldt County keep organizations and businesses from locating here. Without new employment opportunities our young families move away and our future moves with them. Build a bigger jail and clean up our streets. If we do this one thing we will be well on our way to financial recovery in Humboldt County. We have so much to offer. Our natural beauty and mild climate make this an ideal place to live. We have a junior college and a university in a community of less than 150,000 residents. Our hospitals are excellent. We have some of the best specialists in the country who call Humboldt County home. Unfortunately, many of these professionals are retiring or moving away because of the increased crime rates and lack of quality jobs; jobs that pay for benefits that support quality medical care. It is a domino affect that we see happening in Humboldt County. It all starts with a criminal who doesn't fear ever having to pay for his crime. The solution to jail overcrowding isn't the catch and release policy we see today. We need to get these people off our streets and we will see Humboldt County return to a great and safe place to live and raise a family.

This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment