

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

Today is Election Day and I hope that everyone exercises their right to have their voices heard. I am proud each and every time I cast my ballot, even though I'm on the losing end a majority of the time. Being a Conservative in California is very frustrating when the results are finalized. With that said, it is still very important to vote. The Eureka Fair Wage Act, or Measure R, will be decided today as will Measure Z, the county wide 1/2 cent sales tax increase. Both of these Measures will have a devastating impact on our local economy. Last Thursday evening I received a call from a phone number that the caller ID said was from the Operating Engineers Local Union #3. The lady on the other end was asking me to vote yes on Measure R. I asked her if she worked for the union and she said no. The union is donating office space and money to try and pass Measure R. I told her that I thought it was a bad idea for Eureka to have this huge increase in the minimum wage and that it was going to hurt small businesses. She had her standard answer that small businesses were exempt and I proceeded to tell her that it is difficult for the small business owner to hire any quality workers already. They can't compete with the bloated government workers salaries on the top end and on the bottom end welfare and the multitude of handouts the government is giving the poor keeps people from seeking employment. Why would someone work for a small business owner for \$9 per hour when they could flip burgers at McDonalds for \$12? The only way for the little guy to attract employees is to pay a couple dollars more than minimum wage and this will always be the case. They may not have to pay \$12 by law, but the business climate will force them to pay \$14. This increase in expenses will cause some businesses to close their doors or cut their workforce and others to move to

a city that has a friendly business environment. New businesses will not move to Eureka if this passes. It is a double hit on our economy. This is the reality of the situation. The union employee is highly compensated already, so why are they the force behind this minimum wage hike? It is greed; pure and simple. The union contracts are attached to the minimum wage. The higher the minimum wage, the higher their hourly rate will be. The advertisements for increasing the sales tax show a variety of people who state that "we are all in this together". If we give the government more money, they will just spend it and be back with their hands out in the next election. I cannot remember an election without a bond issue or a tax increase. Instead of making the necessary wage cuts to overpaid government workers, the politicians want the poor to pay more in taxes. Please remember this when you vote today; Humboldt County has 384 employees who make over \$100,000 dollars per year. Here are the top ten salaries paid in Humboldt County last year: \$362,000, \$311,000, \$282,000, \$272,000, \$263,000, \$257,000, \$249,000, \$227,000, \$224,00 and \$221,000. They want you to believe that "We're all in this together". Really? I think both the unions and the government employees are in this for themselves. Vote NO on Measure R and Measure Z, or you will only have yourself to blame when businesses leave.

This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment