

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment.

Last Tuesday our Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to place a Measure on the November ballot to raise our sales tax by one half of a percent. As usual, with politicians trying to extract more of our hard earned dollar, they used the scare tactic of public safety. This is getting really old. Every time they overspend, instead of working to eliminate the massive waste in our government, they want to raise taxes. The 2014/2015 Humboldt County Budget is a little over 305 million dollars and is projected to have a deficit of 2.7 million dollars. The Welfare Department, oops, I mean the Health and Human Services Department is almost 52% of the entire budget. This Department alone has a budget of over 150 million dollars and has an increase for next year of 3.3 million. The Law and Justice slice of the budget pie is a little over 18%, yet that is where our elected officials want you to think the biggest cuts will happen. Wow, are we really that stupid? They are trying to scare us into giving them more money. The single biggest problem we are facing is what the public workers unions have done to our budgetary process. They have successfully negotiated phenomenal benefit packages, which are going up 28% this year, that those of us in the private sector would love to have. We don't get dental and vision coverage at our work. We have to work until we are 67 to retire, unlike the government worker who can retire in their fifties. This worker then gets a nice pension and many times they go back to work and double dip. My advice to our elected officials is to play hardball with the unions and for starters, make the government employee work until they are 67 like the rest of us. Those of us in the private sector are tired of making your life easier. Humboldt County is a very expensive place to do business. We have the highest gas prices in the nation. I know

that our cost to dump garbage is higher than any place I've researched. I personally believe that it just might be the highest in the nation. California has one of the highest tax rates in the United States. We are taxed and taxed and taxed and instead of cutting back on the employee wages or the Welfare Department to balance our budget, our Board of Supervisors wants us to vote for even higher taxes. When businesses are looking for a place to set up shop, they look at what the tax rates are in a particular county. They analyze how many people are on government assistance. They look at the crime rate and make decisions based on these factors. Instead of making these numbers more appealing, our Board of Supervisors are doing just the opposite. Once again, Humboldt County is telling the rest of the world we are closed for business. Our Welfare Department is getting a 3.3 million dollar increase in tax dollars over the last budget. This department alone is over half of our budget. This is where we need to make cuts. First and foremost, make the recipients pass a drug test before they receive any free money. The struggling single mom that needs help shouldn't be on drugs. How is testing for illegal drugs before a person gets a handout a violation of their rights? What about my rights? Isn't it a violation of my rights to take more of my hard earned dollars and give it to those who do not work? I am asking everyone who is listening to oppose this Measure on the November ballot that will increase our taxes. Remember, almost 52% of our budget goes to Welfare and only 18% goes to Law and Justice. The politicians are addicts and they are addicted to our money. They will do anything to get more of it, even scare you with threats to public safety. Instead of asking for more money, renegotiate the ridiculous contracts you have with the unions.

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