

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

Happy New Year. I'm excited to see what 2016 brings, not only to our Country, but to Humboldt County as well. Even though I was strongly opposed to the Measure Z tax increase, I'm happy with how the money is being spent. Hiring more officers for public safety is what the citizens wanted when they voted for this tax increase. I have always been opposed to new taxes and I always will be. The system is not working efficiently, and it never will. This is a hard concept for me to grasp, but after spending a lot of time trying to make sense out of the government, I've come to realize that it is a system that is self serving first, and the interest of the taxpayers comes second. The people who run for office start their political career with visions of grandeur, but once they are elected they get sucked into the black hole of the system, they fall in line with the rest of the politicians who simply tax and spend, tax and spend and tax and spend some more. Every single person knows that spending over 50% of all your revenue on welfare, oops, I mean Social Services, is a recipe for disaster. Somehow we've allowed Washington DC and Sacramento to dictate to our local governments numerous mandated programs that have to be implemented without financial help. If the local entity doesn't have enough resources to fund these programs, tough luck, it has to be funded or state and federal monies are withheld. Logic tells us that if Sacramento and Washington DC mandate a program, they should fund it 100%. This isn't what happens. A majority of the \$400,000 we spend each day on welfare is spent on mandated programs that our local officials cannot control. It's a bureaucratic catch 22. The problem is that after these mandated services are funded, there isn't enough money to fund the services we really need. I want my tax dollar to first fund police, fire and

education, then social services. I think we would all prefer it to be that way. It is also crazy that the benefit packages we are paying our public workers are so superior to what we get in the private sector. This causes resentment by the taxpayers who are picking up the tab for these compensation packages. I don't blame any public employee for getting the benefits that you receive. It is just something that needs to change if we are going to keep from going bankrupt. Yes, we are headed to total insolvency at every level of government. Once that happens these benefit packages will be worthless. The unions that represent these employees have done an outstanding job in negotiating these benefits, but they too must be aware of the financial catastrophe that is rapidly approaching. My new private sector insurance policy for my wife and I isn't bad. It costs less than \$1,000 per month. If I choose, I can put the maximum amount allowed of \$17,500 into a private retirement account. Why are we paying benefit packages to public workers that exceed \$40,000 per year? This is one area of our budget that needs a major overhaul. We have been force fed Obamacare as being the solution to the medical insurance crisis. I'm confused as to why there isn't any government employees on this plan. Shouldn't every federal, state, county and city employee be on this new wonderful insurance plan? That would save the taxpayers billions of dollars. Let's try this approach before we raise taxes again.

This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment