

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

One of the biggest lies told by our government is that the rich don't pay their fair share of taxes. This is accepted as fact by the majority of our population. This is a lie. In fact, the richest 5% of incomes pay a majority of all taxes. No matter what you think is true, go to the IRS website and look at the actual numbers. You will see that over 50% of our population do not pay one single cent in Federal Income Tax. In order for the government to keep spending in the reckless manner to which they've become accustomed, they have to devise ways to get more money from the poor, which is where Measure Z, an increase in sales tax, comes in. Our mismanaged government is broke and now needs to get into the wallets of the poorest. Please hear this: raising the sales tax will hurt the poor the most. We have elected officials who are making over \$100,000 per year that want us to believe they are unable to balance a budget without getting more taxes - and they say this every year. Humboldt County has 384 highly compensated employees who make over \$100,000 per year. My message to our elected Supervisors to solve your budget problems for years to come is to simply give every employee who makes between \$75 and \$100 thousand per year a 5% pay cut. Those who make between \$100 and \$150 thousand, a 10% pay cut, and everyone making over \$150 thousand a 20% pay cut. You also need to negotiate with the unions to eliminate dental and vision coverage from county employee's benefit packages. The majority of us in the private sector do not have the luxury of dental and vision insurance, so why should we be paying for others to get it? These two steps would give us millions of excess dollars that can be used for police and fire protection, education, street repairs and all those other buzz-word tax needs that politicians like to throw around

when they are trying to balance the budget on our backs. It is time to tell the government employees that they are overpaid, and we are tired of them enjoying their rides on the tax-payer's gravy train. Unfortunately the highest paid employees are the conductors on this train and making the necessary cuts would affect them, so they want the poor to pay more taxes. Measure Z is our government's way of keeping their bloated salaries intact at our expense. They threaten to shut down police, fire, and schools, if we don't open up our wallets yet again. There is a sign in front of one of our fire stations that says this facility will close if Measure Z doesn't pass. This scare tactic being used by our government is unethical at the very least. This is government property and the sign should be removed. We all know paying more taxes will never be enough. We have to cut expenses somewhere and are always told that police, fire, and schools are the only areas to cut. Honestly, do we really need to pay department heads over \$250,000 per year? My message to our elected Board of Supervisors; Rex Bohn, Virginia Bass, Ryan Sundberg, Mark Lovelace and Estelle Fennell is that you were elected to represent the people, not government employees. Humboldt County is in this budgetary shortfall because of the excessive salaries and benefit packages we pay these employees. You blame Sacramento and Washington, DC, but you really need to blame yourselves for allowing the government unions to negotiate compensation packages that are unsustainable. Vote no to bloated salaries. Vote no on Measure Z.

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