

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

We had to raise taxes by six million dollars because we needed more police officers on the streets. Why couldn't we afford to have enough cops? It's because of the fiscally irresponsible salaries we are paying Humboldt County employees. The head of the Health and Human Resources Department, formally called the Welfare Department, collects over \$250,000 of our tax dollars every single year, \$250,000! My friend asked a Humboldt County Supervisor, who was once thought to be a fiscal conservative, but is now in favor of tax increases to fund these absurd salaries, how we could be paying someone such an outlandish salary and he responded that if this person were running a corporation with a hundred and fifty million dollar budget that is the salary he would be getting. I would like to stand on the Courthouse steps and scream at the top of my lungs that he isn't in private industry. Corporate salaries are directly tied to profit in business. I would like to pose a question to our Humboldt County Department Heads; would you take a private sector job with the same budget where you answered to five Board of Directors for \$25,000 more per year or would you keep your current job with a \$25,000 per year pay cut? Every single one of them would choose to stay with their government job. They would get mad and possibly look for employment in some other county, but they would be looking to work for the government. The key is for every county to make the same cuts. I know they are overpaid, you know they are overpaid and they know they are overpaid. The same is true for every government employee who makes over \$75,000 per year. You are overpaid. Unfortunately, we do not have anyone with the testicular fortitude to make the cuts necessary to keep our government from collapsing in on itself. If we cut vision and dental coverage, something most of us in the private

sector do not have, we would save millions of dollars. This alone would generate more revenue than Measure Z. We don't have anyone representing the working people in the private sector on the Humboldt County on the Board of Supervisors, so we should start our own campaigns by putting some common sense things on the ballot. My first initiative is that the highest paid person working for the county shall not exceed \$150,000 per year, including benefits. My second initiative would be to cut vision and dental from county employee benefit packages. My third initiative is that every person who receives welfare has to pay for and pass a drug test. If they pass the test they will be reimbursed for the cost of the test. This doesn't violate anyone's rights. It is an easy way to determine who is poor and who is lazy. If they fail the drug test they can volunteer to enter a drug rehab center free of charge. Once they are released, they can get government assistance, as long as they pass the drug test. These three initiatives would save Humboldt County tens of millions of dollars. I propose that some of these funds be used to hire more police officers and school teachers and to build a minimum security jail for non-violent criminals. If they are sentenced to sixty days they should have to serve sixty days. We are on the catch and release program today. Without consequences to their behavior the criminal will just keep on stealing us blind. Please let me know what initiatives you'd like to see on the ballot in the next election.

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