

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

I have been one of the biggest opponents of the Measure Z tax increase. Many of those who are in the public sector do not fully understand my perspective on new taxes. I 100% support law enforcement and education. After my last comment, in which I was critical of the handling the burglary that happened at my home, I had a 45 minute conversation with the Humboldt County Sheriff's office and I was satisfied with the response I received. We are closer than you might think in our opinions of where Humboldt County is and where it is headed. My criticism centers around my selfish concerns over the robbery that happened at my home. I was told that there are 5,000 open cases in Humboldt County and resources are spread thin. It is sickening to think that there are that many crimes being reported in our small community. The root to all this crime is drugs and poverty. We are all on the same page when it comes to trying to solve this ever escalating problem. My taxes are not being spent the way I would like them to be spent. I wish our 300 million plus dollar budget fully financed safety and education first and social services received funding with the remaining revenue, instead of the opposite. Sacramento holds the county budget hostage with unnecessary programs. If we do not fund these programs, they withhold revenue. The politicians in Sacramento need to be replaced. We blindly keep reelecting them even though they are the problem, not the solution. In Humboldt County alone we spend over \$400,000 every single day on welfare type programs. What are we getting for our money? Are the down and out recovering financially? Are there fewer homeless people wandering our streets? We all know the answer to these questions. The homeless problem in Humboldt County is getting worse and worse and worse every single day. Throwing money at this is not

the solution. We live in a community that really cares about the less fortunate. We have individuals and organizations that devote their entire day to helping feed, clothe and shelter these people. The problem is that with their immediate needs being met, the money they receive is being used to buy drugs. We are enabling them to fall deeper and deeper into the homeless drug environment they find themselves in. We need to quit giving the drug users money. Provide them with food, clothing, housing and their medical needs only. They have proven they cannot manage finances. How do we accomplish this? First of all, they shouldn't get one penny of tax money without passing a drug test. If they fail the test, we should provide rehabilitation treatment for them. I know the ACLU and other such organizations say this violates their rights. I'm sorry, but what about my rights? I have the right to see my tax dollars used to help the poor, not enable them to buy drugs. The bottom line is that spending so much of our public resources on the poor is not solving the crisis, it's only creating more poor. It is time to try a new approach. If you really want to see what over \$400,000 a day is getting us in Humboldt County, drive to the foot of Del Norte Street and look down the old railroad tracks towards the Bayshore Mall. The tent city that you will see is nothing short of disturbing. Drive from one end of Eureka to the other end and count the street people. This is proof that the Social Services Department is a failure and we need a different approach when dealing with the poor.

This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment