

KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.

Now that the elections are over. There are the winners and losers as usual. What is left for the rest of us, is to look at the election results and see how the results will impact our personal lives. I am a great admirer of Will Rodgers. One of my favorite Rodger's quotes is, "There are men running governments who shouldn't be allowed to play with matches." This quote really resonates with me after each election. I like this quote, because too often election results have unintended consequences that will place a significant burden on a vulnerable segment of the population.

No where are these unintended consequences more apparent, than in the increases in tax payer costs for just living in a community and owning property. In a stagnated growth area like ours, senior taxpayers will shoulder the costs decided by voters who don't pay property tax. The activists, cause advocates, and progressive political elements prayed on one of the most vulnerable segments in our community. In many cases these people who don't have a clue about the unintended consequences of their actions secured by a ballot box victory. Do the ends justify the means?

Much of the aging taxpayer base in this area is made up of retirees and people living on fixed incomes. Like many depressed economic areas, our community's seniors own their own homes and want to live their golden years with independence and within their own resources. It's becoming harder and harder to live this way, especially when a new massive property tax increase has been pegged to property value. To many it may well become a choice-- to eat---to stay in your own home --to sell out and move--- or to give up on the personal dignity of life. Think about the unintended consequences as you do the "high fives" around the school board meeting table based on the new school bond!

In looking into this community comment, I researched some of the other states and communities where seniors are given a tax break based on growing older. In one state, the tax offsets begin at age 70, where property taxes and public bond fees are decreased by 25%. The offset continues to increase at age 75 where another 25% is removed from the levy for seniors. In addition, retirement incomes are also not taxed

at a standard rate, but reduced on a sliding scale based age. Several states have realized that some seniors no longer have the ability to increase their sustainment incomes, and must live on fixed dollars.

Implement tax relief for seniors here, and public sector revenues would decrease dramatically. There appears to be no respect and dignity for the older community members. The single largest increasing segment of U.S. taxpayers is the age group of citizens 65 years and older. The reality of the recent election may make it impossible for many seniors to maintain their living standard. The political class has continued to overlook the impact of their actions on one of the most vulnerable segment of the population. Here, the aging demographic is viewed much like a group of hungry sharks looking at a herd of seals just before the feeding frenzy begins?

Will Rogers would see our local political class still playing with matches!

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