

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

Last Friday I received my sample ballot in the mail and was shocked when I looked at the wording for the 1/2 cent sales tax increase, Measure Z. This is how our politicians worded this tax increase on the ballot; "Measure Z, Humboldt County Public Safety/ Essential Services Measure. To maintain/improve essential services, such as 24-hour sheriff's patrols; 9-1-1 emergency response; crime investigation/prosecution; drug/illegal marijuana grow-house enforcement/prevention; services for abused children/mentally ill; rural fire protection; road repairs; and other County services, shall County of Humboldt pursuant to County Ordinance No. 2517 enact a 1/2% sales tax, for five years, all revenue for the County, none for the State of California, with annual audits and public review?" Wow! They sugar coated the wording to make it sound like you will be saving the world if you vote for this tax increase. I'm surprised they didn't say that voting for this tax increase will regenerate the ozone and stop the Ebola virus outbreak. Every line item they listed is already well funded. The problem with our County budget is that there are too many highly compensated employees. The number one expense for any business or government agency is employee compensation. Humboldt County has 384 employees making over \$100,000 per year. The benefit packages these employees have are astronomical. The head of the Health and Human Resources Department has a base salary of \$199,263.13, he had other income of \$16,808.02 and a benefit package of \$49,960.50. His benefit package alone is more than what a majority of people earn. These obscene salaries are the sole reason Humboldt County has a budget deficit of 2.7 million dollars. If the 384 overpaid employees took just a \$10,000 per year pay-cut, our budget would have a surplus of over a million dollars. Theses 384

employees are the decision makers, so the last thing they will do is give themselves a pay-cut. We have a system where the fox is guarding the henhouse and the fox has eaten all the chickens and is asking us, the tax payers, to replenish their poultry supply. The poor single mom is being asked to open up her wallet and pay more in taxes, while the County employee is making over a hundred thousand dollars per year, drives a County vehicle home every night, gets over a month of vacation time, has excellent health insurance that includes vision and dental, gets every imaginable holiday off with pay, they get several personal days off throughout the year to play golf if they want, they get enough sick leave to insure their check isn't any smaller no matter how much time they take off and, oh yeah, they get to retire up to ten years earlier than the private sector employee, often with 100% of their salary as a pension. According to them, the County is broke and they want to raise taxes or we will lose essential services like police and fire protection. The sample ballot doesn't have an argument against Measure Z in it. For the elected officials who support this, you make me sick. Instead of rolling up your sleeves and making cuts to overpaid employees, you want to hurt the poor with more taxes. This measure is the epitome of what is wrong with our government. If this gets passed, it will be because of the deceptive way the politicians wrote the measure for the ballot. It is nothing short of sleazy. Enough is enough, vote no on Measure Z.

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