

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

In my last Community Comment I misstated that Measure Z was a 1% sales tax increase when it is actually only 1/2%. It is very comical to me that there was an immediate response to have this mistake aired on the radio. Whether the new tax is only 1/2% or 1% is irrelevant to my point: the government is overtaxing us! We are taxed and taxed and taxed; 1% here, 1/2% there, here a percent there a percent everywhere a percent percent. It is never ending. We vote in tax increases that have a five year sunset on them and before we get any reprieve from these taxes they are right back on the ballot for an extension. If government spending solved our problems, we would be living in utopia. We elect five people to the Board of Supervisors to take care of the business of running the County. They are elected to work with our employees, yes the government employees are the employees of the taxpayers. This fact is lost in the myriad of union contracts and bloated budgets. The unions have forgotten who is actually paying the excellent wages and unprecedented benefit packages their members are receiving. The taxpayers are picking up the tab for these wages and early retirements. We hope our elected Supervisors would bring some sanity into this mess, but instead, they've jumped into bed with the government waste. Does anyone else out there find it absurd that some of our public employees are going to be millionaires when they retire? The head of the Health and Human Resources Department makes over \$249,000 per year in salary and benefits. When a member of the Board of Supervisors was asked about this extremely high compensation package, he said that if this employee were in a private sector job with a budget that exceeds one hundred and fifty million dollars, this is what their salary would be. Well, my response to that is that he

isn't working for a private company. The private sector employee with a budget that size is subject to a Board of Directors who would fire him if certain goals were not obtained. The salary would be tied to stock performances which would reflect how well he is doing his job. How are the heads of our County Departments doing? Based on my observations, they should lose their jobs. The Sheriff just received a raise of almost \$15,000 per year, pushing his compensation to over \$230,000 per year. Is he working more hours? Is the crime rate declining? So what if his job description changed, that doesn't entitle him to more of our tax dollars. The one thing this bump will guarantee is that he will receive a bigger retirement. The Board of Supervisors are not doing the job we elected them to do. They are not looking out for the private sector employees, they are looking out for the highly compensated department heads. It's time we took matters into our own hands. I've been working with an attorney who has connections in Sacramento and we are devising a ballot initiative that will reduce by 10-20% the salaries of every County employee who makes over \$100,000 per year in salary and benefits, for a five year period. If this Measure passes, this wage freeze will sunset in five years unless we can successfully get an extension on the ballot for an additional five years. Maybe we can tie it to the tax increases. The wage freeze will expire when the sales tax increase expires.

This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment