

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

The Humboldt County property tax bills have been mailed to the current owners and it is a good time to review how ridiculously out of hand our elected officials have been when it comes to taxing us into oblivion. Yes, we are overtaxed. The bond initiatives are passed blindly by the voters without any thought as to what the money is going for. The reason we pay property taxes, sales tax and income tax is to first fund our schools, police and fire departments, public works and then we need to take care of those less fortunate. The system is all screwed up. We spend over half our budget on welfare type programs which leaves the essential services with budget deficits. The people in charge are afraid to cut back on the freebies for fear of losing the next election because there are more people with their hand out than there are people with their hand in a work glove. The working person is now the minority and we lose every single time at the election box. Knowing that we are concerned for our schools and public safety, the tax increases and bond initiatives are always sold to us with those departments in need. We never have a welfare bond or a social services sales tax measure on the ballot, yet that is where a majority of our tax dollars are spent. I have four Humboldt County property tax bills with the following add on taxes: College of the Redwoods 2005/2007 GO Bonds for a total of \$89.54. The next line is Eureka Unified High School 2002 GO Bonds for a total of \$304.40. The next line is Eureka Unified School District 2015 GO Bonds for a total of \$492.40. The next line is a Humboldt Fire Assessment 1985 for a total of \$84.00 and then another Humboldt Fire Assessment 2004 for a total of \$168.00. These hidden taxes that are billed through my property tax bill total \$1,138.34. The actual property tax bills, which are supposed to fund our schools police and fire departments total

\$8,952.44 before the additions that push my bill to over \$10,000 on a piece of property my family paid \$400 for back in the early 1880's. Multiply this by the thousands of property owners in Humboldt County and it is easy to see that we don't have a revenue problem, we have a spending problem. The money that is being wasted right before our eyes should sicken all of us. If you are a property owner, you know how ludicrous the situation is. If you do not own property and are a renter, these fees, assessments, bonds and taxes are passed directly on to the amount of money you pay for rent. Yes, these taxes hurt the poor more than anyone else. In the next election, and every election going forward, we will be asked to open up our wallets to keep public safety and education financially solvent. Before you blindly vote for these increases, please remember that the budgets are in the condition they are in because of gross mismanagement, not because there is a lack of funds. If you are a renter, these tax increases are the reason your rent gets raised, not because some greedy landlord is lining his own pockets. I have a friend who is so disgusted, that after measure Z passed, she started buying as many of her taxable goods in Oregon when she visits her family. She sends me an email with her savings each trip and it adds up to hundreds of dollars. Maybe that is the only way to get our politicians to listen; hit them in the pocketbook.

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